



KANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER OF THE KANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

JULY 2020

VIVIEN SMITH



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NATIVE PLANTS IN URBAN SETTINGS

Topeka's Discovery Center Prairie

— MICKEY DELFELDER

In the heart of the Capitol city is the century-old, 210-acre Gage Park. For generations, the park has been a destination for families to relax, play, swim, and explore. Just over a decade ago, a small group of patrons founded the hands-on children's museum known as the Kansas Children's Discovery Center (KCDC). Nestled in the wooded southwest corner of the park, KCDC is home to a publicly accessible prairie recreation just under an acre in size.

From the outset, KCDC was designed not only with an extended outside learning environment, but also with a prairie meant to bring in butterflies, birds, and other creatures.

The first few years of the prairie were difficult. The designated area had been hardpan with sections containing a lot of gravel. Not only were these areas not well prepped, the first year of establishment occurred during an extended drought. The prairie planners had also not provided KCDC with appropriate expectations of a prairie restoration. Under the impression they would get an "instantaneous" prairie with lots of blooms, they were instead saddled with almost an acre of annual sunflower and other gangly species.

The Discovery Center is across the street from an affluent neighborhood and received multiple complaints about the "weed patch" and several threats to withdraw donations. At one point, the county parks department (which manages Gage Park)

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Kansas Native Plant Society is to encourage awareness and appreciation of the native plants of Kansas in their habitats and in our landscapes by promoting education, stewardship, and scientific knowledge.

The Kansas Native Plant Society Newsletter is published quarterly: Winter (January), Spring (April), Summer (July), Fall (October). Readers tell us how much they enjoy the newsletter in paper format. Contributions help us continue to produce a publication of this length in this form.

You may send your gift to KNPS at:

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Vivien Smith in the Common milkweed patch

Discovery Center Prairie

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mowed down the entire prairie mid-summer after receiving a few direct complaints. Adding to the difficulties, the original plan also included prairie grasses in the medians and perimeter of the parking lot. Additional complaints came from patrons who had trouble seeing around the medians and concerns of small children getting “lost” inside the tall grasses. It became clear what the prairie needed was a dedicated person to “manage” the prairie. In stepped Vivien Smith, a state employee with a background in horticulture and all-around nature enthusiast. She (with help from a small team of helpers) has “tamed” the “weeds” and worked with KCDC, their patrons, and their neighbors on the expectations of what a prairie restoration can be.

The tall prairie grasses in the median have been removed and replaced with sod, but that allows the volunteers to focus on the remaining three-quarter acre restoration. They work to mow paths, increase signage, and maintain birdhouses. The annual burning is managed by the county and the Evergy Green Team. Aggressive over-seeding from local sources has increased the diversity to nearly 100 species.

Adjacent to the prairie is the Powell Butterfly Garden donated by KCDC patrons. This small handicapped-accessible garden provides easy access to native plants to those who may not want to venture out onto the prairie paths.

The prairie restoration and the butterfly garden provide educational opportunities for children and adults alike. Vivien’s team has led evening walks and KCDC has hosted children’s activities including prairie bingo and coloring contests. Because it is outside of the secure area of the KCDC building, the prairie is open during normal park hours at no cost.

During the summer you will find the KCDC prairie frequented by human visitors, along with the resident blue birds, red-winged blackbirds, Eastern kingbirds and the occasional red-tail hawk on the hunt for an easy meal. Woodhouse toads and leopard frogs, non-native but naturalized Italian wall lizards, voles, and shrews make their home in the understory and drainage ditch. Large patches of golden Alexander produce Eastern swallowtails, and a lone prickly ash hosts a few giant swallowtails. Four different milkweed varieties (common, swamp, purple, and butterfly) attract Monarchs all summer long.



VIVIEN SMITH

KELLY HALLER

President’s Message | BRAD GUHR

EMPATHY WILL SEE US THROUGH. I have found KNPS members to be people of empathy. You care about land, natural areas, and the native plants therein. You realize the importance that these native plant systems play in hosting pollinators, attracting and conserving biological diversity of wildlife, and contributing to clean surface and ground water. You push yourselves to learn more about native plants by taking tours, studying natural areas, going to conferences and meetings, conducting citizen science, and encouraging others to do so too. You landscape with native plants, observe the wildlife they attract, share pictures, and promote to others how this enriches your lives. You know that these efforts are good for the natural environment and they are good for you as well.

This empathy you show for natural systems translates to how you treat other people and how you operate as an integral member of society. Our society is struggling mightily right now with impacts from COVID-19 and systemic racial injustice. Whether or not we feel we are directly affected by these struggles, we are. We see them and feel them around us if we are aware. I encourage you to be sensitive, flex your empathy, be an ally for justice, and show kindness, love and compassion in whatever way you can.

And know that your efforts of empathy may not be perfect, but that they should not keep you from trying. Famed conservationist Aldo Leopold saw natural and human systems as being intricately intertwined and conveyed this sentiment of striving in one of his better-known quotes... *“We shall never achieve harmony with the land, any more than we shall achieve absolute justice or liberty for people. In these higher aspirations the important thing is not to achieve but to strive.”*

In the vein of helping others, another favorite quote I turn to during trying times such as now is the pre-flight mantra you have heard, *“Put your oxygen mask on first, before assisting others.”* One of my oxygen masks of self-care is to immerse myself in native plants. I will leave you with a few photos of places that have helped me with self-care in recent weeks.

We are missing each other during these trying times, but we will eventually get through it. In the meantime, take care of yourself, strive for justice, show empathy, and immerse yourself in the natural world.



BRAD GUHR PHOTOS



SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BRAD GUHR

Dear Members and Friends of the Kansas Native Plant Society,
Due to major health and safety concerns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the KNPS Annual Wildflower Weekend (AWW) planning committee recommends, and the KNPS Board voted unanimously to postpone the September 25-27, 2020 Pittsburg AWW and concurrent board and membership meetings until September 2021 (specific dates to be determined). Here are the reasons for making this difficult and disappointing, but necessary decision.

- 1) Safety: the ages of many of our KNPS members puts them at high risk for COVID-19 infection if attending the 2020 AWW.
- 2) Difficulty in obtaining an appropriate meeting location and local restaurant dining availability for the AWW membership meeting and events.
- 3) Circumstances and conditions on site in Pittsburg do not enable us to practice safe social distancing at meetings and other AWW events.
- 4) Uncertainty persists concerning the spread of COVID-19 virus infection in Kansas this September.

The AWW planning committee is already working on developing a September 2021 AWW program schedule, and over the coming months they will be planning for an exciting AWW weekend. Watch the KNPS website and upcoming Newsletters for details.

PLEASE NOTE: The annual KNPS Photography Contest will still be held. Information about this photography contest may be found on the KNPS website and elsewhere in this issue. Get outside and keep taking those photos. Enter your best photos in this year’s annual KNPS Photography Contest! Winners will be announced on the KNPS website and in the October issue of the KNPS Newsletter.

Be safe and be well.
Sincerely,
Brad Guhr, KNPS President

KRISTA DAHLINGER

In February I was already working in my garden on nice days, picking up branches and sticks to add to the brush pile, raking leaves off of the grass to stockpile for mulch. A friend told me there was a virus going around that could be very serious if it reached Kansas. In late February as waves of cold temperature were still passing through, I was watching flower beds for signs of plants to emerge. I welcomed one more minute of daylight each day, and thought about timing for planting native seeds collected in 2019.

By mid March public schools were closed, toilet paper and cleaning supplies became scarce commodities, and people were supposed to stay home unless their work was essential. Hand washing became a regular activity and any cough or sneeze was suspect. Could it be the virus? Why did I just touch my face again? I gathered all of the flower pots I could find and bought more for starting seeds in a plant nursery corner of the yard. By April last year's Cup Plant and Joe Pye weed were putting on growth and so were Woolly Verbena and a few milkweeds. After every rain more plants emerged and the leaf stockpile was redistributed to make borders around flower beds. With two pecan trees in my yard, I welcomed entire weekends to spend outside removing volunteers. Poison ivy vines, cleavers, and hedge parsley were pulled and piled up, a few Dame's Rocket were left to bloom. Golden Alexanders plants were moved from many locations to a single area.

By May there had been a few Monarch butterfly sightings. First year milkweed seedlings emerged from many flower pots, as did Rattlesnake Master, False Indigo Bush, and Wingstem. I made a few forays out to rural areas and saw Inland Ceanothus in bloom, Compass plant, Rose Verbena. The pandemic has presented me with more time than ever to interact with the plant world. I am thankful that family and friends have remained healthy, and sad for the loss of life and economic devastation experienced by many.



Joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium altissimum*) emerging

KRISTA DAHLINGER

ANDREW MITCHELL

The COVID-19 virus: I had a hard time wrapping my brain around this one. This entire pandemic has seemed to me to be a hoax or a man-made condition driven by power and greed. However, I will leave out my political views as I write about my thoughts and nature for this article.

While the shutdowns and lockdowns themselves did nothing to affect my job as a landscaper, they did pose restrictions to areas where I would travel normally. Despite it all, I found that most of my wanderings have been unaffected, except those to locations in central and western Kansas. I was displeased to see the spring KNPS Board meeting in western Kansas cancelled, even though I knew I could not make it there anyway.

The biggest change for me was the cancelling of my planned hikes at Jackson Park in Atchison and Klinefelter Farm in Brown County. I had planned these hikes to coincide with the blooms of bloodroot (Atchison) and bulbous cress (Brown County). Instead, I eventually walked Jackson Park with my kids and Klinefelter Farm alone.

I have spent as much time as possible hiking my favorite prairie remnants in Atchison and Brown Counties which I would have done regardless. With the closure of many nature centers and trails, I had to limit my spring experiences to places that I am familiar with. Still, I was able to take a drive along Highway 7 in Doniphan County and discovered the rare grape honeysuckle (*Lonicera reticulata*) growing along the bluffs. I also saw many hundreds of plants of red columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) and hiked to the top of the bluff to see a marker between Kansas and Nebraska.

The more I thought about the pandemic, the more I realized it has done the worst to humanity: driving people to be afraid to live for fear of dying. We need to remember that life is short, and we need to spend as much time as possible outdoors in the glory of nature, richly spending this precious time with good friends and family.



TOP Bloodroot (*Sanguinea canadensis*) blooming at Jackson Park, Atchison County. ABOVE LEFT Hiking with my kids at Atchison County Lake. ABOVE RIGHT Showy Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) blooming at Klinefelter Farm.

Pandemics today, as in the past, will come and go, but our time on earth is limited. We must learn to be courageous and not to fear, and we should spend ample time doing what we love. I have not worried, but instead, have spent much time outdoors, encouraging my friends and family to do the same because, to me, nature has beneficial calming and healing effects on people.

So spend as much time doing what you love with those you love, and do not fear living. Enjoy walking in nature and let it heal you.

Happy trails!

JOAN MANOR

Finding a safe place to recreate during a pandemic is easy for a plant enthusiast. Step out into the wild and old plant friends are still there. My husband and I concentrated on short forays during our sheltered days with emphasis on the relationship man has to the prairie.

Most of the ranchers in our area of the northern Flint Hills do spring burning of their grasslands in preparation for grazing, a necessary process to control the growth of woody plants. The Flint Hills Smoke Management plan set aside other types of burning knowing 82,000 acres of burning grasslands would create an abundance of smoke. This was particularly important this year for persons concerned with breathing clean air and avoiding any contributing complications to COVID-19. Burning began early and extended into May, alternating across sections. We were fortunate to see a controlled burn, from the outside-in, of a very large area that had clean-burned edges on each side, created little smoke, and was well-managed. It just happened to be beautiful as well.

It is always good to check on the native plants emerging from any area, and Mt. Mitchell Heritage Prairie Park is a prairie remnant only three miles south of Wamego. This site is important historically as well as for the ecosystem, as slaves passed through the site as they fled to freedom. The farmhouse nearby was a known safe house. The site is dedicated to the Mitchell family and to the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony. The day of our visitation the grass had not been burned, therefore an abundance of native plant seeds and plant remains were available for winter identification which is always a challenge. A walking trail and good parking is available.

By the pandemic month of May we were beginning to see an abundance of native plants in the areas that had been burned. Now bright and verdant fields called for plant identification of the early spring risers. We explored the grasslands nearby and visited the Louis Vieux Family Cemetery and Homestead. Louis Vieux was a Pottawatomie Indian chief who lived at the Vermillion Creek Crossing just north of Wamego. The crossing was along the Oregon Trail and a necessary stop for travelers which made Louis a rich man. He operated a toll bridge but also had a blacksmith shop, a general store, and a stable. Louis, two wives, and seven children are buried in this historical cemetery near the remains of the homestead cellar. The site is clean and has a good path, but there is a very healthy poison ivy



(*Toxicodendron radicans*) wooded area nearby. Just a short distance from the cemetery is the Vermillion Elm Crossing Site and the Oregon Trail Cholera Cemetery. Here many unidentified travelers are buried who died from cholera, a grave consequence of traveling at that time when people did not boil the water or were unable to eat fresh food. The Cholera Cemetery is set in a woodland area and the native plants found are more typical of that environment. The woodland camping area would have been a welcome respite for Trail travelers.

The pandemic stay-at-home order is now lifted, but the day trips will continue at our house. We have enjoyed getting to know some of the areas nearby that tell the stories of the people and landscapes of Kansas and have found that the smaller sites can tell big stories. These important stories continue to remind us that man and native plants and grasses have been intertwined through time.



ABOVE, TOP TO BOTTOM Burning of prairie; Mt. Mitchell Heritage Prairie Park; Blue wild indigo (*Baptisia australis*); Louis Vieux homestead. LEFT Louis Vieux cemetery.

JOAN MANOR PHOTOS



FEATURED NATURAL AREA

Indian Rock Park, Salina

— ANDREW MITCHELL

It was early spring and I was beginning to freak out a bit as I realized that I had no new areas to write about for the Featured Natural Area article. But a three day trip to central Kansas changed that and now I have material for the rest of 2020. Let us begin with Indian Rock Park in Salina.

I remembered reading about the restoration projects at Indian Rock Park in the last newsletter, but it did not dawn on me that I was there until after I had actually been there. I was in Salina, eating my lunch at Lakewood Park and wondering the best way to get out of town. When I looked at the map I saw that Indian Rock Park was just south of where I was and it looked topographically interesting, so I drove down for a look.

What you may not have learned about Indian Rock Park in the last newsletter is that it is a great place to hike, discover native habitat, and has a unique history in the middle of a bustling cityscape. The park mound called Indian Rock was the 1857 last stand battle between incoming eastern tribes (Pottawatomie and Kaw) and the local Cheyenne. After an earlier skirmish, the Pottawatomie took shelter among the rocks of the mound. They eventually regrouped and bolstered by rifle fire from the Kaw and after the Cheyenne leader, Big Chief, was killed, won the battle forcing the Cheyenne to retreat. The founder of Salina, Colonel William Phillips, realized the friendliness of the eastern tribes and established the city of Salina where it stands today along the Smoky Hill River.

Indian Rock Park has trails that wind around and down the mound and into the newly landscaped and replanted trail system to the north and east of the mound. Parking is plentiful and a lodge on top of the mound is available with great views of Salina to the west and south.

I only hiked around the mound itself, as the day was hot and I needed to head back to Cloud County. But I was very surprised and happy to find my first blooming nipple cactus of the season. I also saw many other native plants, including grasses, yucca, Lewis flax, and scarlet gaura. While hiking a vertical drainage swale, an eastern racer snake slid by, and I saw several lizards slipping across my path. The flora and fauna are abundant.

To get to Indian Rock Park from the Flying J Travel Center, head south on Old Hwy 40/North Ohio Street 2.75 miles to Gypsum Avenue. Turn left (east) on Gypsum Avenue and go approximately 2200 feet to Glennifer Hill Drive and turn right (south). Glennifer Hill Drive goes up the mound and by the parking area on top. The park is open from dawn to dusk. Happy trails!

ABOVE, L TO R Lewis flax (*Linum lewisii*); Nipple cactus (*Escobaria missouriensis*); Scarlet gaura (*Oenothera suffrutescens*); Steep trail up the mound of Indian Rock.

TECH NOTES

— KRISTA DAHLINGER

KNPS maintains a photograph gallery on its website for member photographs of native plants from different regions in Kansas. Feel free to look through the gallery and submit your own well-focused and composed image. <https://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/gallery.php>

Plant A Prairie Seeks to Engage Youth

— PAUL SHOWALTER

Twenty-three applicants were selected by KNPS to receive Plant A Prairie garden kits this fall. Among the recipients are Kansas teachers at elementary, middle, and high schools, and include one cultural museum and one afterschool program, drawn from twelve counties. Participants will receive their garden kits in mid-September.

Plant A Prairie seeks to engage youth in the startup of 100 prairie gardens in five years. Eligible applicants are Kansas educators or leaders of youth organizations; all accepted projects have a clear educational purpose and include strong youth involvement. Based on descriptions of planned projects, Plant A Prairie will involve more than 4,000 young people this year alone.

The classroom garden kit includes thirty-two native potted plants hand selected at the nursery to match local growing conditions. The emphasis is on easy-to-grow perennials that support bees, butterflies, and birds, including milkweeds for Monarch butterflies. Completed gardens will fill an eight foot by twelve foot space. The kit includes a KNPS wildflower identification poster, a Plant A Prairie sign for the garden, links to teaching resources, along with planting and care instructions. In addition, a KNPS expert is available via email to answer gardening questions.

This year's participants cited a variety of interests and goals for their projects. Among them:

- Shanna Holmes, Dodge Literacy Magnet Elementary School in Wichita, will turn Plant A Prairie into an outdoor classroom for eighty second graders. "The project will provide a hands-on learning experience, planning and caring for the garden," she wrote.
- Denise Zeit, Ray Marsh Elementary School in Shawnee, teaches three classes of sixth grade science. She has a vacant garden plot ready to go. Writes Zeit: creating a prairie garden is a "great way to learn about the plants, as well as the responsibilities of planning together and taking care of the garden."
- Carol Fagan, first grade teacher at East Antioch Elementary School in Overland Park, will spruce up an existing butterfly garden. The class already raises Painted Ladies in the fall and Monarchs in the spring. With new plants from Plant A Prairie, the class will experience planting, mulching, weeding, and watering.

More than one applicant plans to use their Plant A Prairie project to expand an OWLS (Outdoor Wildlife Learning Site) habitat grant from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. For example, third grade students at Rawlins County USD 105, Rawlins, are responsible for cultivating plants for their local OWLS trail, says applicant Mica Johnson. Plant A Prairie will help students learn about plants and their environments, as well as

improve the trail for walkers and the animals that use it.

Another OWLS grantee, Troy Middle School will expand a pollinator habitat now under construction. This grant involved bee hives and creation of an insect hotel. Applicant Jennifer Whetstine wrote: "This will be a great addition to our OWLS! It will be wonderful to be able to add plants and watch our bees work."

Bobbi Murray of Wabaunsee Jr. High School, located in Paxico, is looking for ways to connect students with nature so they can

learn about prairie plants and ecosystems. In the process, his students will also have the opportunity to exercise civic leadership by also treating the garden as a landscape project to improve the school yard.

The Mid America All Indian Museum, Wichita, will add Plant A Prairie to its existing gardens that are featured in educational field trips and tours. Applicant Michelle Conine wrote that students from Wichita public schools will partner in the planting of the garden.

Plant A Prairie is funded by the Gary and June Kliesen Memorial Fund. Applications for next year will be posted on the KNPS website by April 1, 2021, for projects in September 2021.



2020 PLANT A PRAIRIE PROJECTS

School / Group	City	County
Baldwin City Elementary School	Baldwin City	Douglas
Dodge Literacy Magnet Elementary	Wichita	Sedgwick
East Antioch Elementary School	Overland Park	Johnson
Graber Elementary School	Hutchinson	Reno
Hocker Grove Middle School	Shawnee	Johnson
Lyons High School	Lyons	Rice
Marion Middle School	Marion	Marion
Mid America All Indian Museum	Wichita	Sedgwick
New York Elementary School	Lawrence	Douglas
Ogden Elementary School	Ogden	Riley
Prairie Center Elementary School	Olathe	Johnson
Rawlins Co. USD 105	Atwood	Rawlins
Ray Marsh Elementary School	Shawnee	Johnson
Salina Middle School	Salina	Saline
So. Hutchinson Elementary School	So. Hutchinson	Reno
The Independent School	Wichita	Sedgwick
Troy Middle School	Troy	Doniphan
Manhattan-Ogden USD 383	Manhattan	Riley
Wabaunsee Jr. High School	Paxico	Wabaunsee
Westmoreland Elementary School	Westmoreland	Pottawatomie
Westridge Middle School	Overland Park	Johnson
Wichita High School West	Wichita	Sedgwick
Wonder Workshop	Manhattan	Riley



LENORA LARSON PHOTOS

BRIAN L MARTIN PHOTOS

Other Milkweed Dinners

— LENORA LARSON

You have followed through on your pledge to help the monarchs and planted native milkweeds in your yard. You anxiously scan the leaves and stems, looking for monarch eggs and caterpillars. But what's this? Who is this critter munching on my milkweed? Will it hurt my monarchs? Should I kill it? NO! None of these strangers is a menace to monarchs and all are as charming. Just plant enough milkweed for everybody.

UNINVITED, BUT EXPECTED GUESTS

Remember, ninety percent of insects have a specific host plant, so just as “plant it and they will come” works for monarchs, it is also true for the few other insects that dine exclusively on milkweeds. Monarchs are the only butterfly in our area; related queens and soldiers are found in tropical areas. The accompanying photographs introduce you to the other diners in Kansas: two species of moth caterpillars, two species of milkweed bugs, the longhorn milkweed beetle and those pesky Oleander aphids. Like monarchs, these insects become unpalatable to avian and mammalian predators because they ingest the milkweed's cardiac glycosides.

BLACK AND ORANGE MEANS ‘YUK!’

All these milkweed gourmands wear black and orange during at least one stage of their life cycle to warn possible predators, “You’ll

be sorry if you eat me!” The similar coloration of these very different insects is another example of convergent evolution, i.e., different species independently evolved the same solution to a life problem. The classic example of convergent evolution: butterflies, birds, and bats separately evolved wings to fly.

LEAVE THOSE APHIDS ALONE!

It can be frustrating to see your milkweed plants covered with orange aphids, but anything you do to kill the aphids risks harming monarch eggs and young caterpillars as well as injuring the plant. Just be patient because many beneficial insects eat aphids and will quickly devour or parasitize the colony without damaging monarchs or the milkweed.

SUMMARY

You do not have to be a monarch to be worthy of life or human interest. While you wait for monarchs, observe and enjoy these additional diners on your milkweeds.

TOP ROW, L TO R Small milkweed bug; Large milkweed bug; Baby milkweed bugs. **MIDDLE ROW, L TO R** Longhorn milkweed beetle; Caterpillar & aphids; Aphids. **BOTTOM ROW, L TO R** An unexpected Cynia on (*Asclepias syriaca*); Tussock caterpillar; Tussock moth 1st instar.

2020 KNPS Photo Contest

— ANTHONY ZUKOFF

While our membership may not be able to gather and celebrate Kansas native plants at the AWW this year, **the annual photo contest will proceed as usual.** All entries can be submitted digitally via the KNPS Shutterfly website (<https://ksnativeplants.shutterfly.com>). In order to submit photos, you must be a current member and you must request the password to access the website by emailing Anthony Zukoff at azukoff@gmail.com. Once you have access to the Shutterfly website, you can view the detailed instructions on how to proceed with your submissions. You must have a Shutterfly account as well, which is free.

As in previous years there will be six categories to which photos can be submitted (Scenery, People, Gardens, Flora, Fauna, and Wildflower of the Year) with a maximum of two photos per category allowed. Entries will be accepted between August 3 and September 7. Winners in each category will be selected following the deadline and showcased in the Fall 2020 Newsletter and on the KNPS website. Keep in mind that the 2020 Wildflower of the Year is Blue Wild Indigo (*Baptisia australis*). As many of us have had extra time this spring and summer to get outside and enjoy the wild areas of Kansas, I expect there will be stiff competition!

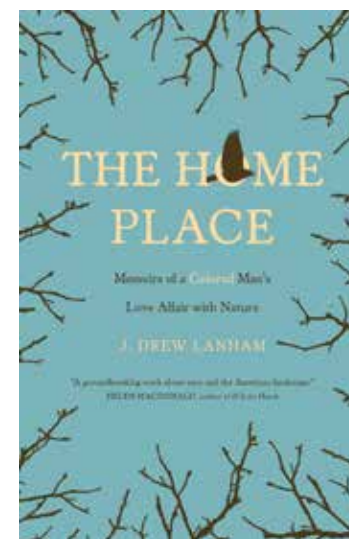
TOP Prairie blanket flower (*Gaillardia aestivalis*)
RIGHT Common spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*)



A Very Apropos Webinar from Dr. J. Drew Lanham

— SHIRLEY BRAUNLICH

The ever provocative professor, poet, and birder J. Drew Lanham presented a webinar in May sponsored by the North American Association for Environmental Educators (NAAEE). J. Drew Lanham, author of the book *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature*, is a charismatic speaker whose name you may recognize from his 2018 presentation in Lawrence. He continues to share his passion for environmental justice along with the frustration of being the uncommon African American ornithologist in a predominantly white field. The heartfelt and inspiring webinar titled “How Do We Find Good in the Bad Times? Nurturing Nature in the Time of COVID!” is available to watch; access the recording at <https://youtu.be/owYwIn2idCo>.



Information provided by Kansas Native Plant Society, see more events on our website: www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org
Please share this information and contact us about additional events to note. Thank you! email@KSNPS.org
Sturdy shoes, long pants, a hat, insect repellent, sunscreen, and water are recommended for outdoor events.
Mark your calendar now and plan to attend some fabulous happenings!

Before you travel, use the contact information to confirm an event is still happening and not cancelled or rescheduled.

SEPTEMBER | 11-13
FLORAKANSAS: GREAT PLAINS PLANT BAZAAR at Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston. This plant sale features hard-to-find native perennials plus classes and tours. Ask about member's only sale dates; 10% members discount on all days. Admission charge is by donation. **For information contact:** arboretum@Hesston.edu, 620-327-8127

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MISSOURI PRAIRIE FOUNDATION PLANT SALE, 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center, 4750 Troost Ave., Kansas City, MO. **Website:** <http://www.moprairie.org>, **For information contact:** info@moprairie.org, 888-843-6739

SEPTEMBER | 16
NATURE BOOK CLUB hosted by Lawrence Public Library in Lawrence. Join us to talk about fiction and nonfiction literature connected to the natural world. New book recommendations from co-leaders Jake Vail and Shirley Braunlich and other book club members. Meet 6:30-8 pm at Lawrence Public Library or via Zoom. **Contact Shirley to RSVP:** sbraunlich@lplks.org, 785-843-3833

DECEMBER | 16
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SEPTEMBER | 2021
DATE TO BE DETERMINED: KANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY'S 42ND ANNUAL WILDFLOWER WEEKEND (AWW) IS IN PITTSBURG. Enjoy a full weekend of outings, board meeting, membership meeting, programs, silent auction, photo contest, lunch, and socializing—join us! Watch for updates soon!

Join the KNPS email list to receive the latest event announcements: www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/email_list.php

NEW MEMBERS FROM 3/25/20 TO 6/07/20

Joseph Blackwood – Overland Park
Kitten Boggs – Kansas City
Jessica Bryan – Leawood
Trevor Burrows – Baxter Springs
Janet Busenitz – Burns
Patricia Carpenter – Wichita
Sam Carr – Maple Hill
Heather Chamberlain – Clearwater
Briannah Church – Newton
Taryn Davis – Wichita
Kathy Ethridge – Wichita
Kayla Garza – Lawrence
George Githechi – Wichita

Jerry Honas – Wichita
John Jamison – Goddard
Pam Jeannin – Leavenworth
Felice Keeton – Riverton
Kevin LeBeau – Gardner
Allyson Mandeville – Towanda
Al Mettenburg – Princeton
Mid-America All-Indian Museum – Wichita
Jonni Millington – Topeka
Vi Nguyen – Wichita
Natalie Oduor – Wichita
Cindy Owens – Paola
Karen Ponce – Wichita

Jordynne Pouliot – Andover
Makayla Prichard – Wichita
Ashlynn Reida – Benton
Teresa Rogge – Kingfisher, OK
Tyson Russell – Lawrence
Evie Saenz – Wichita
Julie Schwarting – Lawrence
Ashley Stewart – Derby
Kay Sullivan – Rossville
Ann Sundeen – Mission Hills
Katrina Thirakul – Wichita
Catherine Thorpe – Wichita
Sid Vetter – Russell

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Want to know the status of your KNPS membership? Check the mailing label on the back of each issue for your membership expiration date.

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A Postcard from the West

ANTHONY ZUKOFF

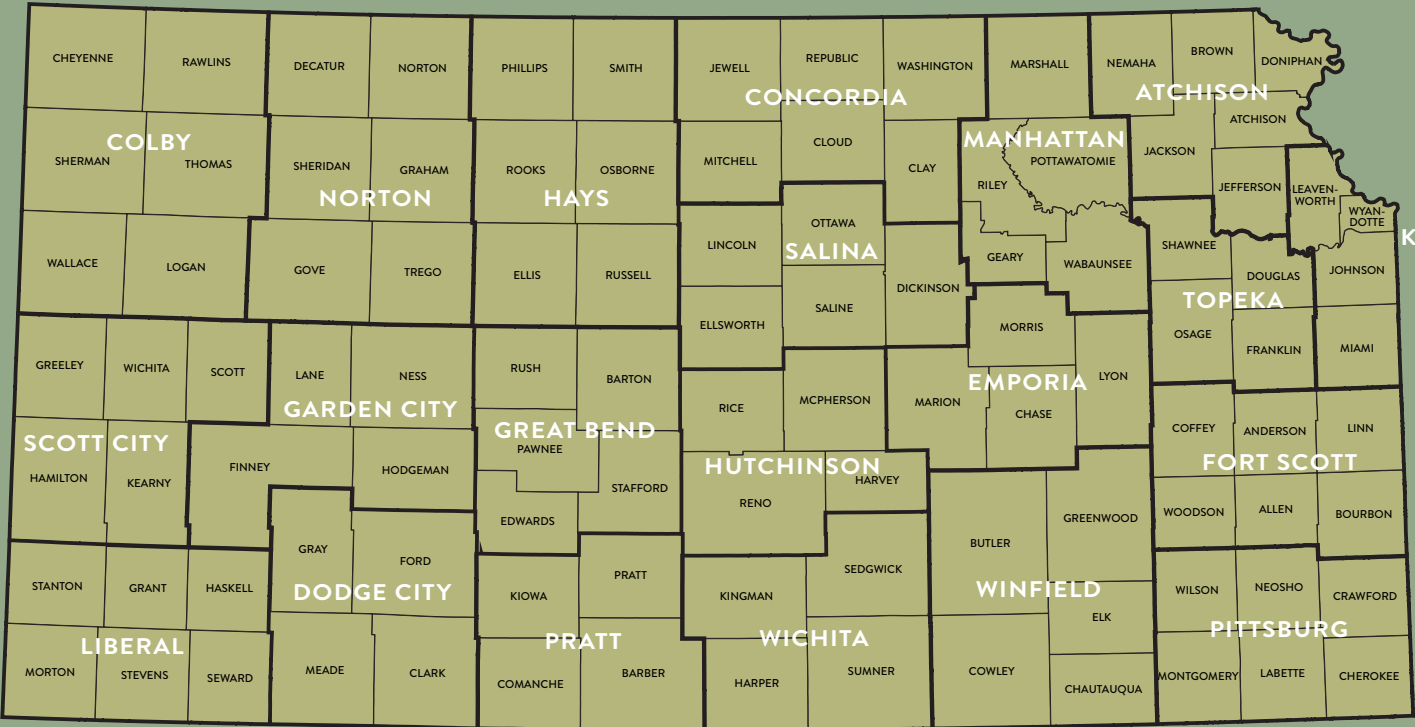


Prince's plume (*Stanleya pinnata*) blooming in the chalk badlands.

As I sit down to write this, the temperature outside is nearing 100 degrees and the winds are gusting to fifty miles per hour. Since I arrived in western Kansas seven years ago, every season has been different, and 2020 is no exception on many fronts. I have learned that the patterns of winter moisture can make or break the springtime show here. For the last couple of years spring has been very colorful, in fact I think May and June of 2019 was the first “super bloom” I had seen here. A visitor could have spent a week exploring the flowers of the chalk badlands all the way south to the Cimarron Grasslands. Towards the end of July in 2019, the show had come to an end as did any meaningful amount of rain. Through most of the west, winter was very dry. While not barren, the spring blooms this year were relatively sparse and the rain has been as well. Currently, the western region finds itself in a moderate to extreme drought status. June tends to be the wettest time of year here, but the forecast for the month does not look promising.

This is a good reminder that western Kansas is, in fact, a semi-arid region. Precipitation generally falls between thirteen and twenty-two inches per year, a dramatic difference from the thirty to fifty inches possible in the eastern portion of the state. While harsh, this lack of rain and recurring droughts are what have shaped the region and made its flora so unique. In less than a three-hour drive one can visit towering chalk pyramids, expanses of sandsage prairie, and picturesque, Permian-age red bluffs along the Cimarron River, all of which host uniquely different floral communities. First time visitors to the region often remark that it feels like a completely different state and wonder why they had not visited sooner. This year may not be the showiest one, but I know the next super bloom will be worth the wait.

MEMBERSHIP REGIONS





The Hawthorn Tree in Kansas

— KEN O'DELL

The common name Hawthorn came from areas of England and Scotland and referred to people living at or near hedges made of these thorny trees. With over two hundred species world-wide there is a Hawthorn to please everyone. The revised and expanded edition of *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines in Kansas* by Michael John Haddock and Craig C. Freeman shows great photos and gives information about some species of this flowering tree which is a member of the rose (*Rosaceae*) family.

In October of 2018, Iralea Barnard sent forty hawthorn fruits to me. The fruit was from Waxy-fruited Hawthorn (*Crataegus pruinosa*), which is a species I was not familiar with. This tree is rare. I am retired and have space so I planted them in my greenhouse. I divided the seed into four groups, freezing some, planting one group immediately, planted one group five months later; if you get the idea I did not know what I was doing you are on the right track. I had never grown Hawthorn before. No germination from the two groups I did not freeze. Germination and growth from the two groups I froze and then planted the seed.

Mature Waxy-fruited Hawthorn trees grow to fifteen feet as a bushy, shrubby tree. They do best in full sun and prefer well drained, but good soil. We all know what good soil is. This Hawthorn has white flowers one inch across with five petals and pinkish colored anthers. The fruit is one-half inch wide with five seeds inside, and is sweet and edible. This Hawthorn is native in a few Kansas counties and in some of eastern U. S. and Canada. The trees will bear some fruit in as few as six years.

The ecological value of Hawthorns to wildlife is high. Plant a tree. Hug a tree. Give away a tree. I have some extra Waxy-fruited Hawthorn trees now growing in pots; I will continue to grow them this summer and will gladly share some of the trees with you this October. I plant small two to three foot trees in the ground on our farm in October each year and keep them watered well during the winter and the first summer and my success is very good. I have a few extra Waxy-fruited Hawthorn trees that I will give away and ship to you in Kansas only at no cost this October. (I do not sell plants.) Send an email to me at ken@springvalleynursery.com and I will save what I have for you. **There is one tree per person, please.**

LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM Waxy-fruited Hawthorn leaf; Waxy-fruited Hawthorn fruit in October; Waxy-fruited Hawthorn seed with toothpick for scale.

FEATURED PLANT

Blue Wild Indigo | *BAPTISIA AUSTRALIS*

— JIM MASON

Blue Wild Indigo (*Baptisia australis*) is one of the characteristic plants of the tallgrass prairie. Its large, sky-blue flowers appear in late spring to early summer and are unmistakable. Of the three different *Baptisia* species in Kansas, *australis* blooms second, preceded by the pale yellow flowers of *B. bracteata* and followed by the white flowers of *B. alba*. All three species are found from the eastern Great Plains to the Atlantic Coast and adjacent provinces of Canada. There are fourteen other species in the genus and all are North American.

Wild Indigos are pollinated by bumblebees. They are legumes with the characteristic pea-blossom form to their large flowers, which make good landing pads for the bumblebees. Each successive species is taller than the one before it, so as to be noticeable by their pollinators as the surrounding vegetation grows higher. *Bracteata* is low and sprawling, *australis* gets knee high and *alba* can be up to your waist since it may need to overtop burgeoning stands of Indian Grass and Big Bluestem.

Wild Indigos are host plant for the Wild Indigo Duskywing butterfly (*Erynnis baptisiae*). Their caterpillars are pale green with smooth skin and knobby brown heads. Another caterpillar that may show up is the Genista broom moth (*Uresiphita reversalis*), which can be a problem. They can defoliate the plant if enough eggs are laid and predators do not limit them. They are yellow with long hairs. Don some gloves and start smooshing them if they show up on the plants in your garden!

Wild Indigos produce a spike of large seed pods that turn hard and black upon maturity (that color led to their common name). They make an interesting addition to a dried flower arrangement and an amusing rattle toy for children. The wind may break them off late in the season and blow them across the landscape, offering the hard, glossy seeds with a chance to be scattered to new sites. If you want to grow some, the seeds germinate well after six to twelve weeks cold stratification and then being lightly scarified with sandpaper.



— LORNA HABEGGER HARDER ILLUSTRATION

Union Cemetery Tree Tour

— KEN O'DELL

On June 14, Jim Earnest gave three tree tours in Union Cemetery, one of the oldest cemeteries in the Kansas City area. Crowds were limited to twenty for each tour. The largest hackberry tree (*Celtis occidentalis*) that I have ever seen is in this cemetery. It is sixteen feet in circumference, ninety-five feet tall with an eighty foot spread. The cemetery is 180 years old being formed in 1857. The location of this big hackberry tree growing on the edge of a high dry place tells me it likely was growing there before the cemetery started. From my estimates, it is perhaps 200 to 225 years old. It seems to be in great shape and is worth the trip to view if you have an interest in big Kansas trees. Jim Earnest frequently gives tree tours in the Kansas City region and contributes his great knowledge of trees to us in the KNPS Newsletter.



Union Cemetery Hackberry tree

PAM EARNEST



KEN O'DELL PHOTOS

The Best Way and Time to Hug a Tree

— KEN O'DELL

When we hug a tree the best feeling is when we feel the tree hugging back. When the wind is blowing or gusting to ten to twenty-five miles per hour, I love to wrap my arms around a twenty-five-plus year old tree with a trunk diameter of twelve to twenty-four inches and hold my body close to the tree and squeeze. If the tree is free standing and the breeze or gusty wind pulls, twists and turns the top of the tree, you can feel the enormous force of the tree. Hold that wonderful hug for three or four minutes and talk to the tree while the tree is holding you with the tremendous force caused by Mother Nature. You are feeling that one great tree with its roots deeply entrenched in planet earth just as a tree on that same day is entrenched in Sweden, being hugged by some good looking Swedes and another tree entrenched in the great Amur River valley of Asia being hugged by their indigenous peoples.

Every tree wants to be hugged; every person truly wants to hug a tree. When President Harry S. Truman retired and moved back to Independence, Missouri, during his daily walks, he frequently stopped at a big ginkgo tree near the sidewalk. He would put his hands on the tree and tell it everything was going to be okay. Reportedly, he did that for years; the big ginkgo is still there. (I would think a good man like Harry Truman put his arms around that tree more than once and talked to it). When you talk to a tree, tell it you know what it goes through. I tell it how important it is to all of our lives. While you are holding that great hug on the tree for three or four minutes, you can say a lot and think a lot. Then go hug more trees, and see how many you can hug in just a couple of hours.

ABOVE, L TO R Shirley Braunlich, mulberry; Fred Kautt, sycamore.

Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month

— SHIRLEY BRAUNLICH

The month of June had a good long stint as Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month: from 2006 to 2019! Now in 2020 we are looking at September; read on to learn more.

Back in 2006 I had an idea to further public appreciation for the diversity, value, and beauty of Kansas native plants and their habitats. I received supportive feedback from fellow KNPS Board Members—most notably Craig Freeman, Brad Guhr, and Jeff Hansen. They provided much of the eloquent prose which we have submitted each year to the Kansas Governor for approval in our annual proclamation request.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor will not be issuing any proclamations in June this year. Thus, I will resubmit our proclamation request to ask that September be named Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month. Here's hoping everyone is safely appreciating diverse wild plants and habitats near and far throughout the year!

Wild Parsley Cooking Adventure

— TERRY OLSON

My interest in cooking with native plants stems from my mother feeding us fresh watercress and lamb's quarters as kids and my recent exploration of forbs on Konza as part of docent training. Despite a lifetime of horticultural experience by virtue of growing up at the family business, Kaw Valley Greenhouses, and operating Eastside and Westside Markets for 43 years, I have much to learn about the plants that occur naturally around us!

One of the first signs of color on Konza Prairie this spring was the cheery yellow umbels of wild parsley (*Lomatium foeniculaceum*). You will often see it growing close to the ground right on the trail with fern-like foliage looking similar to yarrow. I harvested some (at our family farm in Northern Riley County) and took it home to experiment with in the kitchen. The flavor is somewhere between celery and parsley with a texture of parsley. As it happened, I was out of salad dressing one night and COVID was a good excuse NOT to run to the store to get some. So I looked around in the fridge to see what I had on hand that I could improvise with and found the wild parsley. The taste suggested that a Greek salad dressing like the kind I LOVE on gyros was in order. So I found some Greek yogurt, mayonnaise, and other stockpiled essentials to create this lovely creamy salad dressing!

Wild Parsley Salad Dressing:

- 1 c. yogurt
- 1 c. mayonnaise
- 2 T. Fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 c. packed wild parsley leaves
- 1 clove fresh garlic
- 1 t. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 t. salt
- Add 2 T. olive oil if you like it a bit thinner.



Pulse on high in blender until it looks creamy. Serve!

(Note: The dressing is shown on the salad accompanied by Kansas beef and homegrown asparagus.)

A week later, I was making supper and realized I didn't have any greens to make a salad. What I DID have was a huge bag of carrots. Carrots and peas complement each other nicely, so with that in mind, I decided to experiment with the wild parsley once again.

Carrot Pea Salad with Wild Parsley Dressing:

- 4 c. shredded or julienned fresh carrots
- 2 c. fresh or frozen peas (thawed)

Dressing:

- 3/4 c. Miracle Whip
- 1 T. vinegar
- 1/2 t. salt
- 2 t. sugar
- 1/4 c. milk
- 3 T. finely chopped wild parsley
- Black pepper to taste

Whisk dressing ingredients together and pour over carrots and peas. Serve.



TERRY OLSON PHOTOS



I see on my latest hikes that the wild parsley now has some beautiful seed heads resembling the kind that dill plants get. Stay tuned for my next native edible adventure!

KANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Please complete this form or a photocopy.
Send the completed form and a check payable
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R. L. McGregor Herbarium
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A membership to the Kansas Native Plant Society makes a great gift for friends and family members. Recipients of gift memberships will receive notification of your gift membership within two weeks of receipt of your check. The Kansas Native Plant Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Gifts to KNPS are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Kansas Native Plant Society welcomes everyone to join our membership. Read our full Statement of Diversity, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination Policy on the website, ksnps.org.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

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