



Kansas Native Plant Society

Spring Newsletter



Volume 35 Number 2
April 2013

Early Kansas Plant Collectors

Text and photo by Iralee Barnard

Information we have today about Kansas native plants comes from many years of accumulated knowledge. Numerous people have devoted endless hours to the study of Kansas plants. Some of these people are well known, others seldom recognized.

American Indians, of course, had an intimate knowledge of local plants, but documentation of specific plants is difficult and often sketchy. The earliest written record of our prairie plants comes from Spanish travel into this area and is limited. By the late 1600s, the French were exploring vast areas west of the Mississippi River. In October 1724, frontiersman Bourgmont journeyed through the Flint Hills and was impressed by the stoney ground, broad prairies, and short grass of the high upland.

The next stage of exploration of the central grasslands involved surveys commissioned by the U.S. Government. Descriptions of the flora and fauna are contained in journals and reports by members of these expeditions sent to explore the new territory. Natural history collections were usually made along the way. Some of the most noted expeditions are Lewis and Clark (1804), Zebulon Pike (1807), Stephen Long (1819), and John Fremont (1844).

In 1864, J.W. Abert gives an exceptionally detailed view of the flora as he traveled west through the Flint Hills. At Cottonwood



Snow-on-the-mountain
Euphorbia marginata

Fork (near Durham in Marion County), he recorded long-leaved willows, cottonwood, box elder, plum thickets, goldenrod, elderberry, and *Monarda*. Beyond Cottonwood Fork, Abert was delighted to find plains coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*) and snow-on-the-mountain (*Euphorbia marginata*)

growing luxuriantly in old buffalo wallows.

More than 130 years later, in 1998, I was at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge in McPherson County very near where Abert saw the flowering buffalo wallows, and I too saw buffalo wallows filled with snow-on-the-mountain. It was a spectacular sight especially from a distance.

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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

I recently visited the home of a long-time member who had many KNPS newsletters dating to the early 1980s. Back then, the organization was known as the Kansas Wildflower Society, but the mission and the goals were similar. The older newsletters started me thinking about our evolving communication methods when dealing with current members, potential members and the general public.

The quarterly newsletter dates back to the organization's inception in 1978. The format has evolved over the years, ranging from a few black-and-white pages in earlier years to upwards of 16 full-color pages in more recent editions. Not surprisingly, the early editions contained informative, well-written articles and exciting descriptions of outings. I guess we know what our members like to read!

Perhaps one of the greater additions to our communication arsenal is the KNPS website. It has been around for 14 years in one form or another. One early iteration was hosted by Hesston College and contained basic organizational information such as the board members, the Kansas Wildflower of the Year, and membership information.

Before long, the site grew and expanded to our own domain name, which is where we live on the Internet today. Although the site was initially maintained by volunteers, we now employ a part-time Webmaster. The website features continue to grow each year, from the ability for outside organizations to add their outings to our event calendar, to detailed information on Little Bluestem (Kansas's State Grass), to PDF versions of KNPS newsletters going back to 2004, just to name a few. At the end of 2012, the website had grown to over 850 pages of content.

A supplement to our website is our email list. Subscribers receive weekly emails containing upcoming events and occasional emails about special events or notifications. The email list has over 700 subscribers. If you or someone you know would like to receive these emails, visit the KNPS website and click on Email List in the left navigation.

A newer form of web-based communication is the popular social media platform Facebook. With Facebook, we publish frequent, short posts to our "fans" which currently number 850. These posts include items such as upcoming events, fun and interesting photos, plant or nature-related articles found elsewhere on the Internet, or information about KNPS.

Several of our Member Regions are also on Facebook, with similar postings related to their specific region. To join either the statewide or a member region Facebook group, visit the KNPS website and click on Facebook or Member Regions in the left nav. But, the electronic mediums can only go so far. We still maintain many of our traditional methods of interacting with our members.

We have volunteers who manage the KNPS booth at various lawn and garden shows, Kansas Forestry Day and other similar events throughout the year. We cosponsor several pocket guides published by the Great Plains Nature Center. We also have a trifold brochure that is distributed to over 400 organizations statewide including libraries, extension offices, museums and nature centers.

And, last but not least, we have our old standbys of outings, the USPS and an active telephone number at the KU Herbarium. Despite the method, the goal remains the same: we want it to be easy to be informed about KNPS, and we want to hear from you. So check us out online or in person and let us know how we are doing!



Landscaping: Cottonwood Tree

Text and photo by Jeff Hansen

We have three state plants. Our newest is our grass, little bluestem. The sunflower, the state flower, is synonymous with Kansas. Last is the cottonwood, our state tree. Personally I think it's a bit under appreciated. Maybe because it's so common, people take it for granted. But it's a special tree and can make a wonderful addition to our landscapes if it's given room to grow.

The cottonwood (*Populus deltoids*) is also known as the "plains cottonwood," "eastern cottonwood," and "common cottonwood." The cottonwood, along with its cousins willow and aspen, are members of the Willow family. It is found across the state of Kansas in every county. In the west, it is generally found along water courses, but in the east, it grows almost everywhere.

My experiences with the cottonwood in my yard are minimal. When I purchased my house and yard, there was a cottonwood planted in the backyard.

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Landscaping: Cottonwood Tree

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My yard had way too many trees, and I planned to cut it down. But a friend wanted it, so we transplanted it. They transplant very easily. This tree was fully leafed out (worst time to transplant a tree) and suffered little stress. Twenty years later, a cottonwood has appeared in my yard. I did not plant it this time. A tiny seed landed in my vegetable garden and grew. It's that easy to grow a cottonwood tree.

Some people object to the "cotton" that the trees produce. Since cottonwood is a dioecious plant, male and female flowers borne on separate plants; however, only the female trees produce the seeds along with the cottony substance that catches in the wind and carries the seeds to new locations. The nursery trade's "Cottonless" cottonwoods are simply male trees.

Cottonwoods prefer the moist soil of floodplains and drainage ways, but can be found in uplands as well. Seedlings can be found in almost any bare soil, especially on sandbars and lake shores. The trees are very fast growing, making them ideal for those desiring shade-producing trees in a few years. Mature trees often reach 80 feet. A favorite aesthetic trait of the tree is the sound of the rustling of its leaves in a breeze. It reminds me of the sound of running water. KNPS member, Kim Witt, taught me a fascinating activity. Take a dry twig of the cottonwood and snap it at one of the leaf nodes. You will be amazed to find a

perfect five-point star in the core of the twig.

What I really like about the cottonwood is that birds use it for so many purposes.

Woodpeckers carve out their homes in it because of its relatively soft wood. Bald Eagles build their gigantic nests in the tops of it.

Some birds use the paper-like inner bark to weave their nests. Adult birds forage in the foliage for

the larva of any of the more than 360 species of butterflies/moths that feed on its foliage. If you want to grow Viceroy, Mourning Cloak, and Red-spotted Purple butterflies, grow cottonwood in your landscape.

Although some native plants are difficult to establish, the cottonwood is one of the easiest to grow. It can be easily started by a cutting taken in February-March. Just find a young sapling and cut off a one-foot length of last year's growth. Bury it in moist soil with the upper most bud exposed, and it will sprout into a tree.



Cottonwood canopy in summer



Early Kansas Plant Collectors

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Many other brief accounts of the prairie flora were recorded by missionaries, Santa Fe Trail travelers, railroad surveys, and public land surveys. Newly married Susan Magoffin accompanied her husband west on the Santa Fe Trail in 1846. In her diary, she describes a lovely orange flower with an hourglass shape. The flower must certainly have been butterfly milkweed!

In 1843, William Drummond Stewart led a pleasure excursion to the Wind River Mountains. Traveling with his group of gentlemen hunters were four botanists and a New Orleans newspaper editor. A series of newspaper articles about the excursion was published. One article, dated January 6, 1844, describes the flora of the Kansas

River valley when the group passed through in May of 1843. Botanist Charles Geyer comments on the "lower Kansas... behold these prairies teeming with flowers." Prairie parsley (*Polytaenia*), New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus*), old plainsman (*Hymenopappus*), and crazyweed (*Oxytropis*) are a few of the plants Geyer collected in the area.

After Kansas statehood, colleges and scientific organizations sprang up and began keeping records of the flora, fauna, geology, and other natural sciences in Kansas. The resulting state collections are important for study, reference, and as vouchers of recorded species.

James Carruth, appointed state botanist by the legislature, published the first list of Kansas plants in 1872 containing some 540 species. By 1885, numerous additions increased the list to 1515. However, most of Carruth's plant collection was lost, and his plant catalogue cannot be verified.

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Early Kansas Plant Collectors

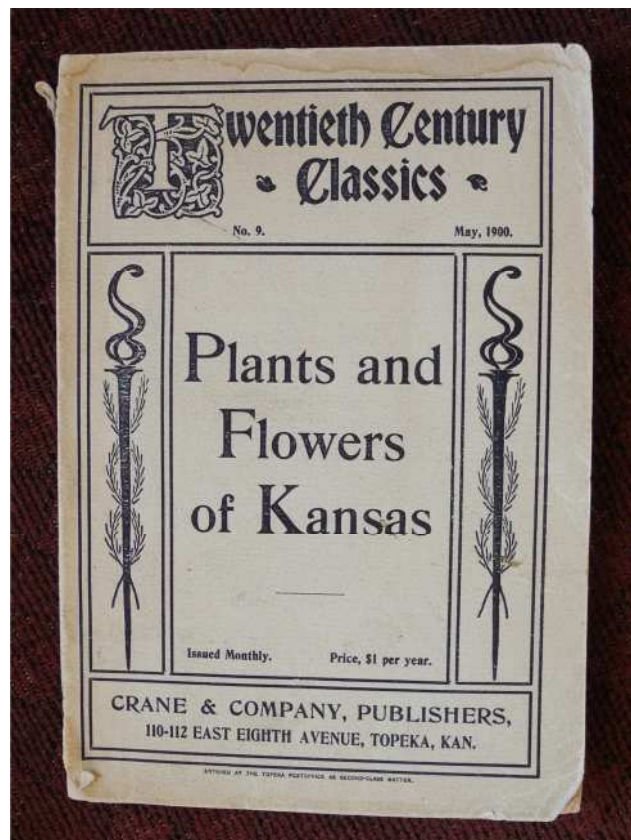
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In the 1890s, B.B. Smyth, curator of the State Museum of Kansas, and A.S. Hitchcock published their works on the Kansas flora. Hitchcock, renowned in the study of grasses, came to Kansas State Agricultural College (now Kansas State University) in 1891. Hitchcock sent his students across the prairie on foot with special collecting wheelbarrows to hold plants. When there was no more room in the plant presses, students would send them back to the college and pick up empty



Specimen sheet of twayblade, *Liparis loeselii*, collected in Pottawattomi County by J.B. Norton in 1899. Some plant species collected before 1900, like this one, are rare today. In 1898, J.B. Norton walked 193 miles through eight counties with a collection wheelbarrow.

presses by train, then continue on with their journey. In 1895, one of Hitchcock's students, R.H. Pond, accompanied him on a nine-week trip in a horse drawn wagon to 33 western Kansas counties collecting more than 11,000 specimens on the trip. Eventually in 1901 Hitchcock became curator of the National Herbarium in Washington, D.C.



I acquired this 1900 copy of Smyth's book at a KNPS silent auction.

Frank Gates became Professor of Botany at Kansas State College (presently KSU) in 1919. In charge of the herbarium for the next 36 years, his influence led many others to become dedicated plant collectors. The KSC herbarium was the largest in the state in the mid-1950s due to Gate's personal field work and that of those he inspired. The 1930s and 1940s were busy years for plant collection in Kansas.

To be continued in the next KNPS Newsletter issue.



KNPS TECH CORNER-

Where We Keep You Informed About KNPS Technology Happenings

by Mickey Delfelter

Within the past few months, the KNPS website has grown to over 850 pages of content. In the past year, we have had nearly 22,000 unique visitors to the website, accessing a remarkable 66,000 pages. For a list of recent website updates and additions, check out "News & Updates" on the KNPS home page.



KNPS Members Tour Ozark Highlands

Text and photos by James Bresnahan

On Thursday, April 19, 2012, eight KNPS members departed the prairie and headed for the billowing green forested hillsides of the Ozark highlands around Eminence, Missouri, and the Jacks Fork River, a karst region of limestone and dolomite with abundant caves, sinkholes and springs. We visited several Missouri Natural Areas on the 20th and 21st, led by Susan Farrington, a Missouri Department of Conservation resource scientist.

On the 20th, we were greeted by rain and were invited to our guide's home to wait out the storm. It was obvious Ms. Farrington was a plant lover by the native plant landscaping around her home as well as the large, non-native planting of pitcher plants in an artificial bog next to her house. When the storm cleared, we ventured into the fens.



Ozark Fen

Fens are a feature of the Ozark karst landscape and occur where mineralized groundwater percolating through limestone or dolomite intersect the land surface and form swampy meadows, dominated by grasses, sedges, rushes and water loving plants. Unlike bogs, which have acidic



Fen-dwelling spatterdock, or yellow pond lily
Nuphar lutea

soils, fens are usually alkaline or neutral and have isothermal water temperatures around 58 degrees.

On Saturday morning, a Missouri grassland group joined the KNPS group to explore a dolomite glade natural area. Dolomite glades are open, natural communities, usually on southern or



Dolomite glade with tickseed coreopsis, *Coreopsis lanceolata*, and fragrant sumac, *Rhus aromatica*, by a dolomite boulder

western slopes underlain by dolomite bedrock and characterized by shallow, rocky, excessively drained soil. In summer and fall, the glades are hot and dry. The glade was dominated by grasses, sedges, and unique and hardy forbs and fauna. Of particular interest to our guide was Bush's Skullcap (*Scutellaria bushii*). This diminutive little plant is an endemic, only found in these particular glades in the central Ozarks, where it is a



Dolomite glade-dwelling Bush's skullcap
Scutellaria bushii

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Ozark Highlands Tour

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characteristic species of this habitat. It is easy to identify, since it is about a foot high with oblong, rounded, opposite leaves and deep blue-purple flowers that are lighter blue below.

We also saw lichen grasshoppers, *Trimerotropis saxatilis*, whose camouflage mimics



Dolomite Glade-dwelling
Lichen grasshopper

the surrounding lichen-covered rocks. After going single file in small groups, we were delighted to see white lady's slipper orchids, *Cypripedium candidum*, in bloom. This is a rare orchid in



Dolomite Glade-dwelling
Lady's Slipper Orchid
Cypripedium candidum

Missouri and has been totally destroyed in some of its range and is threatened or endangered throughout its range in the upper Midwest, Northeast and Canada due to loss of habitat and incursions of invasive species. It grows 4 to 16 inches tall and blooms from about the end of April to June with a white pouch-like lip and green or brownish lateral sepals and petals. Because the plant is further endangered by illegal collection, we were sworn to

silence regarding the location of this glade. We assisted in counting the plants. I believe the count was well over 250.

Saturday afternoon was spent at the igneous glade atop Stegall Mountain. Igneous glades are exposed outcrops of acidic bedrock, in this case, volcanic rhyolite, with very shallow soils, usually,



Igneous glade, foreground left and right, smooth sumac, *Rhus glabra*; center, wild quinine, *Parthenium integrifolium*

again, on hot, dry South and West facing slopes. Lichens, mosses, grasses, along with a few hardy



Igneous Glade-dwelling
Rock Pink

forbs, shrubs and trees dominate. These glades are home to the Eastern Collared Lizard, *Crotaphytus collaris*.

I can't thank our guide, Susan Farrington, enough. Besides identifying any plant pointed out in an instant, her philosophy was that you need to see "both the forest and the trees" to understand and appreciate the landscape. Throughout our tours, she first presented an overview of the natural communities that we were visiting and discussed the role of disturbance, particularly fire, in the development and maintenance of natural ecosystems. She demonstrated several examples of the current practice of controlled burns in maintaining woodland conditions with a diverse herbaceous ground layer.

Our visit to the Ozarks was thoroughly enjoyable, educational and exciting. I look forward to joining the group for further adventures in the area.

2013 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events

Information provided by [Kansas Native Plant Society](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org), 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!

 **April 13:** KNPS Spring Board Meeting at Karlyle Woods in Topeka, KS. Karlyle Woods is owned by Washburn University. We will meet in the lab, noon-2pm. Directions: Take the NW 35th Street exit off of US-75. Go east to 3440 Button Road and take a right. Take an immediate left and follow the driveway to the end. The lab is located west of the caretaker's residence. After the meeting, we will walk the trails in the woods, looking for spring wildflowers such as Dutchman's breeches. Contact Jeff Hansen if you plan to attend: [hanjd@cox.net] (785) 806-6917.

April 20: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. Volunteer prairie maintenance and preservation projects, third Saturday each month except Dec. [www.grasslandheritage.org]. Wear appropriate clothing. No special skills or tools needed. For details, please contact Frank Norman [fjnorman@sunflower.com] (785) 887-6775 (home) or (785) 691-9748 (cell).

 **April 21:** Hillsdale State Park Spring Wild Flower Walk, Paola, KS. The walk will be led by KNPS Board Member Lenora Larson. Our first exploration will be the 1.5 mile "Hidden Spring Nature Trail" (Yes, there is a hidden spring!). We will meet at the Visitor Center parking lot at 1pm, 26001 West 255th St. Directions: turn west on the Hillsdale exit from K-7/169. Contact: Lenora Larson [lenora.longlips@gmail.com] (913) 284-3360.

April 26-29: FloraKansas Great Plains Plant Bazaar, sponsored by Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, KS. [www.dyckarboretum.org] [arboretum@Hesston.edu] (620) 327-8127.

 **May 8:** Woodland Wildflower Walk along Shunga Creek in Topeka, 6pm-dark. See spring woodland flowers with KNPS in the Felker Park woods along Shunga Creek. Volunteers have been clearing Amur honeysuckle from the woods since 2010. This invasive shrub eliminates the native wildflowers. With the honeysuckle gone, the native plants will rebound. Some flowers we should see include blue phlox, Virginia waterleaf, paw paw, violets, and others. Meet at the parking lot at the Tennis Courts off of 2540 SW Gage Blvd. RSVP Jeff Hansen if you plan to attend. [hanjd@cox.net] (785) 806-6917

 **May 11:** Barber County Wildflower Tour. Meet at the Medicine Lodge High School, 8:30am. Enjoy continental breakfast and slides of flowers we expect to see. Buses will provide transportation. Morning participants will return to the school at noon. Full-day participants will enjoy a delicious lunch and entertainment at a tree-shaded country park. Ride through the beautiful gyp hills to a second site. Refreshments will be served before we return to the school around 3:30pm. Barber Co. Conservation District and Kansas Native Plant Society are co-sponsors. Pre-paid reservations should be sent before May 7th, \$8 half-day, \$15 full-day. Barber Co Conservation, 800 W. 3rd Ave. Medicine Lodge, KS 67104-8002, Courtney Pilkington [pilkington@ks.nacdn.net], phone (620) 886-3721, ext. 3.

 **May 11:** Native Medicinal Plants & Wildflower Walk, 10am. KU Medicinal Plant Research Garden, 1865 E. 1600 Road, Lawrence, KS. Curator of the RL McGregor Herbarium, Craig Freeman, will be our leader, accompanied by staff biologist and Assoc. Director for Outreach, Scott Campbell. After this tour, we will drive 1 ½ miles north to the nature trail area to enjoy the spring wildflowers Contact: Lenora Larson lenora.longlips@gmail.com 913-284-3360 Sponsor: Miami County Extension Master Gardeners

May 18: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See April 20 info.

 **May 23:** Topeka Nature Walk, 6-7pm. Take a one-hour nature walk and learn more about birds, flowers, trees and insects from members of the Topeka Audubon Society and the Kansas Native Plant Society. Sponsored by the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library. Limit 30 people. Registration is required, contact: Kimberly Sain [KSain@tscpl.org] (785) 580-4540.

 **June 1-30:** June is Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month! Each year KNPS makes a formal appeal to the Governor for June to be proclaimed as Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month, to promote greater appreciation for the diversity, value, and beauty of Kansas native plants and their habitats.
[www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org]

Kansas Area Native Plant Wildflower Events— Continued

June 1: Spring Wildflower Tour at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge, McPherson County, KS. Board the tram for a tour of the prairie with wildflowers and buffalo, 10am. There is also a self-guided walking tour with flowers flagged. The Refuge is located 6 miles north of Canton, KS. [<http://www.cyberkraft.com/maxwell/>] (620) 628-4455.

 **June 2:** Friends of Konza Prairie Annual Wildflower Walk, 6:30pm - sunset. Join us for a 2-mile guided hike of Butterfly Hill Trail, generally not open to the public. At the peak of wildflower season, visitors often view more than 50 species of native tallgrass prairie plants blooming. Cosponsored by Kansas Native Plant Society and Konza Docents. Free to Friends of Konza Prairie members, \$7 for others. [<http://keep.konza.ksu.edu/visit/events.htm>] RSVP required; telephone reservations will be taken beginning May 1, (785) 587-0441.

June 3-7: Earth Partnership for Schools Summer Institute at Dyck Arboretum of the Plains in Hesston, KS. Teachers: Learn to engage your students in the process of prairie gardening on school grounds, earn three hours of graduate credit, take home an extensive curriculum, eat good food for a week, and have a fun and meaningful experience at the Dyck Arboretum! This 40-hour institute for school teachers and staff will train you in the award-winning Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) Program that you can share with your students and colleagues for years to come. Contact Brad Guhr for more information [bradg@hesston.edu] (620) 327-8127.

June 7: Tri County Rangeland Workshop at Woodson State Fishing Lake and Wildlife Area, Toronto, KS, 8:30am-12:30pm. Emphasis of this field day is plant id, but there will also be stations on invasive plant control, rangeland monitoring techniques, rangeland conservation practices, and patch burning for diversity. Sponsor: Natural Resources Conservation Service. Contact: Amber Johnson [amber.a.johnson@ks.usda.gov] (620) 583-5544.

June 8: Coombs Prairie Restoration Tour, near Holton, KS at 1pm. Tour Fred and Nancy Coombs' ongoing restoration of native grasses and forbs on their 156-year-old family farm. Highlights include reseedling of old fields, patch burning, and timber stand improvement. Directions: 6 miles east of Holton on K-116, right on X Rd, right on 222nd Road, quarter mile to driveway on the right, 18160 222nd Rd. Nancy and Fred are Board Members for Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact: Nancy Coombs [coombs@rainbowtell.net] (785) 872-3463.

June 15: Tour 3 Leavenworth County Prairies, 8am. Explore three of the most diverse and scenic Tallgrass prairies in the county with KNPS Board Member Shirley Braunlich. We'll caravan from a nearby location. Contact for more info: [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 218-5480.

June 15: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See April 20 info.

June 19: Wildflower walk in honor of area celebrations of Juneteenth. In addition to KNPS northern Flint Hills (Manhattan area), sponsors will include Juneteenth-Geary County, Prairie Heritage, Inc., and Bird Runner Wildlife Refuge. The walk will start at 7:30pm, at Bird Runner Wildlife Refuge, 11003 Lower McDowell Rd., Junction City, KS 66441. Follow the gravel drive, across the creek, and up to the guesthouse. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Margy Stewart [zzstew@flinthills.com] (785) 539-5592.

 **June 20:** 11th Annual Grant-Bradbury Prairie Jaunt in Topeka, KS at 6:30pm-dark. Join Kansas Native Plant Society and enjoy an evening on Topeka's premiere prairie park with over 300 plant species. You will learn and see the plants and animals of the prairie. Spring wildflowers will be at their peak. Children welcome. Jeff Hansen, wildflower expert, will lead the tour. Directions: Take Topeka Blvd south to the University Blvd intersection (stoplight), take a right. Take University west half a mile - when the road curves south, you are at the driveway to the park gate. There is a small building at the driveway. Contact Jeff if you plan to attend: [hanjd@cox.net] (785) 806 6917.

June 22: Long Lips Farm Native Plant Garden Tour 1pm in Paola, KS. This 4-acre certified butterfly garden features native plants that are the obligate hosts for butterfly and moth caterpillars, as well as the adult beverage, nectar, from native and ornamental flowers. Tour is hosted by Lenora Larson. Directions: DO NOT USE ONLINE MAPPING directions—they are WRONG. Long Lips Farm is north of Paola, ½-block south of K-68 at 27995 Plum Creek Road. Look for the Long Lips Farm sign on K-68, 6.5 miles west of K-7/169. Contact: Lenora Larson [lenora.longlips@gmail.com] (913) 284-3360.

 **July 13:** Kansas Native Plant Society Summer Board Meeting and Outing in Hutchinson, KS. Botany exploration and hike at Sandhills State Park, 9am. Bring your lunch. Board meeting at Dillon Nature Center, 1pm. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453.



KNPS Members Spread the Word About Kansas State Grass

A significant number of plant-lovers in the past few months devoted time and efforts to making sure that people throughout the state learned about Little Bluestem, the Kansas State Grass and the KNPS Wildflower of the Year. The target audiences were Kansas school children and the general population. Below are the names of KNPS members who either visited classrooms to share information about Little Blue and/or provided information and materials for others to use to introduce our State Grass.

	SCHOOLS	
KNPS Member	Action	Target Location
Nancy Coombs	Presentation	Colorado Elementary School, Holton
Nancy & Fred Coombs, Jeff Hansen	Presentation	Jackson Hts Middle School, Holton
Bennie Holtsclaw	Presentation	Strong City Elementary School
Valerie Wright, Diane Barker, Nancy Goulden	Presentation	Manhattan schools: Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School Woodrow Wilson Elementary School Bluemont Elementary School
Phyllis Scherich	Information/materials	Elementary School, Strong City South Central Grade and Middle Schools, Coldwater/Protection
	EVENTS/GARDEN SHOWS	
KNPS Member	Action	Target Location
Susan Reimer	Information/materials	Kansas Day: Kauffman Museum, Bethel College, North Newton
Craig & Jane Freeman	Bookmarks	Eagles' Day booth
Micky Louis	Speech, bookmarks, fact sheets	Johnson County Library
Nancy Coombs	Created library display	Beck-Bookman Library, Holton
Nancy & Fred Coombs	Information booth	Fall Forestry Field Day, Kickapoo Pow Wow Grounds
Ken O'Dell	Speech	Miami County Master Gardeners, Louisburg
Ken O'Dell	Booth	Master Gardeners' Plant Sale
	PUBLICATION SUBMISSIONS, MAILINGS	
KNPS Member	Action	Target Location
Ken O'Dell	Two articles to periodicals, press release to local newspaper	Northeast Kansas
Jeff Hansen	Press release to two periodicals	Northeast Kansas
Kevin Scherich	Press release to company newsletter	Northeast Kansas
Lenora Larson	Article to periodical	Northeast Kansas
Phyllis Scherich	Press release to 5 newspapers	South Central Kansas
Krista Dahlinger	Press release to area newspapers	South Central Kansas
Chelsea Juricek	Press release to 7 newspapers	North Central Kansas

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KNPS Members Spread the Word About Kansas State Grass

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We don't know the exact number of articles published. However, we did learn that several newspapers carried the press release during the week of Kansas Day. In addition to the printed word, the KNPS website was a popular source of information about Little Bluestem. According to "Most Popular Pages" (Google Analytics), four Little Bluestem pages were in the top 25, and when numbers from the four are added together, it comes out the second highest section.

Ken O'Dell has been active in incorporating Little Bluestem into area landscape plantings. He has planted Little Blue in at least six sites, and two more plantings are planned. The plants are labeled and arrangements made for them to be maintained.

Without a doubt this campaign has been successful. We feel certain there are many more KNPS members that we don't know about who have also been spreading the word in their communities. If you have contributed to promoting Little Bluestem but do not find your name listed above, please e-mail Valerie Wright (vwm@k-state.edu) so we can add your name to the list.



Little Blue Display at Holton Library



Fred Coombes addresses a class in Holton



General Guidelines for Seed Collecting *

*Based on a review of online recommendations

By Chelsea Erickson

Native plant enthusiasts use the tool of seed collecting to aid in enriching their personal gardens or native prairie restoration projects. This raises questions such as: "Can I? Should I? And how much do I collect?" The over-arching reply to these burning questions is..."it depends." This article will explore those questions and present various suggestions for seed collecting.

The location of seed collecting, for example, will dictate who needs to be contacted for permission. I found the most important **first step is "ask permission."** Trespassing is illegal, even if it's in the name of native plants. Several sources recommend "never collect on public land," while other sources recommend checking with local, state, and federal agencies before collecting on public land. Laws and personal preference might change between cities and states; so it's better to be sure before collecting. If you are collecting seed on a roadside, always be aware of traffic and avoid becoming a hazard.

One of the dangers to a plant population is over-harvesting by eager seed collectors. There are several **recommendations to avoid degrading a plant population.** **First**, avoid areas littered with

invasive species. You don't want to accidentally collect seed and spread an undesirable plant. This leads to the **second** recommendation: be 100% sure you know what you are collecting! Never, ever collect seed from a rare or endangered plant. To avoid that serious violation, it's recommended to flag a desired plant population while they are flowering and thus easy to identify. **Third**, wait to harvest seeds until they are fully ripened. This may require some background research but will be fruitful in more ways than one.

A **fourth** recommendation to avoid over-harvesting of seed is to only collect seeds from plants growing abundantly in a given area to avoid damaging that location's seed source. If you cannot locate a satisfactory population, then perhaps locating a commercial source of seed is the way to go. **Finally**, only collect a small percentage of the seed available from a plant population. Recommendations range from 10% of the population to 1/3 of the seed available. Use your best judgment based on the circumstances. When it's all said and done, enjoy your collecting experience and spread the word about the joys of native plants!



Growing from Seed: Ironweed

Text and Photos by Ken O'Dell

Our native Ironweed will tolerate about any well-drained soil from dry to moist. It prefers full sun but will grow in dappled shade along roadways, prairies, fields and pasture. Ironweed is an upright growing perennial 3- to 5-feet in height with reddish-purple flowers in late summer into frost.



Western Ironweed blossom

Photo by Mike Haddock

It is noticeable in overgrazed pasture in late summer as the stems are so bitter the cows will rarely eat them.

Ironweed is easy to grow from seed. This Kansas native makes a nice tall perennial for the home landscape. If you do not want the seeds to mature, you should cut off the spent seed heads as soon as they quit showing color.

Of the five or six species growing native in Kansas, *Vernonia arkansana*, *Vernonia baldwinii*, and *Vernonia fasciculata* are the most common. On our farm in Miami County, Kansas we have *V. baldwinii* in good numbers, and it is at its best in late summer. I frequently see the description of the leaves described as rough, but the leaves on the ironweed on our farm are for the most part quite soft and smooth. The underside of the leaves is very soft and smooth. These are great for butterflies and frequently you will see several butterflies on each flower head. The flower heads are from 3 to several inches across with many smaller flowers making up these large attractive heads. If there is a fragrance to any of these flowers, I have not detected it. The butterflies do have a longer nose than I do and might be able to pick up a faint fragrance.

Gather the seed when the brown seed heads are dry and slightly crisp. I have several sieves used to

clean the seed. After picking the seed heads, I put them in 10" x 22" plastic flats and let them dry out so when I crush them in my hands, they will quickly fall apart. Then I put all of this in a 30 gallon black plastic bag, tie the top of the bag and shake and shake and shake. After several minutes, many of the seeds will be at the bottom of the plastic bag. At one corner of



Ironweed seed

the bottom of the bag, you will feel two-handful lumps of uncleaned seed heads that have gathered in this corner of the bag. Take these out and start putting them through the sieves, using the biggest sieve first, and after you do this through two or three sieves, you will have some decently cleaned seed. Store this in the fridge, not the freezer, until spring time, or if you choose, you can immediately throw these seed into the field or prairie where you want them to grow. I have a small greenhouse where we plant seed for some native plant sales, and I usually plant these seed about mid-January into seed trays, transplant after 2 or 3 leaves into larger pots, and they will be about 5 or 6" tall by mid-April.



Ironweed seedling

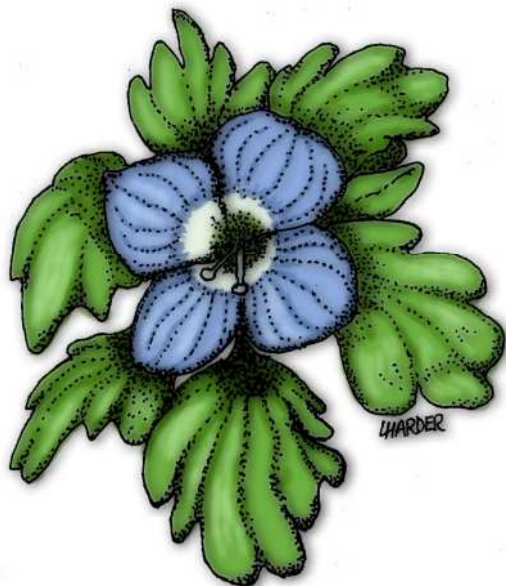
Mike Haddock, a member of the KNPS and the brains behind the Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas website www.kswildflower.org, has more very nice pictures and information on *Vernonia baldwinii*. Jeff Hansen, a member of the KNPS and the brains behind Kansas Native Plants seed and plant source, offers seed of Ironweed. Go to www.kansasnativeplants.com.



Featured Plants:

Greenfield Speedwell, *Veronica agrestis*, and Tiny Bluet, *Houstonia pusilla*

Text by Lorraine J. Kaufman, Illustration by Lorna Habegger Harder



Greenfield speedwell
Veronica agrestis

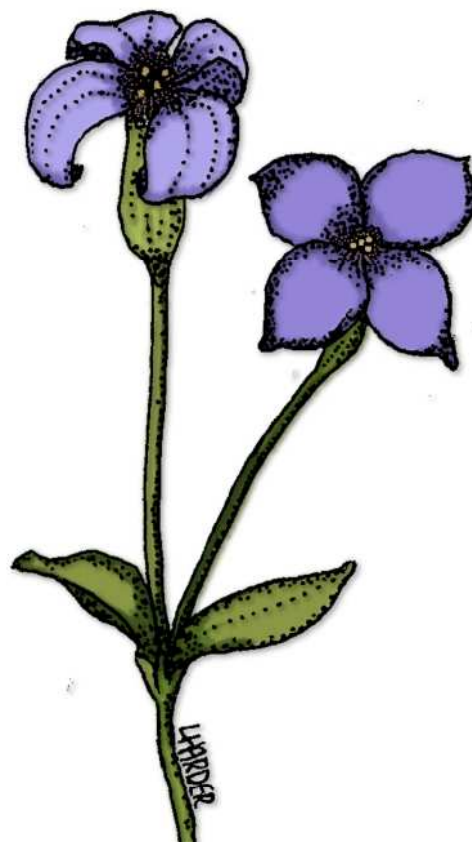
The early spring prairie wildflowers have a special charm. Their diminutive size suggests that they're blooming in a hurry to avoid being silenced by a sudden, late snowstorm or being crowded out by taller species. Their particularly vibrant colors stand out against the brown barrenness of winter. Two of the earliest and smallest wildflowers in the Kansas prairie are Greenfield speedwell, *Veronica agrestis*, and tiny bluet, *Houstonia pusilla*.

It was mid-February and a small patch of snow clung to the edge of the sidewalk. Right at the edge of the snow, a spot of brilliant blue caught my eye. Looking down, I saw a one-eighth-inch-diameter wildflower with the cutest blue "smile lines" radiating across its tiny face. This was the Greenfield speedwell, introduced from Europe but

now widely naturalized across the US in lawns, fields, and disturbed ground. Its leaves appear in December, and it blooms for several months beginning in January. Its obvate corolla has a delicate design best appreciated on your knees with a hand lens.

A few weeks later in early March, a walk in the warming prairies revealed patches of a lavender-blue flower, the aptly-named tiny bluet. These native annuals grow best in sparse vegetation during March and April, producing stems up to four inches high that end in a half-inch diameter, filiform corolla with dark nectar guides radiating from the throat. Four lobes atop each stem spread sharply at right angles, and each "eye" of the flower gazes straight up into the sky.

These delicate harbingers of spring will be long past if you wait for balmy weather before you explore your prairie. Dress warmly, look down, and think small! You don't want to miss the brave and cheery countenance of these courageous tiny wildflowers! You will not be disappointed!



Tiny bluet
Houstonia pusilla



Interview with Layout Editor

Readers who carefully peruse the last page of the newsletter may have discovered that Karen Hummel is the Layout Editor for our KNPS publication. However, very few members may know just what all Karen does to make sure you receive a pleasing, easy-to-read, newsletter on time. So we have asked Karen to share some of what she contributes to the preparation phase of the newsletter and also tell about her background.

1. Explain the primary tasks you carry out as Layout Editor. Contributors are given their assignments by Nancy Goulden. Nancy edits the copy and sends it to me. I assemble the newsletter. Nancy, June Kleisen and I proofread, I make corrections, save the newsletter as a PDF file and forward it to the printer, along with the distribution mailing list.

2. What do you like most about working on the newsletter? I love working with our newsletter team, including our editorial staff, the contributing authors, photographers and artists. There is so much knowledge and talent in the KNPS organization, and it is a privilege to have a part in sharing the information they impart. The newsletter layout process is rather like assembling a puzzle, and is also an enjoyable task.

3. Tell about your training and experiences that have prepared you "to put the newsletter together." One aspect of my job as a Systems Engineer was to oversee design reviews and the associated publications. This required attention to clear communication, and also involvement in the publication process. After retirement, I became involved with web design, and am currently using those tools with the newsletter.

4. Where do you live? I live in Manhattan, Kansas, with my husband Steve. We raised our family here, then moved to San Diego, California for eighteen years. We retired back to Manhattan to be close to family.

5. Tell about your family. Steve and I have three children and eleven grandchildren. All live in the midwest, so we can stay in touch and visit frequently. Property and homes developed from original maternal and paternal family homesteads are still in the family, having been maintained and upgraded to contemporary home standards. My brother and his wife maintain the paternal farm, and a nephew and family reside in the maternal homestead where I grew up.

6. What is/are your favorite native plant(s)? I love the transitions of the seasons. In winter, my favorites are the dried grasses, with their subtle color variations and graceful leaf curls. Each season is special, with its botanical stars and bashful beauties. Circumstances have prevented me from hiking recently, and I am anxious to get back out in the field and refresh my knowledge.

Do you have a favorite place to find native plants? I am a docent at Konza Prairie. Naturally, I favor the Konza trails, and look forward to rejoining the phenology excursions this year.

7. What do you like about KNPS? KNPS is a sensibly run organization with a focus on Kansas native plants. The Annual meeting and regional activities are rich with opportunity to associate with old favorites and new friends, both botanical and human. The members have different areas of knowledge, and readily share their expertise. We all seem to be seeking more understanding, and enjoy the friendship that goes with our common interests in plants and ecological preservation.

Membership News

NEW MEMBERS FROM 12/10/12 TO 3/9/13

AbieNormal Creations - Olathe
Gary Andersen - Olathe
Kathleen Ayers - Mission
Elisabeth Ballou - Topeka
Ted Beringer - Lenexa
Dana Brensing - Manhattan
Camp Wood YMCA - Elmdale

Judith Collins - Salina
Robert Donahue - Wayne, Nebraska
Richard K. Farmer - Olathe
Seth Gollhofer - Pittsburg
Grassland Gardens Nursery & Flower Farm -
Miltonvale
Celia Heller - Ellsworth
Benjamin Kerbs - Emporia
Dan LaShelle - Topeka
Catherine McElvain - Overland Park

Cynthia Robinson - Prairie Village
Kathryn Roccaforte - Lawrence
Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society -
Pittsburg
Lynne Tidwell - Lawrence
Carma Wilson - Eureka
Mollie & Ken Wold - Elmdale

MEMBERS RETURNING AFTER A HIATUS

Bryan & Sharon Reber - Athens, Georgia

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

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LEARN MORE ABOUT KNPS

Check us out online at www.ksnps.org
Contact us by email at email@ksnps.org
Contact us by phone at 785-864-3453



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 calendar year.

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

Kansas Native Plant Society
R. L. McGregor Herbarium
2045 Constant Avenue
Lawrence KS 66047-3729

A membership in 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.

Membership application/renewal form

Member Information:

Membership Category:

Name:		Student	\$10.00
Address		Individual	\$20.00
City/State:		Family	\$30.00
Zipcode:		Organization	\$35.00
Phone:		Contributing	\$100.00
Email:		Lifetime	\$500.00
County (if KS):			