

Kentucky Native Plant Society

Newsletter



Volume 10, Number 3

August 1995

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Deadline for November Newsletter is October 10. Please be prompt!

The Kentucky Native Plant Society, Inc. was founded in 1986 as a botanical organization for all persons interested in the native flora and vegetation of Kentucky. The goals of the KNPS are to serve as a medium of information exchange, to promote native plant conservation, public education in botany and botanical research in Kentucky. Annual dues of \$5.00 (\$7.00 family) may be sent to KNPS Membership, c/o Department of Biological Sciences, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY 40475.

The KNPS Newsletter is printed quarterly (Feb., May, Aug., Nov.). Deadlines for submissions are the 10th of the month preceding printing month. Send articles and correspondence to KNPS Newsletter Editor, c/o Department of Biological Sciences, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond Kentucky 40475.

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A Message from KNPS President Landon McKinney

Before I begin discussing any information that I would like to pass on to each of you, I would like to make one brief announcement. Effective August 1, 1995, I am resigning as President of the Kentucky Native Plant Society. My resignation is for personal reasons and it is with deep regret that I will be unable to continue my term until next spring's elections.

My time spent at the helm of the KNPS has been a truly pleasurable experience. The people that I have met and the friends that I have made have been a major source of encouragement. I have always felt that Kentucky has one of the best and most active Native Plant Societies in the country.

While I would like to take some credit for any improvements made over the last three years, I know that no accomplishments would have been possible without the support of dedicated and enthusiastic officers and board members. To them, I owe any success that may be otherwise attributed to my efforts.

Over the last several years, our membership has increased by more than 20%. Our newsletter is as informative and educational as ever. Our Native Plant certification program is one of the few in the country, and of those, is one of the best. We have made several important changes in our Bylaws. Our spring

meeting continues to be educational and fun. New programs are being initiated to provide funds for scholarships for basic botanical research. Special projects were created to further the occurrence of native plants in Kentucky. Our Dennis Prairie Restoration Project only encompassed one workday, but that one workday accomplished more than anyone could have possibly imagined.

All of this is owed to our members who had the interest and desire to participate in our common goals. To those of you participating, I am truly grateful. To those of you who have not been able to actively participate, I thank you for continuing to be active, dues paying members which help us achieve missions.

To the business at hand, I would like to remind everyone to mark their calendars for our fall meeting. Details are being finalized for our joint meeting with the Tennessee Native Plant Society at Natural Bridge State Resort Park. This will be a great experience so please make plans now to attend.

Also remember that 1996 will be the 10th anniversary of the Kentucky Native Plant Society. Plans are being made for an exciting 10th anniversary program, with a commemorative T-shirt, and a special 10-year review issue of the best of the KNPS newsletter.

I will close this, my last message, by once again saying how much I have enjoyed being at the helm of this great organization. Please continue your support in any way you can and the Kentucky Native Plant Society will continue to provide support for those who truly appreciate our native flora and that

flora's position as an important part of Kentucky's natural heritage.

A sincere thanks to each and every one of you!

PLANT PLACES...

The Best in Public Access Sites for Viewing and Studying our Native Flora

NATIVE PLANTS FEATURED AT NEW SALATO WILDLIFE EDUCATION CENTER

Sherri Evans

On October 1, 1995, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources will open its recently completed Salato Wildlife Education Center at the Game Farm in Frankfort. The gala opening event will feature noted speakers and experts in wildlife and native plant management.

The Salato Center was founded on the premise that all Kentuckians are stewards of Kentucky's natural diversity - its wildlife, their habitats and the ecological processes that support them - and that native plants are essential to the conservation of native wildlife. Salato will present a unique forum for developing partnerships with Kentucky citizens "to understand and manage these resources to meet the needs and hopes of present and future generations." Information about Kentucky's plant, fish and wildlife resources will be disseminated using passive

and interactive exhibits, landscape demonstrations, and workshops. Included in the Center are a multipurpose classroom, a resource room for teachers and a gift shop.

Native plants will be the focus of the outdoor exhibits as well as in the general landscaping and demonstration gardens around Salato and, ultimately, throughout the Game Farm. Outdoor exhibits, viewed through large windows in the Salato Center, will feature some of the natural communities found in Kentucky, including a forest, oak-ash savanna and a wetland. Although not extensive, these exhibits will introduce visitors to the concept of managing ecosystems to provide habitats for the greatest diversity of Kentucky's plants and animals. The outdoor exhibits will interface with indoor exhibits describing each community and amazing ecological interactions that occur there.



A backyard wildlife habitat, complete with a water garden, will demonstrate how native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants from Kentucky's natural communities can be used to attract birds, bees and butterflies to suburban yards. The habitat garden is viewed through a wall of windows where binoculars and field guides will be available to aid in the identification and study of plants and visiting wildlife.

At the front entrance to Salato, a garden featuring medicinal and edible native herbs will have plants labeled with an accompanying information sheet describing the way's native Americans and settlers have used each species. Elsewhere, designed landscapes will feature some of Kentucky's most attractive and hardy grasses, wildflowers, trees and shrubs, including materials suitable for streambank, wetland, prairie and forest restoration as well as general landscaping. A coming attraction on the back forty will be some of Kentucky's favorite game and nongame wildlife roaming freely in large natural habitat enclosures, including bison, deer, elk and turkey. The bald eagle and other raptors such as hawks and owls, housed in a new aviary, will help educate participating schools and other groups about the perils of these miraculous and unfairly maligned birds of prey.

The native plants being used at Salato are being propagated at the Game Farm Greenhouses using Kentucky genotypic materials collected mostly from Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Wildlife Management Areas. A native plant seedbank and reference collection is also being developed for educational purposes, and plans are to produce surplus seed for use by schools, parks, and other groups wanting to propagate and establish native plantings for wildlife.

As you can imagine, development of Salato and its natural landscapes will be a long-term process requiring many hours of labor (and years of patience) to complete. We are actively seeking volunteers who would like to become involved in this process as members of the Salato Volunteer Corps. Volunteers may participate on a variety of levels, from actual

plant installation and maintenance to collecting seeds from wild plants or assisting with educational programs. Greenhouse volunteers will learn how to identify, propagate and landscape with a great diversity of native plants, how to use native plants to attract wildlife, and basic greenhouse operation procedures. To learn more about Salato and the Volunteer Corps, contact Sherri Evans (502-564-5280).

Pat's Weed Patch

Patricia D. Haragan

Pueraria lobata a.k.a. Kudzu!

Kudzu, a native of eastern Asia, is also known as Japanese kudzu or king kudzu and is a member of the legume family. It was first introduced into the United States as an ornamental vine at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. Americans who saw this fragrant, exotic plant with deep purple pealike flowers, were enthusiastic about using it in their landscapes. It was attractive, fast growing (up to 100 feet in a season), luxuriant in foliage, and drought resistant. Word spread and soon this species became highly regarded as an ornamental in the south. It was recommended as the perfect vine to plant by porches to shade them from the summer heat.

In 1935, the United States Soil Conservation Service became interested in kudzu. They began extensive field tests to see if this species had potential as a cover crop. Not only was it

aggressive, but because it was a legume, it could restore nitrogen to the soil. Once it was approved, some 73 million kudzu seedlings were planted to control soil erosion on badly eroded fields. By the mid 1950's, kudzu became a curse; it grew on houses, fences, utility lines, crops, and devastated forested areas. It was dubbed the "green menace" and an estimated seven million acres had become infested. Even the newspapers stated that the south was fighting another war...this time with kudzu. Attention was immediately focused on eradication.

Today, kudzu is found growing far beyond the boundaries where it was first planted and is known from locations as far north as Michigan, New York, and Massachusetts; Pennsylvania has placed it on the state's Noxious Weed List.

In Kentucky, kudzu is found throughout the state. It is a troublesome weed on bottom land soils in the western part of the state; scattered in the middle part of the state and severe in southeastern Kentucky where it has had a devastating impact on native vegetation.

Patricia Haragan is Associate Curator of the Davies Herbarium at the University of Louisville and a regular contributor to the KNPS Newsletter.





Curators' Corner

Kentucky Herbaria: An Overview

Ronald Jones

Many of our members are interested in collecting and preserving plant specimens for permanent study and appreciation. Did you know that many of our state institutions keep a dried collection of plants for study by faculty, students and serious amateur botanist? These collections are called herbaria--and they are defined as a collection of dried plant specimens arranged in some logical order. Typically the specimens are dried in groups, using a plant press, in which each specimen is placed within a fold of newspaper, between blotting paper and cardboard, the arrangement is then stacked vertically between plywood boards and tightened with straps. Once collected and pressed the specimens are dried in a drying cabinet, then identified, labeled and affixed to a sheet of acid-free mounting paper.

Two main types of specimen arrangements are used in herbaria--1) a natural relationship type in which families and genera are arranged from primitive to advanced, and 2) a totally alphabetical arrangement for families, genera, and species.

The specimens housed in our state herbaria were collected over a long period of time by faculty members, by graduate students

working on thesis projects, and by undergraduates as part of their class assignments. In addition many other collections have been added to our state holdings through exchanges with other institutions. Not all collections are from Kentucky; many come from research or travels throughout the U.S. or from abroad. Browsing through some of the collections one can study representative specimens from many parts of the country, and can also travel into the past, as some specimens date back more than 100 years. These sometimes include interesting handwritten accounts of the specimen and localities on the labels. Occasionally a herbarium will obtain through gifts or exchanges a very old set of unmounted specimens, possibly kept in a private collection or in a museum for more than 50 years. It is always interesting just to read the old newspapers that come with the specimen!

Currently 13 institutions in Kentucky maintain herbaria. A recent survey (Transactions of the Kentucky Academy of Science 56: 134-137) estimates that there are about 240,000 collections of vascular plants (ferns, conifers, and flowering plants) in the state. The University of Kentucky has the largest collections, with two herbaria totaling about 70,000. The University of Louisville, Murray State University, and Eastern Kentucky University have about 30,000-35,000 specimens each. Northern Kentucky University has about 27,000 specimens, while Western Kentucky University and Morehead State University have about 15,000 each.

The largest collection at a private college is at Berea College, with about 15,000 specimens. Institutions with plant collections

ranging from a few hundred to about a 1000 include Campbellsville College, Georgetown College, Cumberland College, and Asbury College.

Although these overall numbers may sound impressive, actually Kentucky ranks very low in total collections. In Tennessee herbaria for example, there are more than 800,000 vascular plant collections in eight herbaria, and in Ohio there are more than one million collections in 14 herbaria. For nonvascular plants (mosses and liverworts), the discrepancy is even worse, with only about 3000 collections in the entire state, while individual institutions in other state, such as the University of Tennessee with more than 160,000 collections, and the University of Cincinnati with more than 20,000 nonvascular plant collections, have many more specimens. It is true that many of Kentucky collections over the years have ended up being deposited at other institutions, but still the overall numbers are very low.

You might ask why we need so many collections, when there are only about 3000 species in the entire state. There are several reasons. For any given species in the state, it takes many hundreds of collections to understand how the plant is distributed. Questions such as which counties a species occurs in, its habitat preferences, associates, and others can only be answered by documenting the basic information. In addition, when many collections of the same species are brought together and studied as a whole (as is done in taxonomic studies), one can learn a great deal about the morphological, chemical, and genetic variation in the species. These studies help us better understand the species, its history, its relationship to other

species, its potential as a food or medicinal plant, etc. Each herbarium specimen can be equated to a book in a library--and it is possible to obtain 100's of bits of data from each specimen.

Therefore, the work goes on in documenting the flora of Kentucky. Obviously much remains to be done in learning more about the presence and distribution of Kentucky plants. Those interested in learning how to make collections to deposit at Kentucky herbaria should write me or the curator at your local college or university. Most Kentucky herbaria welcome visitors, so if you are interested, call your local university or college and get in touch with the botanist on staff. Also, some herbaria are badly in need of extra help in processing plants, i.e. mounting, filing, typing, etc. So if you would like to volunteer, just let us know.

Ron Jones is a Professor of Biology at Eastern Kentucky University and Curator of the ECU Herbarium. He can be reached at (606) 622- 6257



Update: Kentucky's Rare Plant Recognition Act

Deborah White

The Rare Plant Recognition Act passed by the General Assembly last session created an official list of the rare flora of this state. Kentucky becomes the forty-fifth state to pass this kind of legislation. The legislation outlines the concern for rare plants as

components of viable ecosystems and recognizes the need for their perpetuation. The intent of the act is not to limit development but to recognize levels of endangerment in the flora and educate the public about the decline in these species. It names the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) as the agency responsible for developing the official list. Since its inception, the Commission has been researching the rare flora of this state and the legislation mandates that information on the habitats, biology and other factors that affect the status of plant species in this state continue to be developed along with protective measures needed for their survival.

Because the Act formalizes the process for listing plants as endangered or threatened, it was necessary to review our rare plant list and outline the criteria used in determining whether a plant should be included on the official rare plant list. As any biologist knows, the road to endangerment is unique for each plant; often a combination of biological circumstances, declining natural habitat and other threats. A methodology created by The Nature Conservancy has been adopted in all fifty states that attempts to standardize the criteria used in determining the status of an organism and facilitates communication among states on the range wide status of species. We also rely upon the Natural Heritage Database, a database maintained by KSNPC (and all other states) that records all the known and reported occurrences and information about rare species and natural communities. Most of the factors affecting a plant defy quantification and this is aggravated by our lack of information on the flora. In evaluating each species for rarity, the number of known

occurrences and population sizes are considered along with other factors that limit the potential for this species. One factor that we also consider is whether the species is rare in surrounding states and, if it is secure all around Kentucky, it is less likely that the species is truly rare in this state.

Nomination of new species for state listing is encouraged from all sources. Usually, a nominated species would be evaluated and then placed on a candidate list for further information gathering. The candidate list will be circulated with the state listing to solicit more information on newly nominated plants and eventually these will be considered for final listing and assigned a status. The proposed official list will go through the state's administrative rule-making procedures in the next few months. The official list will contain only those plants with an endangered and threatened status but the legislation does allow for the creation of other lists for public education which will encompass "special concern" and "extirpated" categories.

In combination with the development of the official list, the results of a three-year review of the flora will appear on the state list. About fifty new plants will be added to the new list. If you would like more information on Kentucky's official list of rare plants, please give Deborah White a call.

Deborah White is a botanist with the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission and can be reached at (502) 573-2886.



KNPS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM IN NATIVE PLANT STUDIES:

Fall 1995 Course Offerings

These courses are being offered by the KNPS as part of a curriculum developed to educate KNPS members in native plant studies. Additional courses in field botany, wildflower cultivation, wetlands, and conservation are being planned. Courses are not limited to KNPS members. Community members are invited and encouraged to attend. For more information on the KNPS, please contact Dr. Ron Jones, ECU Biology Dept., Richmond, KY 40475. (606) 622-6257. For course registration materials call ECU Division of Special Programs at (606) 622-1228.

Plant Taxonomy for the Amateur Naturalist

Dr. Ross Clark, Professor of Biology, ECU.

The flowering plants are the most important group of plants both ecologically and economically. With more than 200,000 species, they form the basis of most food chains, and provide us with many necessary materials--from food to medicine to timber. When did they first appear on the earth? What are their patterns of evolution? How are they now classified? These and many other questions will be addressed in this class. The technical terminology used to describe plant parts will be emphasized, and this course will prepare students for keying exercises and the use of manuals in subsequent classes. A great deal of information will be presented, so students should be prepared to work hard and actively participate. A book fee (about \$30) will be payable to the instructor at the first class (book will be used in subsequent classes also).

This is a required course for KNPS certification in native plant studies and should be taken by those interested in beginning the certification process.

Tuition \$76 ECU Campus, Moore 202

Saturdays, September 16, 23, 30, October 7.
9 am- Noon



Aquatic Plants of the Southeastern U.S. Dr. Ron Jones, Professor of Biology, ECU

Aquatic plants are among the most fascinating members of the plant kingdom. They include a variety of forms--from rooted types with emergent stems, to rooted with submerged stems and leaves, to rooted with floating leaves, to completely free-floating forms. These plants often have very unusual morphological and ecological modifications for life in the water. They are important parts of many aquatic ecosystems, and there is increasing interest in their use as ornamentals, in wetland septic systems, and in the control of those that may become troublesome weeds. This course will survey families, genera, and species of aquatic plants. Aspects of their ecology and life history will also be addressed. Some familiarity with botanical terminology and the use of keys will be very helpful in this course.

This is a special topics course in the KNPS certification curriculum. A book fee of about \$25 will be payable to the instructor at the first class.

Tuition \$76 ECU Campus, Moore 202

Saturdays, October 21, 28, November 4, 11
9 am - Noon

Joint Fall Meeting
Kentucky Native Plant Society -- Tennessee Native Plant Society

When: Friday, September 8, 1995 through Sunday, September 10, 1995

Where: Natural Bridge State Resort Park

Slade, KY 40376-9999

(606) 663-2214 / 1-800-325-1710

Registration: Opens Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (EST), main lobby Hemlock Lodge
Friday late registration 7:00p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Activities Center
Saturday morning registration 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., lobby Hemlock Lodge

Registration Fees: Individuals \$3.00/ Families \$5.00

Planned Activities:

Friday evening: 7:30 p.m. at the Activities Center: KNPS-Sponsored Speaker

Saturday morning: Two trips offered, both depart from lobby of Hemlock Lodge at 9:00a.m.

Field Trip #1: Fall Flowering Endemics of Eastern and North Central Kentucky:

This will be a day long caravan style field trip with multiple stops. We will explore parts of the Red River Gorge, one of the most interesting floristic and geological areas of Kentucky, to search for the white-haired goldenrod (*Solidago albopilosa*). Our caravan will then travel to north central Kentucky to see Short's goldenrod, (*Solidago shortii*), one of the state's rarest plants.

(Activity level will be light to moderate. Comfortable shoes, drinking water, and snack recommended. Lunch will be taken along the way at a commercial eatery or bring your own. Return at 5:00 p.m.)

Field Trip #2: Flora and Geology of Red River Gorge:

This will be a wonderful introduction to the Red River Gorge natural area. experience. Our guided hike over 5 miles of park trails will focus on the flora, plant communities, and the area's unique geology. We will take in such features as the Rock Garden and Natural Bridge (the park's namesake). Discussion will help you interpret the park and whet your appetite for other excursions this fall or next spring.

(Activity level will be moderate to strenuous. Comfortable hiking shoes, drinking water, snacks and/or a sack lunch recommended. Lunch break will be at a rock house. Return at 3:00pm.)

Saturday evening: 7:30 p.m. at the Activities Center: TNPS-Sponsored Speaker

Sunday morning: 9:00 a.m.. Activities left to the discretion of the participants. Field trip leaders will be available for half-day trips. Discussion and sign-up will be arranged at the Saturday evening program.

1995 Field Trips and Activities

There is still time to participate in our KNPS sponsored field trips. These are excellent opportunities to see and learn about Kentucky's plants and plant communities with expert guides. Please call the designated field trip leader or Clara Wieland (606 266-5548) to make reservations for a trip, and for weather cancellation policy, directions, etc.

September 2, 1995. Rare Plants of South Central Kentucky. (Hart and Barren Counties) Saturday, 10:00 a.m. (Central Time).

Charlie Lapham, KNPS Board Member, and Randy Seymour, Nature Conservancy Board Member, will show us three rare plant species. Eggert's sunflower, *Helianthus eggertii*, a federal candidate and endangered in Kentucky, (Randy's farm is one of the Kentucky sites), narrow-leaved blue curls, *Trichostema setaceum*, is a Coastal Plain species that is endangered in Kentucky, and false hellebore, *Veratrum woodii*, threatened in Kentucky, will all be on the hunt list. Meet in the Shoney's parking lot US 31 E bypass, about 1/3 mile north of the Cumberland Parkway interchange in Glasgow. Call Clara Wieland (606 266-5548) or Charlie Lapham (502 646-4060) to register or for additional information.



September 8 - 10, 1995. Joint Meeting of Kentucky and Tennessee Native Plant Societies. Friday through Sunday. Natural Bridge State Resort Park. 800-325-1710. Registration on site. Details on page 9, this issue.



September 23, 1995. The Bluegrass Swamp at Lee's Branch, Woodford County, KY. Saturday 10:30 a.m. (Eastern Time).

Deborah White, Kentucky Nature Preserves Commission Botanist will lead us to this unusual geological and botanical area of the inner bluegrass surrounded by farms and horse paddocks. Libby and Brereton Jones are graciously allowing us access to the best remaining wetland in the Bluegrass. We'll be looking for the rare scented ladies' tress orchid, turtlehead, swamp white oak and other wetland species. Limited to 10 KNPS members. Registration a MUST; call Clara Wieland (606 266-5548).

September 29-30, 1995. Annual Mushroom Foray at Natural Bridge State Resort Park. Friday and Saturday, sponsored by Wilson Francis and the Kentucky Department of Parks. Call the park at 800 325-1710 for details.

October 15, 1995. Eastview Barrens-- Native Grassland in the Fall (Hardin County). Sunday 1:00 p.m. Eastern time.

Julian Campbell, KNPS Board member and botanist with The Nature Conservancy, will introduce participants to the composition and dynamics of one of the most significant native grasslands remaining in the state. Several species of asters will be encountered, including *Aster sericeus*, the rare silky aster. Also, we'll look for the late blooming prairie gentian. Meet at the gas/food store on US 62 just north of the Western Kentucky Parkway, Eastview exit, about 15 miles west of Elizabethtown. Ring up Julian at (606) 271-4392, to register.



Editor's Notes:

T. J. Weckman

First off, as the new editor of the KNPS Newsletter, let me say thanks to Tom Bloom for the super job he has done with the Newsletter over the past year. I see many newsletters from the southeast and Tom produced a very fine product. I hope to be able to maintain the production and content quality.

Some new features begin with this issue, such as "Plant Places," and "Curators' Corner." Continuity will be provided with the President's Message and features such as "Pat's Weed Patch," and the Field Trip and Activities listings. Thanks to our many fine contributors and I encourage any of you to write for the newsletter. Please write me with suggestions about the newsletter and with your questions for "Ask the Botanist," at Biological Sciences, Eastern Kentucky Univ., Richmond, KY 40475, or call (606) 622-1533.

Kentucky Native Plant Society Membership Form

Memberships run for a calendar year (January to December). Dues are modest, please keep your membership current. Current status of membership is indicated on your newsletter mailing label.

Name _____ Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ KY County _____
 Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Please check membership type and enclose check or money order payable to "KNPS":
 (Kentucky Native Plant Society Inc., is a non-profit organization and gifts are tax-deductible.)

_____ Annual Individual Membership (\$5.00)
 _____ Annual Family Membership (\$7.00)
 _____ Lifetime Individual Membership (\$100.00)
 _____ Lifetime Family Membership (\$140.00)

This is a Renewal _____ This is a New membership _____

For new members: Apply dues to this calendar year and send all back issues _____
 Apply dues to next calendar year and start with February issue _____

1995 FALL FIELD TRIP & EVENT CALENDER

September 2: Rare Plants of South Central Kentucky

September 8-10: JOINT MEETING KNPS-TNPS

September 23: Bluegrass Swamp /Lee's Branch

September 29-30: Mushroom Foray

October 1: Salato Center Dedication

October 15: Eastview Barrens

**The Kentucky
Native Plant Society**
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Richmond, KY 40475

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