



KANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER OF THE KANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2022

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AWW OUTING REPORT

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

— LORNA HARDER

Sunday morning . . . the last of the 2022 AWW's outings at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve . . . Much needed rain had arrived the previous night, and now, sunshine, a dome of bright blue sky, and a gentle breeze – setting the stage for a lovely morning walk. As an introduction, Phyllis and Dee Scherich, who lived on and managed the Merrill Ranch in Comanche County, offered interesting historical context as they described the cattle operations that occurred between the Merrill Ranch and the Davis Z-Bar Ranch (now the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve) over many decades of the 20th century.

Then we were off with Craig Freeman in the lead, following the gravel and buffalograss trail from the Ranch House to the Lower Fox Creek School. The trail snakes through a shady cedar grove, prairie uplands, creek bottom, and the sunny slopes between, giving a host of opportunities to observe the variety of plants uniquely adapted to each of these habitats.

Just a sampling . . . notable early on, the bright lavender flowers of dotted blazing star (*Liatris punctata*) just beginning to bloom. Uplands also yielded hairy grama (*Bouteloua hirsuta*) and the delicate white inflorescences of flowering spurge (*Euphorbia corollata*). The flowering stems of Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), and goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.) covered the hillsides. Scattered in the grasses, remnants of summer wildflowers: the coiled brown pods of Illinois bundleflower (*Desmanthus illinoensis*), the flattened pods of Illinois tickclover (*Desmodium illinoense*), the ripening pod clusters of round-head bush clover (*Lespedeza capitata*), elongate prickly pods of

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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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New KNPS Board Member

— PAMELA PAULSEN

First, I would like to say I am honored and excited to serve on the KNPS Board and am looking forward to working with everyone. A little bit about me, I grew up in Manhattan, Kansas where both of my parents worked for Kansas State University as plant people: my dad as an Agronomist and my mom as a Plant Pathologist. So it was inevitable that I become a plant person as well.

I graduated from K-State with a degree in Horticulture and then spent four months as a student intern at the National Tropical Botanical Garden in Kauai, Hawaii. It was there that I first started working with native, rare and endangered plants and their conservation. I ended up stretching out my four months and stayed in Hawaii for seven years. Along the way, I received my Master’s Degree in Horticulture from the University of Hawaii.



While in Hawaii, I also worked in the nursery and landscape industry. At the time, the use of native plants in the landscape was just starting to gain interest. I was lucky to work for people that saw the importance of conserving native plants and incorporating them into the landscape.

In 1999, I applied for and was hired as the Horticulture Agent for K-State Research and Extension in Reno County and have been here ever since. As an extension agent, my job is different every day. I very much enjoy providing educational opportunities for our community members and helping them solve their gardening problems. I work with many parts of our industry as well, from landscapers and garden centers to farmers’ market

producers. We also have a great group of volunteer educators that we train through both our Extension Master Gardener and Extension Master Naturalist programs.

Over the last twenty-three years in my job, I have seen an increasing interest in using native plants, whether that be for their toughness in our climate, their ability to attract pollinators and other beneficial insects, their traditional uses, or a number of other reasons. Because of this, we have incorporated native plant education into our volunteer training classes. I have also taught classes on landscaping with native plants and gardening with beneficial insects using native plants. I have served as an instructor with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Becoming an Outdoors Woman program where I have taught classes on native plants and native plant uses as well as wilderness survival. I am also a volunteer at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge and help with their tours highlighting the bison as well as their wildflowers.

In my free time, I enjoy gardening, photography, mushroom hunting and growing, and wandering the backroads of our beautiful state with my two goofy basset hounds, Kaina and Huli.

STATEMENT OF EDITORIAL POLICY

The Kansas Native Plant Society (KNPS) Newsletter is published quarterly each year. It features writings, photography, and illustrations to fulfill the Society’s mission: to encourage the awareness and appreciation of the native plants of Kansas in their habitats and in our landscapes by promoting education, stewardship, and scientific knowledge. Newsletter content embraces the activities of the Society and includes articles relating to current conservation and ecological developments. The Newsletter accepts manuscripts, photographs, and illustrations for publication that relate to the Kansas Native Plant Society’s mission and activities. To assure journalistic independence and integrity, KNPS Newsletter editors exercise sole editorial control over submissions; editors retain the right to make changes and consult with the author(s) as needed. KNPS reserves the right to reject a submission even after it is accepted if it becomes apparent that there is inaccuracy in its scientific content, or KNPS publishing policies are violated.

President’s Message

— KRISTA DAHLINGER & ANTHONY ZUKOFF

KRISTA DAHLINGER (OUT-GOING PRESIDENT)

My two year stint as KNPS President concluded at the closing of the 2022 Annual Wildflower Weekend, and what a fast two years it has been! I am grateful to the KNPS board members for persisting with committee tasks and projects from home, while we attended our business meetings by Zoom with microphones muted. I was delighted to see that KNPS members and guests were interested in attending the “outdoor only” parts of spring and fall events in the very different habitats and terrains near Garden City, Pittsburg, and Paola.

As I move into the Past-President’s position, I will leave with these two remarks. I will continue to encourage everyone to get out to their closest state park, fishing lake, wildlife refuge, natural area, and/or private property to observe and identify their plant communities in all seasons. And I know KNPS will be in very good hands with Anthony Zukoff as incoming President. With gratitude, it is time to look westward.

ANTHONY ZUKOFF (IN-COMING PRESIDENT)

My journey with the Kansas Native Plant Society began in May of 2014 with an enthusiastic group of people exploring the rocky shortgrass prairie landscape of western Kansas at the Smoky Valley Ranch in Logan County. We would finish the weekend with a trip to Scott Lake State Park, one of the most unique, and seemingly out of place, landscapes of western Kansas.

At the time, I had only lived in Kansas for just over a year. My love of plants and native habitats began in southeast Georgia and

followed a slow march west through Missouri into Kansas. The semi-arid wild spaces I found myself exploring were still very alien and, at first glance, so barren! It only took one season though to realize that there was an amazing diversity of flora to discover in my newly found home of western Kansas. I greatly enjoyed sharing with the group that weekend what I had learned about the flora of the region, and I learned a lot more about Kansas from the welcoming people who joined the outings.

One thing that really stuck out to me was the fact that even some of the long time Kansas native plant enthusiasts found western Kansas to be a whole new world. Drive four hours west of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, one of the showcase locations for our most recent Annual Wildflower Weekend, and you will indeed find yourself in a whole new world. It is a world of short grass, tough weather, and even tougher plants. The amazing “super blooms” of the shortgrass prairie may be infrequent, but they are a bucket list item if you are a fan of Kansas native plants.

I have enjoyed serving on the board since that first gathering in 2014, and I am honored to continue my journey with the society as president. In addition to furthering our mission to make the appreciation of Kansas native plants and wild spaces available to all Kansans, I would also like to increase the awareness of the Kansas Native Plant Society in western Kansas communities while simultaneously increasing the awareness of western Kansas’ unique habitats within the society’s membership. I look forward to seeing you all out on the prairie. Wagons west!

KNPS Silent Auction

— KRISTA DAHLINGER

The 2022 Silent Auction Fundraiser, held in conjunction with the indoor membership meeting at the Community Center in Allen, contained many interesting items, plus books and more books. Several lovely, original landscape paintings were donated. Edible items included wildcrafted grape and elderberry jellies and chocolate cupcakes. Live plants available to bid on were the KNPS 2022 Wildflower of the Year — *Liatris punctata*, plus mountain mint and butterfly milkweed. There was a bouquet of live prairie flowers and several beautiful arrangements of pressed flowers in picture frames. One-of-a-kind items included a hand lens, a complete camera outfit, and an antique metal wagon wheel. The book selection held new and old plant identification guides for mushrooms, grasses, forbs, and trees; garden and tree planting guides; bird and geology guides; and journals — enough to stock a naturalist’s library.

A big “Thank You” goes out to everyone who donated to the Silent Auction and made the browsing so interesting. Another “Thank You” goes to the bidders who purchased nearly \$800 in items to take home. There were some great bargains to be had.



BRIAN L. MARTIN

The KNPS Plant A Prairie program had a display of a typical garden kit that showed plants approved for the program and delivered to schools in the fall, and a map that showed the location of all of the Plant A Prairie gardens already delivered across Kansas over the past three years. The winning bid on the Plant A Prairie garden was \$55 and included thirty-six live native plants.



ABOVE Wild licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*) pods
LEFT Plant ID along the trail
BELOW Maximilian sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliani*) along the trail

catclaw sensitive briar (*Mimosa quadrivalvis*), and the sable brown seed heads of prairie coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*). Racemes filled with the tiny pods of prairie clovers (*Dalea* sp.) and pods of milkweed (*Asclepias* sp.) just beginning to release seed, were also observed.

In the Fox Creek bottomlands were understory thickets of elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) with bright purple berries, and rough leaf dogwood (*Cornus drummondii*), from which came the late summer song of Bell's vireos. Curly cup gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosa*) and annual broomweed (*Gutierrezia dracunculoides*) grew on the dry, exposed gravelly uplands near the school.

Our group split up as we returned to the Visitor Center, some completing the loop trail through prairie, and others opting to return via the roadside. As a member of the latter group, we noted just opening flowers of rigid goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*), the bright purple flowering clusters of prairie ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*), pollinator-attracting lavender-pink inflorescences of tall thistle (*Cirsium altissimum*), and several thick stands of tall dropseed (*Sporobolus compositus*). Back at the Ranch House in the welcoming shade of an oak tree, trailside conversations continued.

This summer morning's prairie walk gently reminded all of the value of KNPS prairie outings that offer wonderful opportunities to spend time in the prairie outdoors with favorite people and plants — getting reacquainted with old friends, learning to know new.

Finally, gratitude is expressed to Craig Freeman for sharing, with patience, energy and enthusiasm, a vast and brilliant store of botanical knowledge. You continue to inspire in all of us a desire to better know and care for our prairie plant community.



Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge

— KRISTA DAHLINGER

The 2022 AWW included a visit to the Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge located twenty miles southeast of Emporia, where local headquarters for the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) refuge office and visitor center are located in the town of Hartford. Nova Clarke, with the FWS, reached out to KNPS and offered space for our board meeting at the headquarters. The visitor center was an unexpected gem, full of information that conveys what happens at a “refuge.” A large wall map shows the seasonally open and closed areas that are maintained for the benefit of migrating waterfowl. There are preserved specimens of pelican, eagle, many ducks, and other wildlife that live at or pass through the refuge. Three trails are open seasonally for hiking, botanizing, and birdwatching.

Beginning in the 1950's, the Neosho River was dammed to retain or release water flow, and the John Redmond Reservoir was created. In 1966, the Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge was created by the Fish and Wildlife Service to enhance and enlarge areas of wetland and marsh habitat available in spring and fall for migrating waterfowl. Farmland in the flood plain was purchased over time and added to the refuge complex that now covers 18,500 acres.

The Refuge is managed primarily for the benefit of migrating

birds, with fishing and recreation use being secondary. Vegetation is chosen and planted that will provide seeds as a food source for waterfowl just in time for spring and fall migrations. Plant community restoration and habitat enhancing activities are ongoing on former farmed lands. In 2022, there were 325 acres of trees planted on river bottom land, and prairie plants above the flood plain have been restored where needed.

The Dove Roost Trail located on the north side of the Refuge is open all year. Native and restored prairie lands, woodlands, wetlands, and marsh provide a terrific diversity of plants, birds, and other fauna that can be experienced each season. Hunting is allowed, so timing of visits should be coordinated in advance. Visit the website to check refuge public access dates and water level conditions on the trails — www.fws.gov/refuge/flinthills.

There are three other National Wildlife Refuges in Kansas: Quivira — Central; Marais des Cygnes — East; Kirwin — North Central. Trails, Nature Centers, and amenities that suit daytime excursions are available at these locations (seasonally) to encourage people to visit and explore nature across Kansas. Visit www.fws.gov/refuge for maps and additional information for each refuge.

Walk with the Flint Hills NWR Naturalist

— PHYLLIS SCHERICH

The first 2022 AWW tour commenced after Friday afternoon's board meeting and began with a gathering at the Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge Visitor's Center southeast of Emporia. Ranger Nova Clarke introduced us to the area, and informed the thirty-five or so attendees that the Refuge was established in 1966 as an “overlay project” on an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flood control reservoir. It occupies an area of 18,463 acres which are still owned by the Corps of Engineers, while the land and waters within the boundary are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Most of the water for the Refuge comes from the Cottonwood and Neosho Rivers which flow through the broad Neosho River Valley upstream of John Redmond Reservoir. The wetlands that dominate the Refuge are prime resting areas for migratory waterfowl and a paradise for waterfowl observation and hunting.

A twenty-year restoration project using an intensive wetland technique termed moist soil management mimics the natural processes of rising and falling water levels. This restoration includes burning, disking, and flooding. Resulting Refuge habitats include grasslands, agricultural lands, bottomland hardwood forests,

riparian areas, and wetlands.

On the Refuge prairie, botanizers found many grasses including switchgrass, big bluestem, foxtail, and barnyard (*Echinochloa muricata*). We also observed eastern toothed spurge, ground cherry, Maximilian sunflowers, Baldwin's ironweed, plains coreopsis, mare's tail, Carolina horse nettle, smartweed, sumpweed, marsh marigold, velvetleaf, and other plants we might expect to see in this environment. My personal favorite was a lone scarlet rose-mallow (*Hibiscus laevis*).

The group visited two areas at the Refuge: the restoration project just north of the visitor's center and a wetland area on Road 110. Ranger Nova also recommended the Townsite Trail and the Dove Roost Trail for further exploration and botanizing for those interested at a later time.



Scarlet rose-mallow (*Hibiscus laevis*)



Ranger Nova Clarke informs KNPS members about the Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge and its amenities.



Awards and Scholarships

— CRAIG C. FREEMAN

Three awards were presented at the 2022 AWW in Allen, Kansas, and two scholarships, awarded earlier in the year, were announced.

Chad Phillips of Soldier was the recipient of the Rachel Snyder Memorial Landscape Award. The Memorial Landscape Award honors Kansas Wildflower Society charter member, past KNPS President, and author Rachel Snyder. It is given to an individual or organization for a project promoting the use of native plants in landscapes. Chad was recognized for his inspiring use of native plants in the gardens on the grounds of the Jackson County Courthouse in Holton. Chad Phillips is a life member of KNPS and a former member of the Board of Directors.

Earl Allen of Manhattan was the recipient of the Stephen L. Timme Excellence in Botany Award. The Excellence in Botany Award, which honors Stephen L. Timme, late professor of botany at Pittsburg State University, and former KNPS Board member and President, is given to an individual who has made an important contribution to botany in the state of Kansas in the form of research or education. Earl was recognized for two decades of service as a

docent at Konza Prairie Biological Station and for his participation in countless Konza- and KNPS-sponsored field trips, where he has contributed to the botanical literacy, conservation ethic, and prairie appreciation of thousands of children and adults. Earl is a life member of KNPS, has served on the Board since 2006, and has been the Treasurer since 2018.

Mike Haddock of Manhattan was the recipient of the Sheldon and Virginia Cohen Memorial Award for Service to KNPS. The Award for Service to KNPS honors the memory of the late Sheldon and Virginia Cohen, charter members of the Kansas Wildflower Society and tireless supporters of KNPS. The award recognizes an individual who has made exemplary contributions to KNPS through their service. Mike was recognized for his distinguished record, helping govern and guide the organization through his service on the Board, as a past President Elect and President, and on at least seven committees during the past fifteen years.

The Mary A. Bancroft Memorial Scholarship Award is a cash award up to \$1000 that supports graduate student research that enhances our understanding of native plant species or their ecosystems and conservation. Established in 1998, the award honors the late Mary A. Bancroft of Ottawa, long-time member and supporter of the Kansas Wildflower Society. In April, KNPS awarded two scholarships, each for \$1000, to Sarah Herzog and Emily Wedel, both PhD candidates at Kansas State University for their respective proposals, “Examining how rarity impacts grassland species’ ability to shift ranges in response to climate change” and “The effects of patch-burn grazing on fire intensity and woody cover in tallgrass prairie.”

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT Chad Phillips of Soldier, recipient of the Rachel Snyder Memorial Landscape Award. Earl Allen of Manhattan, recipient of the Stephen L. Timme Excellence in Botany Award. Michael Haddock of Manhattan, recipient of the Sheldon and Virginia Cohen Memorial Award for Service to KNPS.

Did You Know?

— MICHAEL HEFFRON

Western yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) was used by various Native American tribes as a remedy for earaches, toothaches, respiratory disorders such as coughs, colds, and throat irritations, and to treat wounds and stop bleeding. Also, western yarrow was so widely used to treat wounds during the American Civil War that it became known as the “soldier’s wound-wort.” Now is the time to start learning about the medicinal and nutritional uses for your local Kansas “wildflowers and weeds.”

KNPS Annual Membership Meeting

— PHYLLIS SCHERICH

The KNPS annual membership meeting was held in the afternoon at the North Lyon County Community Center in Allen on Saturday, August 27 in conjunction with the AWW with about fifty-five members and guests present. Special recognition was given to Dr. Tom Eddy (who was in attendance) for his many years of teaching in the Science Department at Emporia State University.

Mike Haddock announced the departure of two board members, Michael Kaye and Matthew Richter, and thanked them for their years of service. New officers of KNPS for a one-year term are: Anthony Zukoff, President, and Krista Dahlinger, Secretary. (Following the meeting, the board re-elected Earl Allen for one year as Treasurer with a unanimous online vote.)

KNPS Awards were presented by Craig Freeman as determined by the Awards Committee to the following: Chad Phillips of Soldier received the Rachel Snyder Memorial Landscape Award; Earl Allen of Manhattan was awarded the Stephen L. Timme Excellence in Botany Award; and Michael John Haddock of Manhattan was presented with the Sheldon and Virginia Cohen Memorial Award for Service to KNPS. The Mary A. Bancroft Memorial Scholarship Award of \$1,000.000 each was awarded to two students since it was not awarded in 2021 due to the Covid pandemic. Students who received these scholarships are: Sarah Herzog and Emily Wedel, both PhD candidates at Kansas State University, for their respective proposals, “Examining how rarity impacts grassland species’ ability to shift ranges in response to climate change” and “The

effects of patch-burn grazing on fire intensity and woody cover in tallgrass prairie.”

Jerry Jost, Executive Director of the Kansas Land Trust, presented the keynote speech titled “Conservation Easements in the Kansas Flint Hills and Beyond.” Jerry invited an audience member to help him illustrate through a mock interview how he would visit with someone who was considering establishing a conservation easement on a piece of property. He had a bundle of sticks with various owners’ rights written on them. He proceeded to ask the owner if she wanted to “hold” each “right” or give it to the Kansas Land Trust; there were several “rights” that the Kansas Land Trust would not take from the land owner. At the conclusion of his presentation, Jerry answered questions from interested audience members. (The Evans Prairie that was visited in the morning prior to the afternoon’s AWW meeting is a part of the Kansas Land Trust, which currently consists of seventy-nine properties, six of which have public access.)

Following the keynote and questions, Anthony Zukoff then revealed the winners of the KNPS photo contest with a colorful slide presentation which was enjoyed by all. At the conclusion of the day’s program, Krista gave final announcements and dismissed the members to place final bids on their silent auction items. Upon the conclusion of the silent auction, members quickly claimed their successful auction items and proceeded on to the Emporia State University Ross Natural History Reservation west of Americus.

Lyon State Fishing Lake AWW Tour

— CYNTHIA RHODES

The first tour on Saturday took place in the morning at the Lyon State Fishing Lake and Wildlife Area. This beautiful, 135-acre lake is surrounded by 442 acres of state-owned public wildlife lands; its drainage basin is comprised of fourteen hundred acres of native tallgrass prairie which contributes greatly to the lake’s crystal- clear water.

The group of thirty-seven people met on the south side of the lake at the stone picnic pavilion, and after a short introduction to the area’s native flora led by Craig Freeman and Tom Eddy, the group commenced to move into the low-rolling native prairie hills.

Among the delightful finds of this tour stop included: Missouri evening primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*), rough agalinis (*Agalinis aspera*), whole leaf rosinweed (*Silphium integrifolium*), stiff sunflower (*Helianthus pauciflorus*), flowering spurge (*Euphorbia corollata*), and button gayfeather (*Liatris aspera*). The prairie blossom colors seemed to be mostly yellows, dotted here and there with purples and whites.

After an hour and a half of botanizing at this location, the group was called back to their autos to proceed on to the next tour stop of the morning. Several were scheming that this was truly a quiet and delightful area complete with picnic tables and camping spots for future botanizing trips.

RIGHT Earl Allen and others botanize at Lyon State Fishing Lake.



FEATURED NATIVE PLANT

Aromatic Aster | (Symphotrichium oblongifolium)

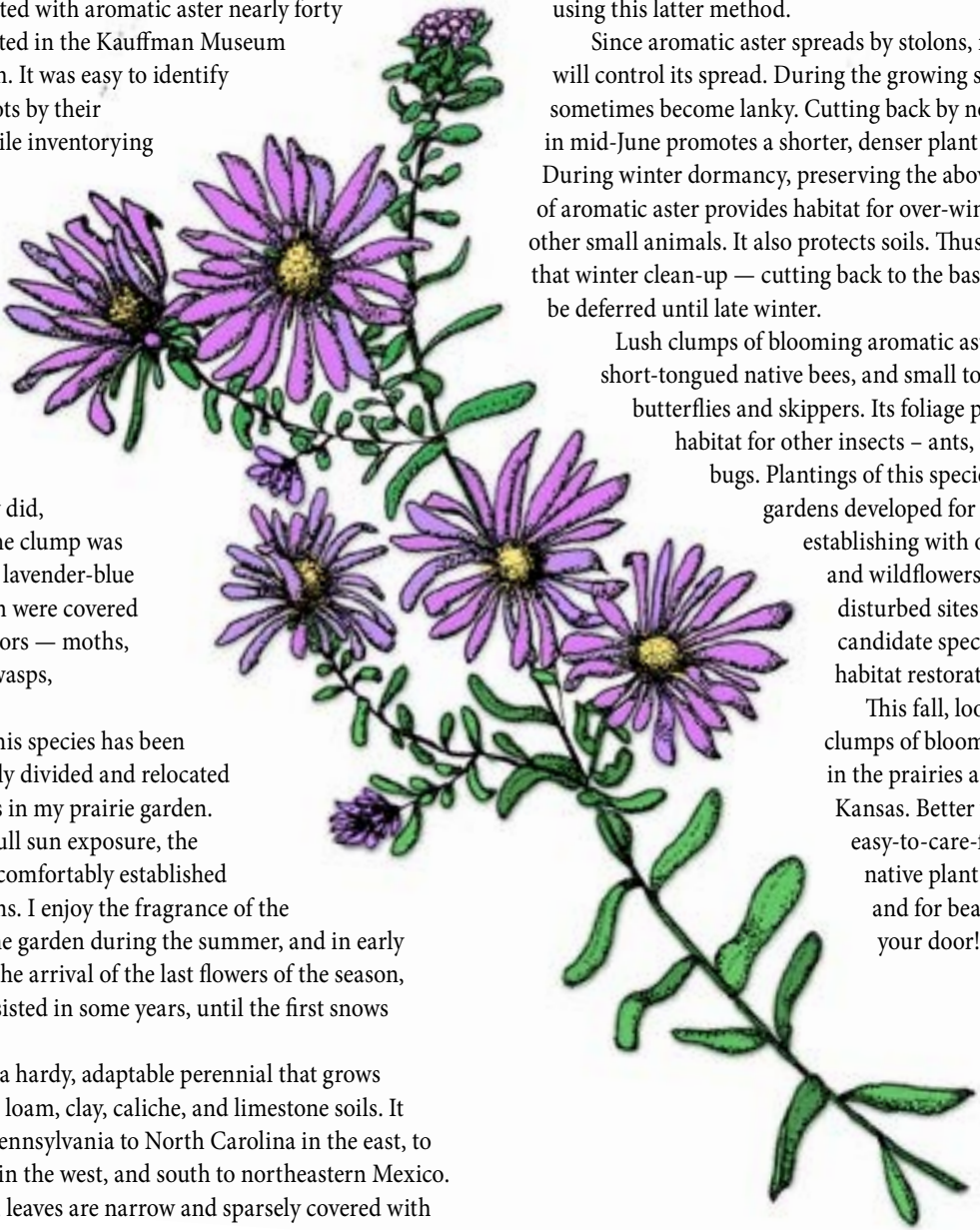
— LORNA HARDER

These days, the ripening seeds of grasses and wildflowers fill the grasslands, signaling the coming end of the prairie growing season. However, there remains one last wildflower hurrah – what former Dyck Arboretum Director, Julie Torseth, termed “the chrysanthemums of the prairie” — the asters! Preeminent among them is aromatic aster (*Symphotrichium oblongifolium*) with its fragrant foliage and exquisite lavender-blue flowers.

I became acquainted with aromatic aster nearly forty years ago. It was planted in the Kauffman Museum prairie reconstruction. It was easy to identify emerging spring shoots by their distinctive aroma while inventorying that first planting with Dwight Platt. I continued to observe the aromatic aster during the growing season, watching and waiting for the flowers to appear. In early October they did, and in abundance. The clump was covered with delicate lavender-blue flowers, which in turn were covered with hosts of pollinators — moths, skippers, bees, flies, wasps, and butterflies!

Needless to say, this species has been planted and repeatedly divided and relocated into a number of sites in my prairie garden. From light shade to full sun exposure, the aromatic asters have comfortably established in all of these locations. I enjoy the fragrance of the foliage as I work in the garden during the summer, and in early October I anticipate the arrival of the last flowers of the season, flowers that have persisted in some years, until the first snows in December!

Aromatic aster is a hardy, adaptable perennial that grows in well-drained sand, loam, clay, caliche, and limestone soils. It ranges widely from Pennsylvania to North Carolina in the east, to Wyoming and Texas in the west, and south to northeastern Mexico. Borne on rigid stems, leaves are narrow and sparsely covered with short hairs. When crushed, the stems and leaves emit a balsam-like scent. Flowers are composites, with on average thirty blue-lavender ray florets surrounding golden yellow disk flowers. Flowers give way to flat, hairy achenes. Flowers appear from late September to November. Clumps of aromatic aster spread by stolons, thin underground stems that produce new plant buds.



Seed can be collected in late fall when it separates from the disk. After drying for a week or two, it can be sown directly into the prepared seed bed in late fall or winter; or seed can be cold stratified in vermiculite or a sand/soil mix for thirty to forty days before sowing into a prepared seed bed or pots for later transplanting. Sow thickly. Plants can also be divided in fall or spring and relocated to new sites. In my experience, aromatic aster has established easily using this latter method.

Since aromatic aster spreads by stolons, regular thinning will control its spread. During the growing season, stems sometimes become lanky. Cutting back by no more than one-half in mid-June promotes a shorter, denser plant for flowering in fall. During winter dormancy, preserving the above-ground growth of aromatic aster provides habitat for over-wintering insects and other small animals. It also protects soils. Thus, it is recommended that winter clean-up — cutting back to the basal rosette — be deferred until late winter.

Lush clumps of blooming aromatic aster attract long- and short-tongued native bees, and small to medium-sized butterflies and skippers. Its foliage provides food and habitat for other insects – ants, flies beetles, and bugs. Plantings of this species function well in gardens developed for wildlife, readily establishing with other native grasses and wildflowers. It also grows on disturbed sites and is an excellent candidate species for wildlife habitat restoration.

This fall, look for lavender clumps of blooming aromatic aster in the prairies and roadsides of Kansas. Better yet, introduce this easy-to-care-for species into your native plant garden for function and for beauty right outside your door!

References:
Illinois Wildflowers: http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/aromatic_asterx.htm
Kansas Wildflowers: https://www.kswildflower.org/flower_details.php?flowerID=66
Pollinator Partnership: <https://www.xerces.org/pollinator-conservation>
USDA: https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/factsheet/pdf/fs_syob.pdf
Wildflower Center: https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=syob

— LORNA HARDER ILLUSTRATION

Ross Natural History Reservation

— CYNTHIA RHODES

After spending several hours inside enjoying the cooler air of the North Lyon County Community Center gathering room for a delicious lunch and the annual KNPS business meeting, thirty-two members and friends gathered at the Emporia State University (ESU) Ross Natural History Reservation for the concluding tour of the day. This private property consists of 200-acres of native and restored tallgrass prairie, shrublands, and woodlands, including a stream with a spring and a pond, and other habitats. Scientists and students connected with ESU conduct biological and ecological research on this reservation which is private property and remains relatively undisturbed.

The group gathered at the reserve headquarters and was met by Dr. Bill Jensen, professor of Biological Sciences at ESU. Dr. Jensen gave the group, gathered around the campfire site located just in front of the reservation headquarters, a brief history of the site which included how the grounds have been managed since its beginning in 1958. He invited the group inside the headquarters building to use the site map hanging on the main classroom wall to further describe the historical significance of the site’s terrain.

FEATURED NATURAL AREA

Sand Dunes in Kansas!

— CYNTHIA RHODES & BRIAN L. MARTIN

Did you know that Kansas has a state park with beautiful sand dunes? The Sand Hills State Park is a 1,123-acre natural area with sand dunes, grasslands, wetlands, and woodlands. In ancient times for thousands of years, the Arkansas River carried sediment from the Rocky Mountains into this area. Prevailing southwesterly winds blew the fine sand out of the river valley, forming a narrow band of unstable sand dunes. The sands shifted and changed shape until vegetation established a foothold and stabilized the dunes creating the diversity of unique and sandy habitats that are found in this park today.

We decided to explore these dunes on a cool (72 degrees) and overcast summer day. The park is located north of Hutchinson on Old Hwy K-61 and either East 56th Street or East 69th Street; there are signs at both corners for directions. State park vehicle permits are required for entrance or use. Camping is available with a modern restroom and shower house. The trails have four areas with vault toilets. Popular activities at the park are hiking and horseback riding; other activities include archery deer and upland game hunting, bird-watching, wildflower walks, and jogging. Erected on the Pond Trail during the summer of 2000 are two wildlife observation blinds which allow visitors a close-up peek at nature in action.

We decided to explore and botanize along the Dune Trail and climbed the Dune Trail Overlook for a comprehensive view of the landscape below. We hiked almost two-thirds of the way north through the park and turned to catch the Prairie Trail on the way back. There is another dune overlook at this point that can be scaled yielding an overview of the middle of the park. The landscape was dotted with low, bushy shrubs (sumacs, elderberry, and sand plums) and overhead truly majestic old cottonwoods swayed and rustled

After answering several questions, Dr. Jensen led the group outside to tour first the restored prairie site which is a former agricultural field area now returning to tallgrass prairie. Many members continued on into the native prairie and woodlands areas as they continued their botanizing activities. Due to recovering from a previous injury, Dr. Jensen, who was on crutches, did not proceed much farther. Several tour members, tired from the day’s busy activities, returned to the headquarters building with Dr. Jensen. Members who continued to botanize found the following notable plants: Sullivant’s milkweed (*Asclepias sullivantii*), whorled milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*), and hoary tick-clover (*Desmodium canescens*).

By the six o’clock hour, the remaining tour group botanizers called it a day and returned to Emporia to various eating establishments of choice. Several decided to gather together in a group to talk about the day and to compare notes about the various botanical finds of the flint hills region. All were looking forward to Sunday’s final tour at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve.

gently in the cool breezes. A numerous diversity of prairie grasses and sedges thickly carpeted the sandy ground and trails.

Some spectacular and exciting botanizing finds for the morning’s hike were: butterfly milkweed (vibrant yellows), American germander, serrate-leaf evening primrose, goat’s rue, and American persimmon. The top find of the day was the silky prairie clover patch located in a meadow by the Dune Trail Overlook.

We had so much fun climbing the dunes and hiking the trails that we were able to identify over fifty different plants. We decided to return on another cool day to explore the north side of the park, and we want to hike the Pond Trail for the observation tower wildlife-viewing experience. The park is open year round, and to maintain this habitat, controlled burns are necessary and occur in March and April. Signs will be posted if a controlled burn is to occur. For a different gem of a natural area, set your sights on the Sand Hills State Park and climb a Kansas sand dune. This is an experience you will not forget!



TOP View from atop a high sand dune
ABOVE Silky prairie clover (*Dalea villosa*) at the base of a sand dune.

BRIAN L. MARTIN PHOTOS



Fall Garden Clean Up

— LENORA LARSON

People are increasingly adding native plants to their ornamental gardens and may wonder about their care, especially fall clean-up. A traditional list of fall chores includes removing all plant debris and raking/blowing the fallen leaves. However, the new horticultural strategy for both native and ornamental plants recommends leaving all debris in place. Your ornamental garden consists of diverse communities of animals, microbes, and annual and perennial plants. They form an interactive ecosystem that is damaged or destroyed if you “clean” your garden in fall. The new horticulture also recommends disturbing the soil as little as possible. That means no tilling and no digging leaves or other organic material into the soil. This new strategy is proclaimed through the battle cry: LEAVE THE LEAVES!

Your Plants’ Opinion

I am guided by Mother Nature when making horticultural decisions. When does Mother Nature mulch? In the fall. Plants evolved to expect a warm blanket of leaves and other debris in the fall. If you leave dead stalks they will catch the falling leaves and create a protective cover that prevents the freeze/thaw cycle that can damage roots and even heave the plants from the ground. During winter much of the dead plant material will decay into mulch, saving time and effort next spring. And wildlife, especially birds, will appreciate the stems and seed heads that provide shelter and food. The new horticulture also avoids synthetic fertilizers. Mother Nature does not drag bags of fertilizer to her prairies and woodlots. No fertilizers are needed as the fungi and microbes “eat” the plant debris and then symbiotically supply needed minerals to the plants, which echo the slogan, LEAVE THE LEAVES.

Do Pollinators Agree?

Where do your garden’s insects spend the winter? While a few like the Monarch fly south, most spend the winter hunkered down in your yard. Specifically, 70 percent of our native bees hibernate as pupae in underground burrows. The remaining 30 percent hibernate in

standing hollow stalks. Syrphid fly and many species of beetle pupae overwinter just under the soil surface, protected by leaf litter. Most species of butterflies spend their winter in their chrysalids disguised as dead leaves and twigs. For instance, the convivial Hackberry and Tawny Emperor caterpillars build group sleeping bags from dead leaves, which then fall to the ground. Great Spangled Fritillary caterpillars spend the winter hiding among fallen leaves near violets, their host plant. Many moths overwinter as cocoons hidden among the fallen leaves. If you clean up your yard, you will literally murder many of your pollinators. The exception? Non-native honeybees that overwinter in hives.

While they are not significant pollinators, we grieve that fireflies are rapidly disappearing world-wide despite having few predators. The larvae of many species live in leaf litter for two years and are therefore destroyed when leaves are removed to the bare ground in any season. Fireflies have become symbols of the campaign by scientists and gardeners to LEAVE THE LEAVES.

Summary

Some fall clean-up is necessary to control pests or prevent smothering of perennial plants. And some “leaving” is necessary to protect plants and beneficial insects. Definitely remove and burn all diseased plants and any identifiable pests like bagworms (a species of moth!). In March, I hand-break my ornamental grasses and stalks into mulch that is left in their beds. Year-round, I keep the edges of my beds pristine, so any leaves or plants that flop onto a path are gathered up and tossed into the nearest flower bed to be composted in place. You may ask, “When should I clean up my garden?” My answer? “NEVER! My garden is NOT “dirty”! Slight tidying when perennials and self-seeding annuals emerge or when I am planting is all that is necessary, and the resulting debris is added to the spring mulch rather than being removed. No matter the season, environmentalists and enlightened gardeners agree, LEAVE THE LEAVES.



ABOVE The Luna Moth’s leaf-wrapped cocoon (top) spends the winter in the leaves beneath its host plants: Walnut, Hickory and Sweet Gum Trees. If you rake or mow the leaves under these trees, you will likely kill the moth and never see the magnificent adult in spring.

OPPOSITE One of my gardens in February with all mulch and plant debris left in place. In March, I hand-break the grasses and stalks into 3-inch lengths and lay them down as mulch in their bed.

How do you know what is best for your yard? It depends. Best practice maintains a part of your yard as “wild”, undisturbed throughout the year. As we’ve discussed, LEAVE THE LEAVES is the recommended strategy for an ornamental garden. However, the rest of your yard is typically divided into distinct areas that may require different fall tactics.

The Vegetable Garden

A vegetable garden is an artificial array of mostly annual, monoculture plantings that attract multitudes of specific pests. For instance, tomato plant debris harbors species-specific fungus and bacterial spores. Asparagus Beetles overwinter in dead asparagus stalks. Cabbage worms overwinter as chrysalids attached to remnants of cabbage or broccoli stems. Squash Bugs and Armyworms/Cutworms hibernate just under the soil surface preferably under the protection of mulch. And have you ever pulled back your mulch in spring and seen a city of rodent tunnels? YIKES! You don’t want these enemies to survive the winter. Consequently, vegetable gardeners should thoroughly clean up their gardens in the fall. Healthy weed-free plant debris and mulch should go to the compost pile. Then a thick layer of compost or leaf mulch--not hay or straw, can be applied to the “clean” soil surface as a regenerative start for the next spring.

The Lawn

Excessive build-up of dead tree leaves on your lawn will kill the grass, so a fall clean-up may be necessary. The clean-up tactics depend on the volume of leaves, determined by the numbers and species of trees. Experts currently recommend mowing the leaves as they fall onto the lawn, leaving the fine leaf particles that slip between the grass blades to form mulch. The benefits include providing nutrients, conserving water and suppressing weeds. However, if you have a lawn shaded by many large-leaved trees, it may be difficult to keep up since piled leaves will begin to harm your grass if not removed within three days. Wet piles should be removed immediately. And even if you do keep up, the volume of mulched leaves may overwhelm and suffocate the grass. If you have a plentitude of leaves, mow and collect them in your mower’s bag, or mow them into piles for easy gathering to use as the best possible mulch for your ornamental or vegetable garden.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

NEW MEMBERS FROM 6/13/22 TO 9/17/22

Helen Alexander – Lawrence
Karen L. Anderson – Wichita
Cheryl Bolton – Kansas City, MO
Alice Cherry – Lawrence
Joe Gannon – Lake Villa, IL
Debbie Gillen – Olathe

Shirley Jo Hett – Marion
Kristin Hoffman – Wichita
Marilyn Jones – Peabody
Shannon Kingsley – Salina
Richard Manning – Wichita
Melody Miller – Basehor

Pamela Paulsen – Hutchinson
Ann Reddy – Augusta
Kate Sheppard – Wichita
Betty Thompson – Derby
Cynthia L. Vadakin – Wichita
Jenna Zimmerman – Preston

MEMBER RETURNING AFTER A HIATUS

Kathy Jenkinson – Leon

Jamie Parrott – Belle Plaine

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.

OCTOBER | 29

PRAIRIE PARK PRAIRIE RESTORATION WORKDAY, 2811 Kensington Rd, Lawrence, 1 to 4 PM. Join Grassland Heritage Foundation and Native Lands LLC in partnership with Lawrence Parks and Rec this fall at Prairie Park for opportunities to learn about native prairie landscaping and invasive removal. Come prepared for working outdoors. **RSVP required. For more information and to RSVP:** grasslandheritage.org/prairiepark

NOVEMBER | 2

WILDLIFE DAMAGE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE LAWN AND GARDEN, K-State Garden Hour, On-line, Noon to 1:00 PM CST. Dr. Drew Ricketts, Extension Wildlife Management Specialist, shares practical tips to prevent and control common wildlife damage issues. 45-minute presentation, 10-15 minutes for questions and answers. **To register:** hnr.k-state.edu . **For more info:** 785-532-6170

NOVEMBER | 4-6

KANSAS & MISSOURI ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS CONFERENCE, HEALTH FOR ALL: CONNECTING HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION. Location: The Kauffman Foundation Conference Center 4801 Rockhill Rd. Kansas City, MO. The Resilient Activist will present a 2-hour workshop: Four Steps to a Resilient Life. Optional field trips on Nov. 6, too! meeo.org/professional-development/annual-conference info@kacee.org, 785-532-3322

NOVEMBER | 5

FRIENDS OF THE KAW FALL WORKDAY, Kaw River State Park in Topeka, 10 AM to 1 PM. Join Friends of the Kaw, Native Lands LLC, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, the City of Topeka Utilities Dept., and Shawnee County Research and

Extension to learn, experience the park, and help restore the native habitat. Bring work gloves, a trowel or shovel, and water to drink. **RSVP at Kansasriver.org. Email questions to Kim Bellemere, Friends of the Kaw Program Manager, at kim.bellemere@kansasriver.org, 785-312-7200**

NOVEMBER | 17

BEES WITH GORDON FIEDLER, SMOKY HILLS AUDUBON, Kansas Wesleyan University, 100 E. Claflin Ave., Peters Science Hall, Room 225, Salina, 7:30 to 9:00 PM. Learn about beekeeping, the benefits of honey to humans and bees to the environment, and the equipment needed. Bring your questions, Gordon has all the answers! **Contact: Cheryl Higgins at dcjmhiggins@hotmail.com**

NOVEMBER | 29

ARTFUL GARDENS: FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, Powell Gardens, 1609 NW US Highway 50, Kingsville, MO, 3:00 to 6:00 PM. Art lovers of all sorts are invited to attend this final installment of a new seasonal series. Docent Donna Houtteman will help learners of all levels explore the connections between art and the natural world. This art-focused evening includes a 90-minute presentation showcasing artists that use light and seasonal themes for their inspiration and works of art. Individual tickets are \$50 (10% less for members). **For more info, contact: 816-697-2600 or frontdesk@powellgardens.org**

DECEMBER | 7

ACCESSIBLE GARDENING FOR ALL, K-State Garden Hour, On-line, Noon to 1:00 PM CST. Calla Edwards, Butler County Horticulture Extension Agent, will provide tips, tricks, and ways to make the gardening experience adaptable for anyone. 45-minute presentation, 10-15 minutes for questions and answers. **To register:** hnr.k-state.edu . **For more info:** 785-532-6170

DECEMBER | 10&17

OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS ON THE PRAIRIE, Maxwell Wildlife Refuge, 2565 Pueblo Rd, Canton, 10:00 to 11:00 AM. Board a tram (covered with windows for warmth) for a 45 minute ride through Maxwell's bison and elk herds. Upon return to the visitor center, enjoy Christmas cookies, hot cocoa, cider, and coffee while warming up around a prairie Christmas tree and listening to seasonal stories. **Reservations are a must. Adults: \$15.00, children age 4-11 \$7.50. To reserve, call 620-654-7230, email Maxwellwildliferefuge@gmail.com**

DECEMBER | 13

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

JANUARY | 14

KNPS WINTER BOARD MEETING, Dyck Arboretum, Hesston. Weather alternate date is January 21. **For more information, contact Brad Guhr brad.guhr@hesston.edu, 620-327-8127**

FEBRUARY | 24

WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL, Liberty Hall, 644 Massachusetts St., Lawrence, doors open 6:00 PM, show starts 7:00 PM. Tickets to benefit Friends of the KAW and the Kansas Riverkeeper Program. **Info: kansasriver.org, 785-312-7200, info@kansasriver.org**

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



WILDFLOWER OF THE YEAR
1ST: LIATRIS PUNCTATA – PHYLLIS SCHERICH
2ND: GAYFEATHER BLOOMS UNDER A STORMY SKY – JACOB PENNER
3RD: LIATRIS AT REST – TERRY OLSEN



PEOPLE
1ST: KELLY KINDSCHER LEADING A WALK AT AKIN PRAIRIE – CYNTHIA PEDERSON
2ND: FALL DOCENT TRAINING AT KONZA PRAIRIE – TERRY OLSEN
3RD: KRISTA'S HANDS – CYNTHIA PEDERSON



2022 KNPS PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

FAUNA

- 1ST: BUMBLEBEE ON ECHINACEA
– SAMUEL STEPP
2ND: TIGER SWALLOWTAIL ON JOE PYE WEED
– CHERYL BURKHEAD
3RD: SWALLOWTAIL ON IRONWEED
– TERRY OLSEN



GARDEN

- 1ST: CEDARS RETIREMENT GARDEN: MONARCH
WAYSTATION, MCPHERSON
– PHYLLIS SCHERICH
2ND: UNIV. OF KANSAS MEDICAL CENTER
POLLINATOR GARDEN – SAMUEL STEPP
3RD: PRAIRIE PARK NATURE CENTER
–SAMUEL STEPP

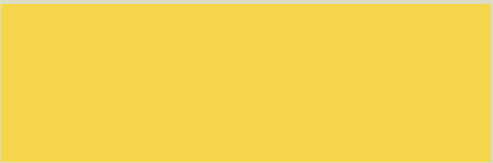
SCENERY

- 1ST: A PALETTE OF PRAIRIE GREENS FRAMES CLARK SFL
– SAMUEL STEPP
2ND: A ROCKY SLOPE LEADS DOWN INTO A LUSH FLINT HILLS
VALLEY – JACOB PENNER
3RD: BAKER WETLANDS – SAMUEL STEPP



FLORA

- 1ST: RAYS OF SUNSHINE ON THE WESTERN
PLAINS: PRINCE'S PLUME AT THE
LITTLE PYRAMIDS IN LOGAN COUNTY
– KELLI EGBERT
2ND: "HIDDEN JEWELS", SHOWY ORCHID IN
WYANDOTTE COUNTY – KELLI EGBERT
3RD: HAIRY GRAMA GRASS UNDER A
KANOPOLIS SUNSET – JACOB PENNER



KANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL GUIDELINES

Annual dues are for a 12-month period from January 1 through December 31. Dues paid after December 1 are applied to the next year. Note to new members: the first year of annual membership is effective from the date of joining through December 31 of the following year. See upper right of mailing label for expiration date.

Please complete this form or a photocopy.
Send the completed form and a check payable
to the Kansas Native Plant Society:

Kansas Native Plant Society
R. L. McGregor Herbarium
University of Kansas
2045 Constant Ave.
Lawrence, KS 66047-3729

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

Member Information

Name _____
Address _____
City/State _____
Zipcode _____
Phone _____
Email _____
County (if KS) _____

Membership Category

☐ Student \$15.00
☐ Individual \$20.00
☐ Family \$30.00
☐ Organization \$35.00
☐ Contributing \$100.00
☐ Lifetime \$500.00

Additional Donation: Legacy Fund \$ _____ Scholarship Fund \$ _____ General Fund \$ _____