



Kansas Native Plant Society

Winter Newsletter



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KNPS Membership Regions Continue to Evolve and Grow by Jeff Hansen and Nancy Goulden

Background of Formation of KNPS Membership Regions

Most KNPS members originally get involved in the society because they have a passion for native plants. But people who go on a KNPS outing, engage in a restoration project, or spend the Annual Wildflower Weekend with other plant enthusiasts discover that there is another powerful draw—the kindred spirits they meet at KNPS events. Unfortunately, the time with other KNPS members is almost always too short; the time between events too long; and the distance to other parts of the state too far. There are these wonderful people you would just love to get to know better, but the logistics get in the way.

Over a year ago, a potential solution to address the disadvantages of having widespread membership was initiated—the formation of Membership Regions. The state was divided into membership regions of four to six counties; each was named after the largest city in the area. Leaders were either recruited or volunteered to contact KNPS members in the region and arrange for some kind of gathering. Some of the alternatives regional leaders chose for the initial meetings were: planning meetings, speeches by experts on plant-related topics, and native plant hikes. At this point, we are pleased to report there are now leaders for the majority of the regions; many regions have had at least one event; and several have carried out successful multiple activities.



KNPS Membership Region Map

What Do Membership Regions Do?

The main goals for each region are to develop local events, recruit local members, and create a local community of members. Additional benefits that come from being able to have more frequent KNPS events in your own neighborhood are educational opportunities.

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Have you renewed your membership in KNPS?
Check the first line in your address for your membership expiration date. If the date is past, your membership has expired. To continue receiving the newsletter, please renew now.

The Kansas Native Plant Society Newsletter is printed four times a year: Winter (January), Spring (April), Summer (July), Fall (October). Readers tell us how much they enjoy the newsletter in color and in the paper format. Contributions help us continue to produce a publication of this length in this form. You may send your gift to KNPS at Kansas Native Plant Society, R.L. McGregor Herbarium, 2045 Constant Avenue, Lawrence, KS 66047-3729.



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.



President's Message

by Mickey Delfelter

Like many of you, my Kansas roots run deep, and for as long as I can remember, I have been interested in my family history. My earliest Kansas ancestors arrived in Atchison in 1855, six years before statehood.

The landscape into which these families arrived looked different than it does today. As we all know, a vast prairie stretched from Canada to Mexico and from the Rocky Mountains eastward toward the Mississippi River. Thick groves of timber could be found along the waterways and in a few savannas that dotted the landscape.

At that time, the prairies, woodlands and waterways were unspoiled. There was no *Sericea lespedeza*, no purple loosestrife, no zebra mussel, no salt-cedar, no bush honeysuckle, nor any of the other invasive species that we fight today. An estimated 50 million bison freely roamed the western plains, and the streams and rivers ran clear and unimpeded.

I have often wondered— what did our ancestors think as they cut down the large trees along the rivers and plowed up the prairies? Did it occur to them that they were harming an ecosystem that had been evolving for thousands of years? Did they appreciate the spring ephemerals

or the dotted gayfeather or the golden grasses on the ridge throughout the winter?

I like to think that my ancestors appreciated and admired their surroundings when they first arrived in eastern Kansas, but the truth is they probably did not. To them, Kansas was a wild, untamed and dangerous place that needed civilizing. The woodlands were a source of lumber to build a house or keep them warm through the winter. The prairie was, at best, a ready source of food through hunting and, at worst, to be upended and replaced with crops and managed livestock.

But, honestly, I do not begrudge my ancestors their actions. Nor do I look down on them for plowing up the prairie, although I wish they had left a bit more of it. They did what their parents had done: worked hard— very hard— and did everything that they could to feed their family and survive.

We can't reverse the actions of our ancestors, but hopefully we have learned some important lessons since they arrived here 150 years ago. We can educate ourselves about native species, be good stewards of the land and help preserve the areas of native prairies and woodlands that remain. And, perhaps most importantly, we can share our knowledge with those around us so future generations can experience the native species that their ancestors saw centuries before.



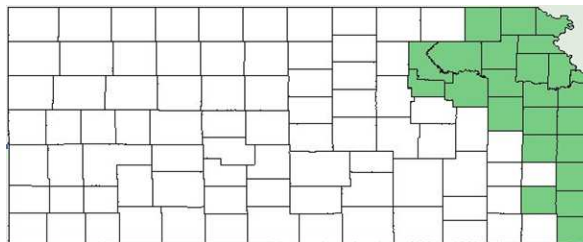
Landscaping: Hophornbeam Tree by Jeff Hansen

Trees are almost always a part of our home landscapes. They offer us welcome shade on a hot summer day and provide yearlong beauty and interest. Most trees that people plant become quite large (50 feet tall or more) at maturity. Large trees can overwhelm a landscape. A better choice in most situations is a smaller-sized tree. One of my favorites is the American hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*).

It resembles another species known as hornbeam (*Carpinus*), and its fruits resemble hops (*Humulus*). The hophornbeam has very hard wood and is also known as ironwood. Some of its most interesting features are its flaky bark, its winter catkins, and its hop-like fruit. Because the wood is so hard, it is not prone to broken limbs. Its wood is used for tool handles and mallets. The nuts and buds provide winter food for various birds.

This is a drought tolerant tree that grows naturally on dry slopes as an under story tree. It grows well in full sun or shade. The mature height

is about 20 feet. Leaves are toothed and resemble an elm leaf. Interestingly, the leaves are not deciduous in the fall but stay on the tree all winter and are shed when it leafs out in the spring. The range of it in Kansas is mostly in the eastern quarter of the state, but it should do well in the eastern half of the state.



Hophornbeam Tree Growing Region Map

The best way to experience the tree is to see it in person. Winter is a good time to look for the tree in our native woodlands. Look for a small under story tree with flaky bark and dry leaves attached to the branches. Collect some seeds and try growing your own American hophornbeam. I've seen it in the Lake Perry and Lake Clinton areas as well as the Overland Park Arboretum. Some nurseries also sell the American hophornbeam.



KNPS Membership Regions

Continued from Page 1

Groups are using both members and guests to speak or conduct workshops in order to learn about topics of special interest to the people in their region. In addition, more frequent hikes and walks in one's own area provide one-on-one sharing of plant identification and information. Regions aren't restrictive in the sense that you can attend events in any region; nor do regions all have to follow the same patterns. Each region is different. Some are urban, some rural, and others a mix of the two. The flora of each region is also varied. With the members having input and interactions with other members they might not otherwise see in their local area, it is hoped that people will get more out of the KNPS.

What Is Happening in the Regions?

By learning what is going on in other regions, we all can get new ideas to use as we develop our own Membership Region.

Atchison:

Fred and Nancy Coombs volunteered to lead their region earlier this year. Their membership has grown from 16 to 26. They had a meeting in Valley Falls this fall and are planning various wildflower walks for next year. They have used local newspapers as a means of publicizing their regional activities.



Atchison KNPS Region gathering

Emporia: Glen Fell has been offering monthly weekend tours in his region throughout the season. Glen has advertised his events in the local newspaper and library. Next year he has events planned for every month of the flowering season.

Fort Scott: Rondi Anderson has volunteered to lead this region. She is planning a meeting in the area and plans to hold some wildflower events next year.

Great Bend: Jenni Carr will be starting a new job with the Extension Office in the region next year and has volunteered to get things started in this region. She previously worked on the Cowley County wildflower tour.

Kansas City: Ken O'Dell has been his region's leader since the start of the regions. Over the past year he has enlisted the help of a representative from each of the region's counties. They are planning monthly events throughout the year, such as presentations, workshops, garden tours, and prairie/woodland tours. Their membership has grown from 49 to 77 this year. Ken has used his contacts with Master Gardeners and the Overland Park Arboretum to attract interested people.

Manhattan: Jerry Freeze of Wamego began leading this region this fall. The region had its first planning meeting in November. Ten members attended and several others sent regrets but expressed interest in being active in the future. The group decided to focus on indoor, learning events during the winter months and hikes during the growing season. Potential subjects discussed for cold-weather meetings included seed collecting procedures, growing plants from seed, and learning more about taxonomy as an identification tool. Those present also came up with an extensive list of places (mostly on private land) they would like to visit during the warm weather.

Continued on Page 4



KNPS Membership Regions

Continued from Page 3

Wichita: Krista Dahlinger planned a seed exchange in her region this fall. Many attended and were pleased to have a local event to attend. (See p. 6 for full report).

Winfield: Marjorie Snyder volunteered to lead this fall. She hopes to hold a planning meeting and her region will be hosting the 2012 Annual Wildflower Weekend.

A big thanks to all the regional leaders. Remember, they need help from other members. Below is a list of current leaders. If you have not yet become active in your regional group, contact your regional leader for more information. If you live in one of the regions that does not yet have a leader, consider working with other KNPS members to get your region involved.

Region Name	Region Counties	Region Leader
Atchison	Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson, Nemaha	Fred & Nancy Coombs Coombs@rainbowtel.net
Colby	Cheyenne, Logan, Rawlins, Sherman, Thomas, Wallace	Vacant
Concordia	Clay, Cloud, Jewell, Mitchell, Republic, Washington	Vacant
Dodge City	Clark, Ford, Gray, Meade	Vacant
Emporia	Chase, Lyon, Marion, Morris	Glenn Fell glennfell13@gmail.com
Fort Scott	Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Coffey, Linn, Woodson	Rondi Anderson bluemeadow@gmail.com
Garden City	Finney, Hodgeman, Lane, Ness	Vacant
Great Bend	Barton, Edwards, Pawnee, Ruch, Stafford	Jennifer Carr jennibringer@yahoo.com
Hays	Ellis, Osborne, Phillips, Rooks, Russell, Smith	Chelsea Juricek cjuricek@hotmail.com
Hutchinson	Harvey, McPherson, Reno, Rice	Brad Guhr bradguhr@yahoo.com
Kansas City	Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami, Wyandotte	Ken O'Dell ken@springvalleynursery.com
Liberal	Grant, Haskell, Morton, Seward, Stanton, Stevens	Shari Butler fs.fed.us
Manhattan	Geary, Marshall, Pottawatomie, Riley, Wabaunsee	Jerry Freeze jfreeze@wamego.net
Norton	Decatur, Gove, Graham, Norton, Sheridan, Trego	Vacant
Pittsburg	Cherokee, Crawford, Labette, Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson	Cindy Ford cford@pittstate.edu
Pratt	Barber, Comanche, Kiowa, Pratt	June Kliesen jkliesen@gmail.com
Salina	Dickinson, Ellsworth, Lincoln, Ottawa, Saline	Mark Nuebrand mark@prontoprint.com
Scott City	Greeley, Hamilton, Kearney, Scott, Wichita	Vacant
Topeka	Douglas, Franklin, Osage, Shawnee	Jeff Hansen hanjd@cox.net
Wichita	Harper, Kingman, Sedgwick, Sumner	Krista Dahlinger kskld@hotmail.com
Winfield	Butler, Chautauqua, Cowley, Elk, Greenwood	Marjorie Snyder marjosnyder@earthlink.net



Meet the Board: Craig Hensley



Craig Hensley, KNPS Board Member

Where are you from, where do you live, what do you do for a living? I am a native of Atlantic, Iowa, born and raised there. I now live in Shawnee, KS and work as the Lead Education Specialist/Manager of Mr. & Mrs. F.L. Schlagle Library & Environmental Learning Center in Kansas City, KS at Wyandotte County Lake Park.

How did you become interested in wildflowers and other native plants? I have loved the natural world since I can remember. For me, the love of plants began in earnest during my sophomore year in college at Arkansas Tech University when I took a class in Plant Taxonomy with Dr. Gary Tucker. I will never forget the first time we took a field trip to Ouita Park in Russellville, AR, and he showed us *Lamium purpureum*, *L. amplexicaule*, *Claytonia virginica* and a little rather inconspicuous plant *Luzula bulbosa* or Wood Rush. Seeing the beauty in those

tiny flowers and plants hooked me for life, and it has been a love affair with plants ever since.

What are some of your favorite native plants and why? That's like asking what my favorite bird is— but at least you asked for "plants" instead of "plant." It is a toss up and seasonal in nature. In the spring I spend most of my time looking at our spring wildflowers, and it matters not whether it is spring beauty or Dutchman's breeches or columbine— they are all so beautiful and elegant. During the remainder of the year, put me in the prairie. I LOVE composites, one and all, particularly the sunflowers. There is so much variation and detailed beauty to each species that I never get tired trying to catch just the right photograph. Milkweeds also have captured my fancy; their fragrance and diversity. and just their design, and the number of insects that use them as a food source is simply amazing. Lastly, I have to throw in the cacti. When I lived in Texas, I fell in love with the Chihuahuan Desert and its amazing diversity of cacti— and when they are in bloom, oh my!

What is your favorite natural area of the state and why? I am just learning the state for real now; so I haven't spent a lot of time out and about, but prairies to be sure, and I find the Flint Hills to be just gorgeous. I also love the Cimarron grasslands in the southwest corner of the state. But, hey, I am open to all parts!

How did you learn about KNPS? I learned about it by attending a meeting held at the Overland Park Arboretum and was invited to attend by Ken O'Dell. I loved the energy at the meeting and the knowledge of Ken and the others. I am one of Ken's "groupies" and am thrilled and honored to have been considered for, and voted onto, the Board.

What do you like best about KNPS? Having been mostly involved with birding organizations in the past, I have found KNPS to be a great breath of fresh air for me. Spending three days with fellow native plant enthusiasts in Lawrence this fall was just fantastic— I thought I knew a few things, until being around Craig, Jeff and the other wonderful people. I love the passion everyone has for native plants; I really enjoy the website and all the information there. I plan to become much more involved with KNPS down the road and look forward to visiting all around the state to see the flora of every area and hang out will all you fellow native plant lovers!



Seed Exchange of Wichita Membership Region by Krista Dahlinger

Greetings All Regional Enthusiasts!

I wanted to give you a report on a recent event here in Wichita. My living room had become the repository of brown paper bags of native plant seeds. I thought, "There's no way I can plant all of these in my landscape; somebody ought to organize a Seed Swap event," and that somebody would be me. I sent out an email to my regional people asking if there was interest in such an event. Hoyt Hillman is a local native plant enthusiast, associated with the Master Naturalist Program being given through the local Extension Office, and he replied that he had "bags and bags" of native seeds. He then proceeded to reserve a room for Saturday, November 12th, at the Extension Office. Jeff Hansen added the event to the KNPS calendar, and more email notices were sent out.

I was really thrilled when about 20 people arrived for the seed exchange that afternoon! Between Hoyt, Nat Barton, and myself, we filled three cafeteria tables with bags of native plant seeds. We provided brown paper lunch bags

and markers for people to take whatever they wanted and label their bags. Many people were apologetic when they came in, saying they didn't bring anything to trade. We told them they were welcomed to browse and take what they liked. Myrna Campbell, the botanical artist who donated her image of Little Bluestem to KNPS State Grass project came; a new KNPS member from California and his young family attended; one lady dug up and brought some late blooming aster plants to trade/give away; and other people were there because they are interested in starting native plants from seed. Most of those who attended said they'd seen the event listing on the KNPS weekly emailed notice of events.

Seeds available were from *echinacea*, *liatris*, butterfly milkweed, *rudbeckia*, false boneset, tall primrose, wooly verbena, mullen, pitcher's sage, Baldwin ironweed, and several others. The seeds that were left over were given to the Master Naturalist Program to use for restoration projects or to be passed on through their volunteers.



Notice: Special April Outing

In the spring, the Missouri Ozark region is filled with woodland flowers! Flowering dogwoods are just one of the highlights. KNPS members and friends are invited on a two-day exploration in the Eminence area of south-central Missouri where many unique habitats harbor a variety of unusual plants. We will have a local guide and be walking a mile or more, sometimes off the trail on rough terrain. Camping, cabins, or rooms are available. Reservations are necessary. The group is limited to 18. If you are interested, inquire to findiralee@yahoo.com for more information.



KNPS Tech Corner by Mickey Delfelter

Did you know the KNPS website has a storefront? As of this writing, we have KNPS branded t-shirts and hats in various colors, wildflower posters and even a coloring book. Stop by today and come back in 2012 when we may have additional goods for sale. Just visit our website (<http://www.ksnps.org>) and click Store in the left hand column.

CORRECTIONS

We apologize for the following errors in the October issue of the newsletter. On page 3, the picture of members on the hayrack should have been credited to Mike Haddock. On page 3, the individual studying the sunflowers is "Madonna Stallmann" not "Stallings." The photo of Baker Wetlands on page 4 was also taken by Mike Haddock. On page 4 in the section on "Awards," the correct name on the last line in the left-hand column should be "Daryl Smith." On page 11, the picture that is titled "Scenery First, Welda Prairie" by Steve Roels, should have been identified as Steve's third-place Scenery picture named "Flint Hills Fall." The actual picture of first-place in Scenery, "Welda Prairie" was inadvertently left out. You can go to the KNPS website to look at all of Steve's prizewinners.

2012 Kansas Area Native Plant and Wildflower Events

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!

 **January 21:** Volunteers are needed for prairie maintenance and preservation projects. The Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs meet on the third Saturday of every month except December. [www.grasslandheritage.org]. Wear appropriate clothing. No special skills or tools needed. For details, please contact Frank Norman, **Kansas Native Plant Society** Board Member [fjnorman@sunflower.com] (785) 887-6775 (home) or (785) 691-9748 (cell).

January 21: Kaw Valley Eagles Day in Lawrence, KS. Celebrate the return of the eagles and learn about the environment, 11am-4pm. Programs on area Bald eagles and other wildlife. Exhibitors will offer educational resources related to nature, sponsored by the Jayhawk Audubon Society. Location: Free State High School, 1 block north of 6th & Wakarusa. [eishaw@ku.edu] (785) 843-7665

January 23: Presentation by Kelly Kindscher 7:30-8:30pm. Grassland Heritage Foundation and the Jayhawk Audubon Society are co-sponsoring a presentation by Dr. Kelly Kindscher, Senior Scientist with the KS Biological Survey and Professor of Environmental Studies Program at KU. He will give information about his current work with The Native Medicinal Plant Research Program at KU. We will also have "Buy Your Own" dinner with Kelly at 5:30pm at Free State Brewery, with the program beginning at 7:30pm in the fellowship hall of Trinity Lutheran Church, just east of the intersection of 13th & Massachusetts in Lawrence. Angie Babbit [angie.babbit@gmail.com] (785)-840-9934

 **February 4:** **Kansas Native Plant Society** Winter Board Meeting, 12-3pm. The meeting will be held in the Science Hall, Room 159, at Emporia State University. Members are welcome to attend the board meeting. Backup date is February 11 in case of inclement weather. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453

February 11: Kaw Valley Seeds Project Annual Fair, Lawrence, KS, 10am-3pm. The Seed Fair will include a seed exchange, exhibits, local producers, speakers throughout the day and a children's activity center. Admission is free. The Kaw Valley Seeds Project is a nonprofit whose mission is to create a Local Living Seed Reserve by fostering a network of people committed to growing and eating, sharing and bartering, buying and selling primary seed varieties of the Kansas River Valley. In addition, our goal is to educate the general public on the pleasures of growing their own food by teaching them how to save, store and plant seeds from their own gardens, and where to obtain organic and local seed lines. Sponsor: Kaw Valley Seeds Project. Location: Douglas County Fairgrounds, Building 21, 2110 Harper St. in Lawrence. Contact: Daniel Bentley [dan66044@yahoo.com] (785) 842-4418

February 15: Program: Bees, Butterflies, and Birds, 7pm - 8pm. Topeka Audubon Society is hosting this event at Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library. Jeff Hansen, native plant consultant, explains the importance of using native plants in our landscapes. Plants are near the bottom of the food chain and support our insects, which in turn become food for birds. Nesting birds almost exclusively feed insects to their young. Migratory songbirds also are dependent on insects to fuel them during migration. Many of the various insect species use specific plants as food, especially butterfly & moth larva. Without the necessary species of the plants, the insects suffer, which in turn affects birds. Learn the trees, shrubs, and other plant species needed by our native insects that in turn become protein for our birds. There will be a special focus on butterflies. A slide show of various plants, insects, and birds will be presented. [hanjd@cox.net] (785) 806-6917

 **February 18:** Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan 21 info.

 **March 10:** Feel the Love: Pollinators and Flowering Plants, 10am. The Kansas City Region of the **Kansas Native Plant Society** invites you to a special presentation at Overland Park Arboretum, 8909 W. 179th St, Overland Park, KS. Betsy Betros will speak and give a presentation "Feel the Love: Pollinators and Flowering Plants." Betsy has had a life-long love of nature. Her interest in butterflies led to writing the first book to provide an in-depth guide to butterflies of the Kansas City region: *A Photographic Field Guide to the Butterflies in the Kansas City Region*. Professionally, Betsy has been with the Johnson County's Environmental Department for over 30 years and is currently the Pollution Control Director. Betsy's book will be available at

Kansas Area Native Plant Wildflower Events— Continued

 **March 10:** Feel the Love: (continued)

the meeting. Members and visitors are welcome. Contact: Ken O'Dell [ken@springvalleynursery.com] (913) 837-5112

 **March 17:** Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan 21 info.

 **March 24:** Workshop: Growing Wildflowers from Seed, 10am to noon. Ken O'Dell will show you how he gathers, cleans and stores some of his wildflower seeds at Overland Park Arboretum, 8909 W. 179th. St, Overland Park, KS. Ken will provide seeds he gathered for you to use in this class. You will learn what kind of soil to use, how much to water the pots, and how much light the seedlings need during and after germination. You will plant different wildflower seeds with a label for each pot. You may then take the flat of pots home and watch your wildflowers grow! Each of you will get 15 to 18 pots. Ken O'Dell is a long-time volunteer at the Overland Park Arboretum and serves on the Board of the **Kansas Native Plant Society**. Class is limited to 12 people, so register early. We will take the first 12 that respond via email to Ken O'Dell and say they want the class. This is a free class to members of the **Kansas Native Plant Society** only. Contact Ken O'Dell to register. Contact: Ken O'Dell [ken@springvalleynursery.com] (913) 837-5112

 **April 7:** Early Spring Walk With Wildflowers of Wyandotte County Lake Park, 1-4pm. Join us for a walk in the spring woodlands of Wyandotte County Lake Park as we search for and identify a variety of spring woodland wildflowers, from Dutchman's breeches and spring beauties to bloodroot and violets. Naturalist and Educator Craig Hensley from Mr. & Mrs. F.L. Schlagle Library & Environmental Learning Center will lead the walk. Members of the **Kansas Native Plant Society** are welcome to attend. Please note that some of the hiking will be on narrow trails with inclines. Sturdy hiking shoes are recommended. Participants should plan to meet at the Schlagle Library & Environmental Learning Center, 4051 West Dr Kansas City, KS (in the park) and we'll carpool. [<http://www.kckpl.org/documents/WyCoLakeWildflowers.pdf>] To register for this walk, please contact: Craig Hensley [chensley@kckpl.org] (913) 299-2384

 **April 14:** **Kansas Native Plant Society** Spring Board Meeting, 1-3pm and Outing starting at 3pm. The meeting will be held at the Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 E 29th Street North in Wichita, KS. After the meeting, we will tour the trails of the GPNC through the prairie, woodland and wetlands areas. This is a good opportunity to meet other members in the Wichita area. Meet at 3pm inside the GPNC. For more information contact Krista. Everyone is welcome to join us. Contact: Krista Dahlinger [kskld@hotmail.com] (316) 258-6341

 **April 15:** Overland Park Arboretum Wildflower Tour, 1pm-3pm. Lynda Ochs and Ken O'Dell will lead the Kansas City Region of The **Kansas Native Plant Society** on a tour of the woodlands at the Overland Park Arboretum. A large wooded area is ripe with millions of spring woodland plants. Meet at the Visitors Center and we will leave at 1pm sharp. Both dirt and mulched pathways, some hills to climb. Plants we will see include Yellow Buckeye, Wild Ginger, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Pawpaws, Bittersweet vines, Wild Geraniums, Bluebells, Mayapples, Jacob's Ladder, Solomon Seal, False Solomon Seal, Elderberry, Bloodroot, several varieties of wild violets in yellow, blue and purple. Sponsor: **Kansas Native Plant Society**. 8909 W. 179th. St. Contact: Ken O'Dell 913 837-5112

 **April 20:** Master Gardener Woodland Wildflower Tour at Overland Park Arboretum, 1-3pm. Lynda Ochs and Ken O'Dell will lead the Douglas County Master Gardeners on a tour of the woodlands at the Overland Park Arboretum, 8909 W. 179th. St. This large wooded area is ripe with millions of spring woodland plants. Meet at the Visitors Center and we will leave at 1pm sharp. A FREE Wildflower booklet and KNPS brochure will be available for those attending. KNPS members are welcome to attend. Contact: Ken O'Dell [ken@springvalleynursery.com] (913) 837-5112

 **April 20:** Screening of Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time, 6:30pm. The Kansas City Region of the **Kansas Native Plant Society**, Schlagle Library & Environmental Learning Center, and West Wyandotte Public Library are pleased to present the movie "Green Fire," a movie about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold. Aldo Leopold and his writings are as important today as they were when he penned them many decades ago. Leopold advocated a conservation philosophy known as the land ethic, a belief that natural resources are shared by all forms of life, not just for human consumption and exploitation. Excerpts from Leopold's book "A Sand County Almanac" will be read prior to the movie; from 6:30 to 6:50 pm. Refreshments will be available. Seating is limited so please call the library to make your reservation. Contact: Craig Hensley [chensley@kckpl.org] (913) 299-2384.



Kansas Wildflower of the Year: Leadplant by Ken O'Dell

Lead plant, *Amorpha canescens*, is the KNPS Wildflower of the Year for 2012. This beautiful, native prairie plant was selected because of its hardiness, and its determination to grow throughout the state in many of our Kansas counties. Lead plant, a member of the bean family, with light purple to reddish purple flowers, blooms in late springtime. Lead plant is more of a subshrub than a forb with thin branches and small gray to gray-green leaves. It is thought the common name "lead plant" came from the color of the foliage. However, some descriptions suggest that when *Amorpha* was first discovered, it was growing near what was a lead mine, and it was concluded that the species needed this type of soil to grow. It will actually grow in just about any and all types of soil. It is a beautiful, tough, prairie plant that will grow very well in our yards and gardens. It is frequently offered by retail nurseries and native plant growers as an ornamental native plant. I usually have seed of *Amorpha canescens* that from time to time, we use in our seeding classes. *

Lenora Larson, KNPS member from Miami County and a national expert on butterflies, reminds us that lead plant is a great food source for butterfly caterpillars. Caterpillars of Silver-spotted Skipper, Wild Indigo Dusky Wing, Southern Dogface Sulfur (its wings have a poodle's face on them!) and the Marine Blue Hairstreak depend on *Amorpha* species as their food source. The caterpillars eat the leaves.

The botanical name of this Lead Plant is *Amorpha canescens*. "Amorpha" is from the Greek



Leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*)

photo by Ken O'Dell

word meaning "deformed" as the flowers only have one petal, which curls around parts of the reproductive system. There are many of these one-petaled flowers making up a 3 to 4 inch, tall, upright spike on the tips of the branches. The purple colored flowers have some reddish purple stamens that add more color to the flowering heads. "Canescens" means "graying" or "gray hairs" referring to the appearance of the early flowers that are often covered with the tiny gray hairs.

* As of now we have a seeding class scheduled for March 24th, 2012, at 1pm at the Overland Park Arboretum. This class is for KNPS members only and will be limited to 12; so if you want to come contact Ken O'Dell, and I will hold a spot for the first 12.



KNPS Members Who Make a Difference Interview of Debra Carson by Jeff Hansen



Debra Carson, KNPS member

Tell us a little about you. Where are you from, what you do, where you live now? I was transplanted from Oceanside, California, at ten-years-old to Kansas; raised on a small farm south of Wichita and have been moving around Kansas since then. We settled in the small town of Derby, Kansas, and have lived there for almost 27 years. I loved it when we first drove there and saw the area, with all the woods, river, fields and open land around the small town. I have been primarily in sales for almost 30 years, and currently I am the Customer Relations Manager at Scholfield Honda, in Wichita.

You seem to have a real passion for native plants. How did this come about? As a small child I spent a lot of time outside, we walked

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everywhere, pulling a red wagon and collecting bottles for penny candy money. We used to walk through fields in Oceanside along the beachfront, and the wild flowers were always ending up in my hair. In Kansas, the first thing we had to do was clear some land around the home to put in vegetable gardens and small animal pens. All the plants and "weeds" were taller than I was at that time, but so very pretty; some were hard to pull out by hand. My mother fought over what to keep and what not to keep; she wanted the currant bushes, mulberries and elderberries, and all I wanted was to quit pulling weeds. As the years went by, she would take me with her and my Grandma Sue to go looking for poke and gooseberries and sand plums on the deep wide ditches alongside the unpaved roads around the area.

We kept a small area of Lamb's quarters going and a lot of small, pretty dandelions. I learned you could eat these plants and, actually like them. This early "task training" as I call it, is what gave me the love of wild native things. There is nothing prettier than a roadside ditch full of blooming wild daisies, ditch lilies, purple ironweed, sunflowers, verbena, milkweeds and yellow bidens. And, I can't leave out the dark red wine cups that my MOM always tried to dig up and plant in her tubs.

How did you become interested in using native plants in your garden? I love to grow morning-glories and found that a morning-glory will climb a sunflower as easily as a cornstalk; so I started replacing the vine poles and planted sunflower seeds from the fields where I found them to be the most plentiful. The huge tall multi-stemmed branching sunflowers were the best companion for an *Ipomoea purpurea* (Common morning-glory), which I love. And what a contrast! Another plant I found that grew tall, branched and could be used as a support for my morning glories was the Common evening primrose, you know the really tall yellow ones that open at night and smell wonderful? Success! Oh how pretty it is to see, so pretty that several friends and even my son has started using these plants as supports for other plants.

I also loved the combination of daisy fleabane as a contrast to my hybrid tea roses, and then decided to see what other ways I could combine wild flowers with hybrid show plants and tropicals, which spend their time outside in summer. While I was visiting a friend in Wichita, he had a plant that I had seen out in the country called "Snow On the Mountain." It was beautiful, nestled in with his tropical plants; so I thought it might be pretty with

the Cannas, and could also hold up a tomato vine as well. I was right and so now I use that native as an eye-catching tree-sized support for vining plants, and tuck a few other things to peek through for color as well. Wild flowers that are actually watered, fed, nurtured and cared for grow amazingly huge! They make great shade canopies for semi-shade tropical that are only outside temporarily.

What are some of the plants you are growing in your garden? Some of the first plants I started were wild indigo, *baptisia*, wild ginger, blue pitcher sage, Helens flower (sneezeweed *Helenium* genus), blanket flower, chicory, *liatris*, and white daisies. I added Common yellow evening primrose, sunflowers, violets, wild rose, trumpet vine, ditch lilies, pink primrose, wine cups, swamp milkweed, butterfly milkweed, white yarrow, pink lady thumbs (smartweed), wild *amaranthus* (pigweed), wild *datura* (Jimson weed), yellow goats beard, tall grasses, Mexican hats (prairie yellow coneflower), smooth blue asters, wild four-o'-clocks, poke, *coreopsis*, *rudbeckias*, *monardas*, and various coneflowers and have been trying to get some of the other natives to grow. I especially like the wild petunia (*Ruellia*) and the yellow thistle, button bush and dogbanes. Some people look at these as weeds; I see them as beautiful when grouped together. The fairy-like "look" of clammy weeds mixed with red clover is a sight to behold, especially mixed in with some white daisies and asters. I have some elderberrys and sumacs I am trying to grow to fruit. I just recently acquired some currant starts and hope to get those going too. Oh there are so many I have seen out in field that I want in my back yard.

You have done some seeding of native plants in roadsides in the Derby area. How did this start and why? The City Of Derby has been mowing down, plowing up and bulldozing areas that were a joy to wander through while walking a dog, and now there are "landscaped" areas with the typical landscape plants. BORING. Not enough color! I called, and after finding out what was not toxic and noxious, was able to throw a few native seeds around; got a few blooms the first year; last summer hardly anything. I am still throwing seeds around.

You also have helped friends identify invasive species on their property. Tell us more about that. Everyone calls me the "Plant Lady," but really I am not an expert. I do, however, after reading and watching what some invasive plants can do to trees, shrubs and other wild flowers, know that honeysuckle, trumpet vine and pink primrose (for example) if not contained and

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eradicated, can take over and bring down a whole tree, fence line, row of sand plums and any tall grass or sage trying to grow. I have seen a home left unattended completely covered in honeysuckle and trumpet vine and watched their progress bring the home down. It is sad since I love those two vines, but they can't be left to go where they want to go. Friends and acquaintances have invited me out to tell them what that crazy stuff is that is "eating" their trees.

Tell us some of the favorite and interesting plants you've found in your travels. The whole reason for traveling has been to find some native morning glories. As I said earlier, my first love was the morning glory, and I wanted to start growing native morning glories. I found an *Ipomoea pandurata* (Bigroot morning-glory). I was so excited. In July it is heaven to see them all a bloom. I have found three colors of bind weeds, (still a morning glory, folks) and am always looking for the mysterious *Ipomoea* that is said to be established in Kansas, called *Ipomoea shumardiana* var. *torres*. I have found the ivy leaf morning glory, a beautiful blue color, and the glorious white two-inch blooming *I. convolvulus*

rambling around some fences. When I found a patch of the *Clematis pitcherii*, (Leather flower), I was overcome with emotion. I have found some very cool milkweeds. I am always looking for them, as I love to watch the butterflies visit. Seeing a Button Bush for the first time really stopped me in my tracks while going across a farmer's field road. At the low lying edge of the field that held rain water for long periods was the most elegant Button Bush shrub I have ever seen.

How do you identify things that aren't in your field guides? When I see flowers I can't identify, I usually go to the Kansas Native Wild Flower and Grasses (kswildflower.org) website and see if I can find it.

Is there anything you'd like to add? I would end this interview with a plea to the ranchers and farmers and landowners to please consider seeding with friendly colorful wild flowers in your ditches and roadsides; decorate your property with the blazing colors of the beautiful Kansas Native Wildflowers. I love driving around collecting seeds to throw around other barren areas that seem to be neglected or not cared for, and have been driven in ATV's along property with land owners as I threw them out. What better Garden to have than one that requires little effort?



Growing from Seed:

Baptisia

by Ken O'Dell

We are fortunate to have wonderful, colorful, species of *Baptisia* growing in their native habitat in Kansas. I have been growing these native plants for years and have worked with them both in the ground as ornamental native perennials and as pot plants. I have also studied them in their native settings. They are a wonderful group of tough hardy plants.

The first *Baptisia* I see in our prairies is Early *Baptisia*, (*Baptisia leucophaea* aka *bracteata*). I have been calling this Early *Baptisia* by the *B. leucophaea* name for a long time and now find out I may have been calling it by the wrong name. (Haddock lists it as: *Baptisia bracteata*, var. *leucophaea*.) Early *Baptisia* has a beautiful creamy-yellow flower very early, usually in May and June before the other prairie forbs and grasses get tall, and because of the early blooming, it is very easy to see. This plant is pollinated by bumblebees, which may be their only pollinator. Sometimes the plants do not have many seeds because of not being pollinated. The flowers are in large



Early *Baptisia*
Baptisia leucophaea

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Growing from Seed:

Baptisia

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6 to 8 inch long, drooping clusters, hanging to the sides of the short bushy plants. Wild Blue Indigo (*Baptisia australis*) is perhaps the most widely known of the *Baptisia* as it has been offered by retail nurseries for many years. Interest in native plants has encouraged many homeowners to ask for other varieties and colors of these natives. Wild Blue Indigo is native over much of the Great Plains to the east coast, growing to 3 to 4 foot tall clumps, similar to peony clumps.

It is not uncommon to find older clumps of Wild Blue Indigo with 30 or 40 stems coming up from the ground with 6 to 10 inch clusters of blue flowers at the top of the stems in June and July. The foliage is a smooth, blue-green on *B. australis*. A few years ago I dug and moved a *B. australis* from one part of our gardens to another garden spot. It is like digging a bunch of piano wire out of the ground. Those things have tough roots and plenty of them.

Wild White Indigo (*Baptisia alba* or *Baptisia lactea*) is a large native with fewer stems than the blue ones, but with flower heads that are often 10 to 18 inches long, standing up above the foliage, making them easy to see. The stems reach 4 to 5 feet in the air and are great to use as a background to flower beds because of the blue-green foliage. Wild White Indigo is native in the lower Great Plains from Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Iowa to the east coast. These giant white *Baptisia* will bloom after all other *Baptisia* have finished.

I gather *Baptisia* seed when the seedpods start to rattle. You want to pick and clean out the seed and store the clean seed in a paper envelope in the fridge until spring. If you store the seed in the pod, weevils will eat the seed during the winter, as most of the seedpods will have at least one weevil in them. In the springtime, plant the seed in a seed flat and cover seed about ¼ inch or less with soil. I go to the farm store and get a small package of alfalfa inoculants and scatter this on top of the seed after I have put the seed in a seed flat. These inoculants are used by the seedling immediately after the seed germinates and sends up a couple of leaves. *Baptisia* will grow better when inoculated as tiny seedlings.



Wild Blue Indigo
Baptisia australis

The *Baptisia* as a group prefer full sun or more sun than shade, regular to well-drained soil, and have attractive blue-green foliage that in its self is worth planting for. The dried seedpods are used in flower arrangements as they turn a dark chocolate brown and gray and rattle from the seed inside. There are some natural hybrids in our native *Baptisia*. On U.S. Hwy 56, between Edgerton and Baldwin City one can see some natural hybrids with beautiful blue-gray flowers. This is on the highway right-of-way. The mowers have cut back the *Baptisia australis* before it bloomed in the spring; so it forced up new blooms, which opened late when the White Flowering *Baptisia* was blooming.

You only need a 3-foot space to plant a *Baptisia*. So, plant one. Life is too short not to know a good *Baptisia*.

Membership Soaring

Look at these amazing membership facts and pat yourselves on the back. We obviously have a “great” organization.

- Total Regular Members (“paying” members) 720 !!!
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- Contributing Members 18
- There is at least one member in each county in the eastern three columns.
- 203 new members since the first of 2011 !!!



Featured Plant:

Nodding Lady's Tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*)

text by Loraine Kauffman, artwork by Joyce Fent

There is always something special to be found when walking in the prairies. I love these "serendipities," which can take many forms— a butterfly that lingers long enough on a nearby flower for a viewer to observe its exquisite coloring and intricate markings; the sweet melodious call of an unseen bird from a distant treetop; dew diamonds suspended in a huge, perfectly formed spider web or the fragrance of evening dampness settling in the twilight. These transient, unexpected glimpses all are enough to make me say, "Oh, I'm so glad I was here for this very moment!"

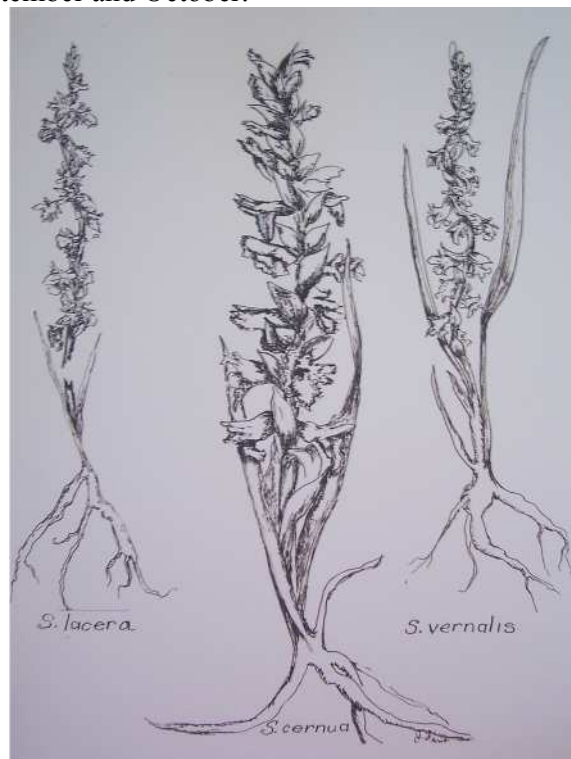


Nodding Ladies Tresses amongst Blue Sage

So it was one day when my feet took me within inches of a blooming Nodding lady's tresses, *Spiranthes cernua*. Appearing as an upright, pale green, eight-to-ten-inch pencil in the prairie grass, it had two or three rows of one-fourth inch flowers that spiraled to the top of the stem resembling a woman's hair. With little color or attractive foliage, it stood unobtrusively alone.

There are four common species of *Spiranthes* in Kansas, found mostly in the eastern two-thirds of the state and sometimes called "Kansas'

orchids." Blooming first from June to August is *S. vernalis*, whose petals are yellowish white with greenish spots on the lip. *S. ceruna* (L.) Rich is known as nodding lady's tresses because its one-fourth inch white flowers face downward but open upward as *S. Lacera* (Raf.) bloom in a single spiral on a very slender stem from August to early October. Little lady's tresses *S. tuberosa* (Raf.) bloom in a single spiral on a very slender stem in September and October.



The Three Ladies Tresses

Spiranthes' method of germination is as amazing as its appearance is surprising. The seed is minute, lacks stored food reserves, and thus is unable to germinate without the help of toadstools or other fungi that live in the soil. The seedling orchid lives as a parasite on the fungus until its roots are formed and it can live independently. This delicate and complicated relationship means that attempts to transplant these flowers is not only misguided, but also nearly certain to fail.

As you might expect, the appearance of the members of the *Spiranthes* family are so similar, it will take a sharp eye to distinguish between them. I feel they are so special, however, that discovering any one of them can be considered a real prize.

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