



Gaillardia

The Oklahoma Native Plant Society Newsletter

The purpose of the ONPS is to encourage the study, protection, propagation, appreciation and use of Oklahoma native plants.

Inside:

- Clay Hill Update
- Cimarron dunes
- Ardmore workshop
- OETA connection
- Registration form and much more!

Notice of meeting: Calling all members for Oct. 26-27

Beginning with 9 a.m. - noon registration, the ONPS Annual Meeting and field trips will be headquartered at the Kerr Country Inn and Conference Center, south of Poteau, less than an hour to many parts of the Ouachita National Forest. Theme of the meeting is *Fall Foliage*. Besides the first guided field trip, beginning at noon on Saturday, the two-day schedule includes the business meeting and election, a panel on Forest Biodiversity (with George Bukenhofer and Vernon Bates), Awards Banquet and program by Ouachita National Forest botanist, Susan Hooks. Field trip leaders include Paul Buck, Susan Hooks, Jim Norman and Connie Taylor. Another field trip is set for Sunday.

The July/August *Gaillardia* carried information on booking rooms in the area, etc., and on page 5 of this issue is more information, and the send-in registration form. Please pre-register so planners can schedule for Banquet, meeting room size, etc.



Native Plant events for your calendar

Date/Time	Event/Place	Contact/Phone
<u>Sept. 21</u> 8 a.m.	<u>Field Trip/Tenkiller</u> Meet below dam/Hwy 62	Jim Norman (918) 682-1896
<u>Sept. 21</u> 9 a.m.	<u>Tallgrass Prairie field trip</u> Led by Harvey Payne and Bob Hamilton	Nature Conservancy (918) 287-4803 Meet Pawhuska Homeland
<u>Sept. 27-29</u>	<u>OAS wildflower field trip</u> Osage State Park	Ed Nelson (918) 495-6944
<u>Sept. 30</u> 7:30 p.m.	<u>Central Chapter Meeting</u> OSU Technical Branch	Susan Chambers (405) 769-7917
<u>Oct. 5</u> 1 - 4 p.m.	<u>Boehler Seeps Field Trip</u> Reservation needed	OK Nature Conservancy See item below
<u>Oct. 12</u> 9 a.m.	<u>'Schroomers Hunt</u> Mushrooms/Tenkiller area	Nora Jones (918) 749-5859
<u>Oct. 19</u>	<u>Redbud Valley 9 a.m.-noon</u>	See below
<u>Oct. 26-27</u>	<u>ONPS Annual Fall Outing & Meeting</u> Poteau/Kerr Center & environs	Linda Watson (405) 325-1985

Trip notes:

Pat Seibert, Tulsa Audubon Society, will help identify birds, and Nora Jones, Oklahoma Nature Conservancy and ONPS board member, will share information about the natural communities the conservancy is restoring on the Boehler Seeps and Sandhills in Atoka County, southern Oklahoma. Trippers will explore the unique bluejack oak sandhill community and the beautiful upland marsh. Contact the Nature Conservancy at (918) 585-1117 to sign up for this, or write to the Conservancy at 320 South Boston, Suite 1222, Tulsa, OK 74103.

For the Tallgrass trip, bring water, along with usual hiking paraphernalia. The Redbud Valley trip in Rogers County is limited to 25. Call Oxley Nature Center for details and reservations: (918) 832-8112.

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Conservation Corner -- by Pat Folley

Nothing ever happens in an herbarium: nothing is *supposed* to happen in an herbarium. There is where we store carefully preserved plants in a museum mode until they are needed for study or reference. So, in OU's Bebb Herbarium, where I am privileged to work as a volunteer, the most excitement I'd ever witnessed came on the day we found a live assassin beetle on the computer keyboard! No housewife ever hated bugs as much as does the curator of an herbarium. Then, in an instant, everything changed. CERL came into our lives.

CERL is one of those "awful acronyms" that the Defense Department uses to conceal the mind-cramping titles of its many agencies. In this case, the (U.S. Army) Construction Engineering Research Laboratory. Through the offices of the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory, we got a contract to perform a plant survey on the Ft. Sill army depot, complete with six collections of each plant species found, a laminated sample for the depot's conserved list of the results. In a fury of activity, graduate students and some of the professors were hired, outfitted, and dispatched to live in VOQ's, tents, or the occasional local motel while creeping through the undergrowth and making their samples.

The Ft. Sill project was quickly followed by others at Fort Leonard Wood, MO., Fort Chaffee, Ark., and more coming. The work stations were always full. A laminating machine camped beside the computer. Storage cases packed the narrow aisles. It has been a wonderful madhouse, in short, and the Herbarium will never be the

"In many ways, land used as a bombing or artillery range is less disturbed for natural vegetation than is a tidy farm."

same. The CERL's strange but stringent regulations require more information on the labels than ever before; including the parent rock, soil, topography, vegetation type and associated vegetation. Specimens poured into the collection as never before since G.W. Stephens made his pioneering studies 80 years ago.

There is a reason why I'm reporting this to the ONPS: that is, that no place is so thoroughly studied that a new look-to-cannot discover fresh material. Much of the

land locked away in military reservations has never been farmed or logged. In many ways, land used as a bombing or artillery range is less disturbed for natural vegetation than is a tidy farm. If your interest in our native plants includes a healthy curiosity about a specific place, your vacation lot, perhaps, or a local natural area, then why not consider a survey of your own?

Probably, there is someone at your county Extension Center who will help you get started, but if not, a new book in the *Fireside Books* series by Simon & Schuster is a great way to begin. By author Rick Imes, *The Practical Botanist* contains a brief introduction to botanical terms, followed by chapters on various habitats and clear directions for collecting and preserving specimens. No hobby I've ever indulged has been so interesting or rewarding as my own survey of our 40 acres of worn-out sandy farmland in central Oklahoma. Imagine what you can do with a truly wild area! ♣

Notes from a wildflower weekend in the Arbuckles

(Or, last May's Wildflower Workshop, Ardmore and environs)

Ed Shovanec described the wildflower seed production efforts of the Johnston Seed Co. in Enid. The Johnston operation could be an answer to the frequently asked, "Where can we get Oklahoma-grown plant material for restoration work?" He noted some problems in producing seed in commercial quantities: first, seed production is unacceptably low when plots of less than five acres are planted. Then, there are different demands for weed control and seed-cleaning for each species planted...large investments in support machinery and labor are needed. This initial investment makes it necessary, then, to harvest a good crop each year, unlike Nature's careless habit of feast-and-famine production.

The Johnston Company has already passed beyond those start-up difficulties, and is planning to meet the \$31 million annual nationwide market for Oklahoma's wildflower seed. Most goes to California wholesalers; only 10% of Johnston's production stays in Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Dept. of Transportation's Laurie Stillings told about some considerations not noticeable

from roadside, such as the well-accepted drought-tolerance of native species, only effective after a population has become established in its new location. Problems have been experienced with *Castilleja Indivisa* (Indian paintbrush) which doesn't develop from seeding, but responds very well to being encouraged where it spontaneously appears. One new development...a carpet-like roll of mulch with seeds already imbedded that can be placed on erodable slopes to protect both slope and new plants. In 1990, ODOT received \$30,000 from all sources for seed, and used it to plant over 200 additional acres of right-of-way in 8 to 10-foot strips.

Dennis Markwardt, a range manager for the Texas Dept. of Highways, described the Texas wildflower program, one of the oldest in the country, and likely the largest...over one million miles of right-of-way. Texas has only one word for roadside management, he said: "Conservation." Common problems: the soil is usually fill of sand, gravel, rocks, old asphalt, etc., and then is littered

(Continued on pg. 3)

Photo Notes by John Miller

The Photo Committee met July 31 to work on the rules for the Fifth Annual ONPS Contest. We will be asking the board to approve a few changes. We propose that there be no more than one award per person per category. We will also be asking for a new category for Beginners. Complete rules will be included in this column when approved.

A Special Thanks (although belated) from Photo Committee to:

Louis McGee, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Lindsey, Ruth Boyd, and Pat Folley for helping at the Quartz Mountain Wildflower Festival;

Larry Magrath, for the photo contest certificates;

Marilyn Bell for typesetting contest poster headings, promo flyers, other posters and the title for my slide show, this in addition to typing the Gaillardia every time;

Victoria Mason and other staff at Quartz Mt. State Park, who helped us be a part of the Wildflower Festival, and for Vickie's nice letter thanking us for participating;

Wildflower



(Continued from page 2)

and spilled upon and driven-over; seldom any shade or windbreak shelter. One advantage Texas has: historical success, since they started in the 1930s. The reduction in maintenance saves the state over \$30 million every year, and has established April as prime touring month.

Some details of Texas management: reduction of the use of herbicides to safety-critical locations, and those are using Roundup (a short-life chemical that does not leave dangerous residues in soil and water); careful selection of the plants to the intended habitat; planting in bare spots only; planting for spring and fall display, so that mowing is reduced to twice a year, in midsummer and late fall. Also, recently, adding trees at the top of back-slopes for beauty and windbreaks. He referred to some not surprising problems, referring to one former highway commissioner as "Mr. Mow-it-all!"

Lake Murray State Park Naturalist, Mark Teder, talked about wetlands: with the exception of bogs, Oklahoma is well-blessed with wet environments of all kinds, and clearly Lake Murray has a complex and wonderful environment with beautiful and diverse flora. Some of the plants he showed were *Uvularia*, Bellworts, Pickerelweed and Lotus.

Ecologist Linda Wallace was working in Yellowstone at the time of the fires, and described her experiences there and lessons learned. She concluded that invasion by alien weeds from neighboring ranches and imported hay and the pollution of streams by runoff from mines are far more dangerous to the total ecosystem than are the

Cyndy Harnett and those who helped her, for displaying our posters at a business convention in Tulsa. I understand it was a beautiful exhibit and was well received.

HELPFUL HINT:

Cropping will improve most prints. Use two L-shaped pieces of paper to cover the part of print you want to cut away. Move the L-shapes around to find the best composition. You may be able to cover distracting background or foreground, improving your composition dramatically. Slides may also be cropped by remounting in a smaller mount, or by pasting strips of dark paper over the edges of the image. Take care not to get glue on the transparency.

POSTER NOTE

Sue Amstutz has agreed to be custodian of the ONPS Photo Contest posters. We want them to be used, and Sue will help make them available. Ruth Boyd will keep a set in the Central Oklahoma area for the convenience of those in central and western parts of the state. If you can use these posters at your meeting, for special events, or wherever you think people might want to see ONPS native plant pictures and learn about ONPS, contact Sue (918) 742-8374, or Ruth (405) 872-9652.

fires to which most native species are adapted.

Betty Burns, herb-gardener from Norman, advised us about using wild plants as foods.

The field trip

On the second day of the Workshop, we boarded buses and vans and headed to the Turner Falls area. A 20-minute stop at an unused field on the north edge of Ardmore was a flower-lovers dream: I listed 29 different species in bloom in just that two-acre spot, and am sure I missed many more. A special thrill was the *Marshallia caespitosa* (Barbara's button), a species limited to that area. Then, on to the Turner Falls Overlook, where we climbed a rocky hill to examine several cactus species, yuccas, and more yellow composites than I want to spell. The *Tradescantia ohioensis* (spiderworts) were stunning. Two more stops, at a hill overlooking the Arbuckle Wilderness, and at the Travertine Nature Center in Chickasaw National Recreation Area, completed the day. Wildflowers in profusion at these stops, and all along the way.

by Pat Folley

Red Clay Wildflower Hill Garden Update by Ruth Boyd

When the first installment of the Red Clay Hill saga was penned in late March, daytime temperatures were in the 70s and there had been ample moisture. Now, in late July, it has been 100 degrees or above several times and the "scattered showers" of our Oklahoma summer have managed to miss my particular small patch of central Oklahoma almost entirely. My enthusiasm dried up along with the clay. The hill may not look any worse now than it did last year at this time, but it seems worse to me because I put so much more work into it last fall and spring. Today I would like to erect a large sign stating, "This hill does not belong to 812 Jordan Drive."

The wildflower kits purchased at such bargain prices last fall (and consisting of enough preseeded medium and a germination blanket to cover 40 square feet), that were planted last fall, were a big disappointment. The germination blankets gave excellent winter protection for the seeds of the annual weeds I was trying to eradicate. They really came on well as did many of the seeds from the kit. However, since I did not recognize many of the plants, I was afraid to pull almost anything until they got big enough to identify and by then they were rampant and there was no way I could keep up. There were 13 kinds of flowers in the kit, of which only four germinated. By late May there were bountiful plains coreopsis, gaillardia and Mexican hats and the first flower to bloom was one lonely Texas bluebonnet about six inches tall when all the plants surrounding were at least twice that.

In late June we had 70 mph winds on two succeeding days that flattened the tall plains coreopsis. I harvested some seed, but the majority had not cured, so I

staked many plants. The naturally-occurring purple coneflowers, purple prairie clover, threadleaved *thelesperma*, fleabane daisies, yarrow and transplanted *Coreopsis lanceolata* were glorious and I was rewarded as was everybody else in central Oklahoma with magnificent displays of rudbeckia and wild petunias. The liatris, which is abundant, is just about to bloom, but there is no sign yet of last year's pink gerardia.

None of the seeds I planted in the spring germinated except a dozen or so *Gaillardia pulchella*. This failure included both the seeds I purchased and the ones I harvested last fall and over-wintered in the refrigerator crisper. I did have some success with about two dozen seedlings of *Gaillardia pulchella* and *Monarda citriodora* that the Central OK Chapter germinated as a fund-raising project. The good news is that there was practically no Johnson grass and I found no Bermuda at all.

If I can't be as successful as I wish the hill, I shall be philosophical instead. The hill is an inhospitable environment. Plants must be very determined to exist in such a place in July and August in Oklahoma. The things that belong there will survive and the things that don't, won't. I don't intend to stop trying, but perhaps I can learn something from past mistakes. Any seed planting will be done in the fall. I saved the germination blankets and will use them again. I have learned in a hard way the plants that need to be pulled and perhaps will not wait again until they have become small trees.

The main thing is to find another outlet for my natural spring garden enthusiasm. Wouldn't you think that after more than 60 years I should be able to remember that although everything seems possible in the spring, mid-summer cannot be far behind?

Recommended Reading

Roadside Wildflowers of the Southern Great Plains
by Craig C. Freeman and Eileen K. Schofield

For all of us wildflower enthusiasts, a great new book has just been published by the University of Kansas Press. It covers 250 species with each species afforded an entire page that includes a color photograph, a line drawing, a written description, the blooming period, and habitat.

The introduction includes a narrative description of the vegetation of the Southern Great Plains that includes Oklahoma, Kansas, and portions of Nebraska, Colorado, and Texas. It also covers the meaning of plant names, the use of botanical terminology, some good wildflower routes to drive in Oklahoma and Kansas, and plant identification techniques. The keys are organized by color, making identification simpler. This book is a must for wildflower watchers in Oklahoma. To order, write: University Press of Kansas; 329 Carruth St.; Lawrence, KS 66045. Enclose \$17.95 for a paperback copy. The ISBN number is 0-7006-0448-0.

Review by Linda Watson



From "The Way of the Trout: An Essay on Anglers, Wild Fish and Running Water" (Knopf) by M.R. Montgomery:

"These days, I need to know the names of the wildflowers and the species of the dinosaurs whose bones erode out of the rock. The boy is transmuted; obsession with trout has been replaced with a stronger and yet more diffuse affection for trout country. I want fish, also mint, dipper-birds, bitterroot in bloom and ospreys kiting over the river...But it is not enough...Every year, fishing takes me farther from the river."



North Central Field Trip Report by Connie Taylor

A very special thanks to Dr. Paul Nighswonger who guided an eager bunch of wildflower lovers down to the Cimarron River dunes located on a private ranch this summer. This area of shifting sands and wet interdune areas yielded a most wonderful display of wildflowers for us to identify, photograph, and enjoy. Oaks, cottonwoods, cedars, sumac, and even a large buttonbush intermixed with sand plums were the major woody plants.

Most striking were sunflowers and the 3 to 5 tiered Monardas that dominated the aspect. Unusual plants seen were *Palafoxia*, a purple flowered composit more common in the Oklahoma and Texas panhandles, a Big Sandreed *Calimovila gigantea*, which is more or less

restricted to the sand dune habitats north of the Canadian and Cimarron Rivers. Much of the back dunes were stabilized, but we hiked to and climbed up one of the large active dunes. After lunch, we journeyed back to Cherokee and decided the wet roads had dried enough to travel into the salt flats of the Great Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge. We visited the area where digging for selenite crystals is allowed. The highlight of this part of the trip was the remarkable display of two snowy plovers who did their injured wings act and climbed into depressions which were fake nests. We were so enthralled. It took us a few minutes to realize we were nearly standing on their nest of two eggs and one newly-hatched chick. *

ONPS donates wildflower seed to OETA

At the last ONPS board meeting in July, the board agreed to donate up to \$200 toward the purchase of Indian Blanket seeds for "Oklahoma Gardening", the public television (OETA) program. "Oklahoma Gardening" is preparing 10,000 packets of seed to distribute free to the public. Two telecasts are scheduled to include promotion of the free packets and mentions of ONPS as participant. Each packet will contain about 100 seeds, planting instructions and information about ONPS. "Oklahoma Gardening" airs Saturdays at 11 a.m.

Plant names/via Connie Taylor

MONARDA (Mon-nard'-uh), named after N. Monard, a Spanish physician and botanist. Horse mint, Bergamot, Beebalm, or Wild Mint are common names used for the seven species found throughout Oklahoma. Plants have tight terminal verticils of flowers or stacks of three to five verticils of very narrow two-lipped flowers usually with reddish or purple spots. Petals are purple, white or yellow. Plants have a very strong, usually wonderful odor.

Useful numbers about Oct. 26-27 sessions

Call the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Poteau, local co-host of the event, and ask for Heidi, Lara or Nancy at (918) 647-9123 (days); Or, you can call ONPS president, Linda Watson, at (405) 325-1985.

Registration Form

1991 ONPS Annual Meeting and Field Trips • October 26-27 Kerr Country Inn and Conference Center near Poteau, Oklahoma

Please pre-register. Late registrants cannot be guaranteed banquet meal. Fill in the form below and mail by October 11 to:

Linda E. Watson
Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory
2001 Priestly Ave., Bldg. 605
Norman, OK 73019

NAME(S) of attendees: _____

Address: _____ City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Registration for Members: \$ 5.00 x # attendees = \$ _____
Registration non-Members: \$ 6.00 x # attendees = _____
Saturday Awards Banquet: \$10.00 x # attendees = _____
Sunday Breakfast: \$ 4.50 x # attendees = _____
TOTAL = \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: ONPS. Thank you!

Central Chapter by Susan Chambers

July 29 report: Our summer field trip and brown-bag picnic at the Folley Farm...

After the long drive east of Norman, everyone was ready for food and drinks and a leisurely hike around some of the Folley 40 acres. The highlight was a young hawk, bigger than his mother, perched on a high-line pole. Seventeen people came out to the farm, some for a swim in the pond, but most just relaxed and soaked up the sounds of nature instead of the nearest interstate. Pat and J.W. have some of the best real estate around.

July 29, our regular meeting at OSU Technical Branch, attracted a surprisingly good turn-out for the middle of the summer. Fourteen people were there to hear about water gardening with native plants. Some of the tips were on how to build the garden so it simply blends with its surroundings. Some plants were listed that are to be avoided or used with caution, i.e., cattails and native lotus. Materials, plants and fish were covered in the discussion, as well as maintenance problems. (I was the speaker, and I'm somewhere between an expert

and complete novice on the subject.)

It was decided not to try for a field trip for end August because of the heat, beggars lice and ticks. Next regular meeting is Sept. 30, 7:30, OSU Technical Branch -- it will be our annual native seeds and plants exchange. Everyone is welcome.

Northeast Chapter

Dr. Ed Nelson, author of the book on Oklahoma Aquatics, was the scheduled speaker for Sept. 9 at the Garden Center. Plans for car pooling to the Annual Meeting in Oct. also on agenda.

The Sept. 21st field trip is to be led by Jim Norman for an area below the Tenkiller Dam. Meeting time and place (as *Gaillardia* went to press) is 8 a.m. at the Muskogee McDonald's on Hwy. 62. Please call Jim to confirm (918) 682-1896.

If you need information about NE Chapter in general, call Betty Kemm at (918) 742-4351.

Memberships Invited

For \$10/year, individuals; \$15/yr, families; and \$5/year, students, you can become a member of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society and receive the six newsletters a year and all other mailings to keep you involved in Native Plant field trips, meetings, and issues relating to ONPS purposes. To join, write to:

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Tulsa, OK 74114

The Gaillardia

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