

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.

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Volume 11 Number 1
Spring 1996

**COPY AND ART DEADLINE
FOR NEXT ISSUE IS
15 May 1996**

CALENDAR

Ed. note: to make the calendar a better reference, I have put either the page number for a more detailed explanation, or the name of the person to contact for more information. The phone numbers for persons named are in bold type below.

11 March: NorthEast Chapter Meeting at Tulsa Garden Center, 7:30 p.m.

Featured speaker Jimmy Norman, showing wildflowers slides. (page 9)

25 March: Central Chapter meeting at the Horticulture Center. ONPS President Frank Carl will be our featured speaker. 7:30 p.m. (page 9-10)

6 April: Tour of the forested areas of Chickasaw Nat. Rec. Area, (p. 9)

13 April: State-wide field trip to Pontotoc Ridge, near Ada (page 8)

20 April: Central Chapter outing at Arcadia Lake (Page 10)

20 April: Herbal Affair and Festival, Downtown Sand Springs, OK. Call (918)245-5588 for more information.

26-28 April: Spring Field Meeting at Lake Murray, Oklahoma Academy of Science. Ruth Boyd at (405)872-9652.

6 May: Northeast Chapter meeting at the Tulsa Garden Center, 7:30 p.m. Featured speaker Frank Carl. (page 9)

10-11 May: Wildflower Workshop at McAlester (page 6)

11 May: Central Oklahoma Herbfest, Oklahoma City at OSU's Horticulture Center. Call (405)528-8800

1-2 June: The Nature Conservancy Annual Meeting, Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. Members will be notified by mail; this is for your planning only.

1-2 June: Backyard Habitat Tour, Tulsa, OK. Sponsored by *Make Every Home a Habitat* (918)446-2720

4 June: Oklahoma Urban and Community Forest Council, annual Tree Conference, Muskogee. Call Mark Bays at (405)521-3864, ext. 296

8-9 June: ONPS Summer Field Trip to McCurtain County Wilderness and other SE Oklahoma sites. (page 7)

1 September: Cutoff date for nominations for the Anne Long Award.

12-13 October: ONPS' Annual Meeting at Osage Hills State Park & Tallgrass Prairie Preserve (save the date: more in later issues of Gaillardia)

1 December: Deadline for 1997 Photo Contest Entries. Now is the time to be selecting your best shots for submission to Jim Norman.

***Connie Taylor: ph. (405)924-5163 (home). Jim Norman, (918)682-1896. Jeff Burkhart, (405)293-7639. Betty Kemm (918)742-4351**

GARDENING ON THE WILD SIDE

by Ann Randle

BLUE-EYED GRASS

Robert Waller writes, in *The Bridges of Madison County*, that "There are songs that come free from the Blue-eyed grass..." This is a timely reference, given that not only is this column featuring *Sisyrinchium*, but so is one of the columns in the March/April publication of *Fine Gardening* – no doubt following our lead.

To my knowledge, all our native Oklahoma members of this genus are similar in culture and appearance (from an ornamental point of view). Most are perennial to -20° F, and have nickel-sized violet-blue to white flowers. The perianths have 3 spreading petals and 3 sepals that look alike and spiral up tightly together when they fade at the end of the day. Leaves look like sparse, coarse, blue-green grass. The flower has a yellow eye or center and is not a grass but a member of the iris family. Roots are wiry rhizomes, the plants growing in neat, 6 to 12 inch clumps. The actual clump size does not appear to depend on culture so much as on difficult-to-predict genetics. The result is inconsistent size, so I prefer to use them solo or in masses so large that size variation is unimportant. Bloom occurs at the same time as larger relatives in the iris family. Often, flowers appear with the dwarf garden iris and Siberians and continue through the German bearded iris season. For a perennial spring bloomer, this is a long season. Flowering appears to cause the death of the leaf stem where it occurs and in my experience the plants seem to bloom themselves to death in a good flowering year. This fact, combined with the genus' dislike for wet soil when dormant, often results in a short-lived plant. This is not too great a problem as they readily seed themselves here and there. They never become invasive and extras are easily transplanted or pulled as weeds.

In terms of culture, this plant makes me think of stars – best seen at night when one is not directly looking at them. Blue-eyed grass grows at its finest in my garden when not directly looked-after or planned-for. About the time Narcissus begin to flower, I keep a watch out for it – curious to see if and where it will come up. On the whole, it prefers full sun if the soil retains enough moisture. As the season progresses it prefers a dryer medium – an obvious adaptation to our own rainfall patterns – so be careful of overwatering or heavy

mulches during summer when they are dormant. A soil that has a pH between 6.0 and 7.0 and is not too rich is preferred by this plant – about what you would expect from natives that range from Canada to West Texas. Sally Wasowski records it even growing in caliche, sand and limestone. [Ed. note: these are different species within the *Sisyrinchium* genus.]

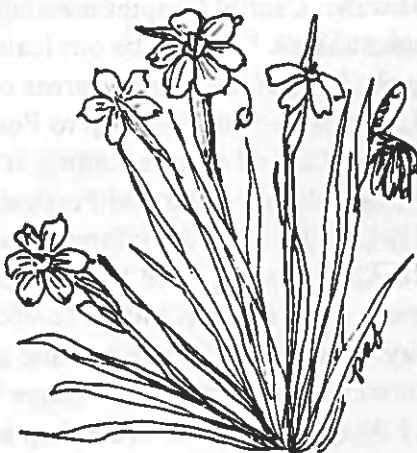
The color and leaf form of our *Sisyrinchium* repeat many of the iris cousins at a much lower and more delicate level, making Blue-eyed grass an addition that easily fits into most traditional flower borders if used near the front edge. It won't clash with the tall iris Granddad had growing next to the shed, the dwarf ones I dug out of an old farm-yard my husband purchased, or the hybrid Siberians I planted into a difficult wet spot. The culture and height of Blue-eyed grass also

make it a must for any prairie meadow, even the ones maintained by knowledgeable crews with big machines. It can take occasional mowing and even continue to bloom in places like the rough grass along the fairways of a golf course. Rock gardens would be another likely spot for any member of the genus.

Horticultural sources often recommend growing other, larger member of this genus, and pursuing resources interested me in trying some of them, including *S. douglasii*, a purple California native and *S. striatum*, a larger, pale-yellow one from Argentina, which is considered the most ornamental of the genus.

Propagation can be had from seed, by division and by root cuttings. Seed germination is erratic. If you choose to plant inside, barely cover seed with the growing medium and germinate at comfortable room temperature (70-75 F) in a clear, enclosed container to keep the humidity up. The first seedlings should be evident in 3 to 4 weeks. As soon as they are large enough to be handled, move them out to their own containers but keep the original community container going, as seeds will continue to come up at odd intervals. Most commercial and research growers carry out germination with a cold/damp stratification at 35 to 40 F. If you wish to try this method without the equipment professional growers possess, sow your seed outside in late autumn. Use a shallow row and barely cover. Choose a wind-protected location with fairly moist soil: if this turns out to be in the shade do not concern yourself overly much. This is not their final location. Start

continued on page 3

*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*

CONSERVATION CORNER

by Sheila Strawn

Following up on the geological history of the state in the last issue, here is what soil type has to do with plant distributions in Oklahoma:

In 1963 when John Shed and William Penfound did a study on legume distribution, they found a general relationship between soils and vegetation type. Sand deposits generally become forests while limestone and clay deposits generally become prairie, but the soil-plant relationships are not really that simple. There are topographic effects such as slope and solar and wind exposure as well as precipitation rates, which override the characteristics of the various soil types and make it impossible to delineate a specific soil type based on its vegetation.

Paul Buck studied the soil-woody vegetation relationships in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. Granite formations at the refuge erode to make a cobbly soil which drains quickly, making it difficult for plants to become established. However, the Sugar Maple is able to dominate more mesic (wetter) cobbly patches near streams. Blackjack Oak dominates the cobbly, less mesic, upland patches on this newly formed "soil". Different levels and patterns of precipitation can interact with soil types, producing gradients of moisture availability for plants with different moisture requirements. An analogy might be like several people trying to watch TV in the same room. When the TV set is on and someone else controls the volume, all you can do is control where you sit in the room. When it rains, soil type and topographic features control the available precipitation and a plant can only live at certain positions along the moisture gradient.

In places like the Carolinas bountiful precipitation on limestone soils can actually make soil very poor in nutrients. Organic acids from abundant vegetation can react with Ca, Na, and Mg ions in the soil. Rainfall then leaches (rinses out) the ions from the soil and washes them into the groundwater below the reach of roots. This is not usually the case in Oklahoma, where a different precipitation pattern interacts with our limestone to affect the biogeography. Oklahoma actually loses more water to evaporation than it gets in precipitation. (Rivers and ground water from the Rocky Mountains make up the difference.) Here, precipitation is not sufficient to leach all the minerals from our limestone soils. Dense stands of forbs and grasses grow where these mineral-rich formations receive moderate rainfall amounts, as in the Tallgrass Prairie.

In Oklahoma's arid southwestern region the precipitation rate is so low that much of the water evaporates before it gets very far into the soil. There, in soils from

limestone formations, the calcium ions accumulate at the lowest level of water penetration (sometimes just inches from the surface) and form a caliche layer which restricts root growth. Not much grows on caliche. Gypsum is mostly calcium sulfate which was formed long ago when the seawater evaporated. Mesquite and mixed grass are associated with it, but few species grow on it either.

Our dominant red clay soil has its own precipitation-related characteristics. Clay particles are so small that they hold water molecules between them for a long time. Minerals are not leached out by our heaviest rainfall. In fact, light rainfall runs off the surface of tightly packed clay. Our farmers look for a "good, soaking rain". Clay soils that get adequate precipitation hold the water (and minerals) weeks longer than some soils which may be more fertile but drain quickly. This is very important because we often have late summer and winter droughts

Soil and water relations alone do not explain why plants grow where they do in Oklahoma. We haven't begun to address the build-up of humus in the soil from previous vegetation nor the presence of microorganisms, nematodes, grazing animals, fire, ice, windstorms, and human influence. These factors work on a smaller scale than climate and geology and are responsible for much of the physical heterogeneity of a region and thereby its total biodiversity. Maybe we'll get around to those next time. ☺

....GARDENING, continued from page 2

looking for the small plants to come up off and on through the spring. They usually bloom their first year, so move the little plantlets to their final location as soon as you can get a good hold on them. The seeding rate for large areas is 8 lbs. per acre.

Carroll Abbott recommended waiting until after leaves wither to divide clumps. However, I have much more success with it in the spring as soon as I can find plants big enough to divide. In truth, I rarely propagate Blue-eyed grass in any manner. This has never been a long-lived perennial for me and as it transplants easily, I prefer to locate needed specimens in a road ditch or damp field and move them.

Sources for seed include Thompson & Morgan (800-274-7333) and Gardens of the Blue Ridge (704-733-2417), which both offer *S. angustifolium*. Native American Seed (800-728-4043) makes *S. ensigerum* available. Plants of *S. angustifolium* can be ordered from Carroll Gardens Inc. (800-638-6334).

BOTANY BAY

BLUE-EYED GRASS (Sisyrinchium)

by Connie Taylor

This is being written the day after the coldest night of the year. If winter comes can spring be far behind. I hope so; and by the time you receive this in the mail, blue-eyed grasses will be ready to bloom. No one seems to know the origin of the genus' scientific name.

Sisyrinchium is one of our native Iris Family plants, but with a much smaller flower. The grass part of its common name comes from its leaves being narrow and grass looking, and the winged stems below the inflorescences also resemble a grass leaf. The 3/4 inch flowers have six dark blue to pale blue to white petals with a small green fruit beneath them, and 3 stamens.

Sisyrinchium angustifolium is the most common species and occurs throughout eastern and central Oklahoma in sunny disturbed habitats, such as road-sides, lawns, and ditches. Plants are usually 3 inches to a foot tall and older plants form a dense clump of delightful intense blue. A roadside in bloom can surpass the beauty of a cluster of cultivated irises. These are before noon plants and are most showy in the morning. The small clusters of flowers grow out of two folded leafy bracts called spathes. There will be several pairs of spathes on each inflorescence stem (pedicel) in this species. White flowered plants are rare. Angustifolium means narrow leafed.

The other common species in Oklahoma, Sisyrinchium campestre, occurs in unplowed native prairies. Its flowers are a paler blue or often white, so the common name white-eyed grass is often used. Populations will have quite a variety of different shades of blue to white. These plants are taller and are not in dense clumps of leaves and stems. There is only one pair of spathe bracts on a flowering stem, so the display is more subdued. Campestre refers to fields.

Other species have been reported, but are not likely to be found. These plants have a wonderful set of variations and are quite a puzzle to botanists. The characters originally used to separate the different species can vary considerably in a population.

Wandering around in an unplowed prairie that is growing on limestone, you may turn up a very close relative of Blue-eyed grass—Nemastylis geminiflora. (Nemastylis refers to its 6 thread like style branches; geminiflora refers to its twin flowers in each spathe). Its flower is larger, being over 1 1/2 inches in diameter and blue-violet, lavender, purple or rarely

white. What it most interesting are the pleated leaves. When you look at the leaves, there appear to be small tucks that run the length of the leaf. Nemastylis grows in the prairies of Lake Murray State Park where the Oklahoma Academy of Science spring field trip will be held April 26-28. ☺



Announcing: a blessed event!

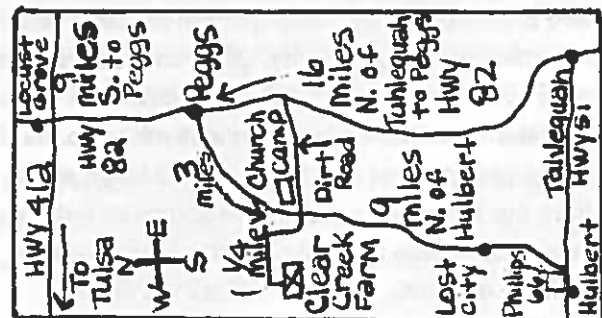
A baby girl, born to Sue McAllister and Mike Palmer, both ONPS members and professors of Botany at OSU, in Stillwater.

Born 5 March 1996, her name is Emily Margaret McAllister-Palmer

Writing to enter her spring advertisement, Loretta Bowers first thanks us for the "good response" the folks at Clear Creek Farm and Garden received from ONPS members last year, and adds "we are excited about the 1996 season, because we have lots of new plants to offer. We've had good results with propagating plants like elderberries, dutchman's pipe and wild scarlet morning-glory, just to name a few. I look forward to having all our "new babies" adopted by new plant parents" The Bowers are ONPS members. Their paid ad:



Herbs • Wildflowers • Habitat Plants
Lectures • Medicinal Herb Products
Loretta & Kirk Bowers
(918) 598-3782 P.O. Box 89 Peggs, OK 74452



WHY ARE LOCO WEEDS LOCO?

by Leslie Cole-Jackson, DVM

A few species of two closely allied genera of the family Leguminosae, *Astragalus* and *Oxytropis*, are the "loco" or "crazy weeds". These plants are associated with three different animal disease problems: 1) Selenium Toxicity, as they concentrate selenium in their tissues; 2) Milk-vetch poisoning; and 3) Locoism. The former two are not often problems in Oklahoma.

Interestingly, we are in an area where selenium levels in the soils and in the plants which grow in them are high. The Great Plains region of North America has higher selenium levels than the rest of the continent. The high selenium concentrations in the soils of the Great Plains exist because the sedimentary rocks that give rise to them were exposed to volcanic ejecta during deposition under the ancient central sea. Uplift of these ancient sea-floor sediments then exposed them to weathering and soil-making.

Oxytropis lambertii, commonly called Purple Loco, Crazy Weed, White Loco or Lambert's Crazy-weed, is a true loco weed

found in dry open sites throughout the western two-thirds of Oklahoma. A perennial, Purple Loco produces several erect, very short hairy stems from short rhizomes. The plants are generally 12 to 18 inches tall, with leaves being mostly basal and alternate. The leaves are divided into silver-white, narrow linear segments 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches long and 1/16 to 3/8 inches wide. I think the flowers are very beautiful, with the colors ranging from striking rosy-lavender to pinkish-purple to almost white. They are borne on spikes of 10 to 25 flowers, and up to a foot high. The flowers are typical of those of many legumes, being pea-like, and are 1/2 to 1 inch long. They bloom in April or May.

The name *loco* is Spanish for crazy and is descriptive of how intoxicated animals behave. This disease was recognized long before 1873 in the Spanish-colonized areas of the Rocky Mountain west and southwest.

Horses, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and other species are known to be affected by an alkaloid in the plants named

Swainsonine. This alkaloid inhibits the activity of certain enzymes, causing the intracellular accumulation of long-chain sugars. Loco behavior is due to the accumulation of these sugars and the damage they cause in the cells of the cerebellum and the cerebrum. The alkaloid's effects are cumulative and when pastured together, horses will show signs before other species.

These plants are normally unpalatable and will only be grazed when other forage is unavailable, especially in spring. Signs such as emaciation, depression and uncoordination become evident after at least three weeks of grazing these plants. "Locoed" horses show marked hypersensitivity to handling, with the development of severe excitement which is not alleviated by conventional tranquilizers. Cattle and sheep show similar signs and isolate themselves or "forget" to flock. Locoed animals will seek out locoweeds as if addicted, avoiding more desirable food.

Loco weeds have also been associated with abortions and birth defects. Bees have been poisoned after working the flowers of Spotted Loco. Serious losses have been reported by apiarists in Nevada (spotted loco has not been found in Oklahoma).

This spring, as you drive the smaller highways and roads, notice the flash of purple-rose flowers in gravelly areas. This plant has a place in the lore of the Old West and has modern significance as well..☺



Oxytropis spp. "Locoweeds"

from "Poisonous Plants of the U.S. & Canada"

by John M. Kingsbury

FACTS AND FIGURES

When your friends find out that you are an ONPS member, do they often expect you to know "all about" our native flora? If so, you may want to learn some of the following statistics, all gleaned from the 1994 edition of *An Annotated List of the Ferns, Fern Allies, Gymnosperms and Flowering Plants of Oklahoma*, by R. John and Constance E.S. Taylor.

Oklahoma claims some 2,549 species of vascular plants. 72 species of ferns or fern-allies grow wild here. There are 11 species of Gymnosperms (pine and juniper-like plants). 669 species are "monocots", or grass-like plants, of which the grasses count 308, or nearly half.

1,797 kinds of "dicots", including 351 kinds of composites, live in Oklahoma. There are 154 kinds of pea-family plants, but only one species each of palm, sycamore, sandalwood, custard-apple or ebony!

STATE-WIDE NEWS

INDOOR OUTING CANCELED!

When the Indoor Outings were started, several years ago, the hope was to provide a "field trip" experience for those of us addicted to that sort of fun, but in the dead of winter, when we really needed it. They have been successful beyond our wildest dreams; dozens to hundreds of winter-weary plant-lovers turned out to tour the Myriad Botanical Garden, the classrooms, labs and greenhouses at OU, OSU and others of the state colleges, and more. We have been so blessed with decent traveling weather that when Tulsa, this year's intended host, was hit with 6 inches of snow on the day before the event, we were caught without an alternate date.

Betty Kemm writes from Tulsa "We were very disappointed when we had to cancel the Indoor Outing. The nine-member committee had worked since last fall on plans and had twelve more volunteers assigned to help that day. Our thanks to all of them and to the wonderful speakers and workshop leaders. We tried to reschedule, but found the speakers were committed to other things on the only date possible. There was so much interest in attending -- over 100 had pre-registered!"

Remembering the great time we had at a former Outing held in Tulsa, Ruth Boyd and I were planning to brave the weather and go despite the snow. (Here in central Oklahoma, we would go a long way just to see moisture in any form!. With only 0.1 inch of rain this year, we are counting precipitation in blow-sand. Scary! We are grateful to Betty for having the courtesy to cancel, when the Tulsans, who had done all the work, could have attended. Hopefully, the same program will be presented next year in Enid.

19th ANNUAL WILDFLOWER WORKSHOP

by Joanne Orr, Oklahoma Department of Transportation's Highway Beautification Coordinator.

Wildflower enthusiasts will gather in McAlester on Friday and Saturday, May 10 and 11, 1996 for the 19th Annual Wildflower Workshop and field trips.

The workshop has a long history of exciting programs and beautiful field trips. This year will feature lectures and slide presentations by experts in several areas.

"Attracting Butterflies with Native Plants" will be the topic of the feature speaker, Dr. Gary Noel Ross. The Professor Emeritus of entomology is an expert on butterflies. Known as Louisiana's "Butterfly Man", he enjoys an outstanding international reputation as natural history writer, photographer, lecturer, and tour leader. His many activities include the position of "Consultant for Educational

Programming" for the new *Butterflies in Flight* exhibit at the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, Louisiana, and technical consultant to National Geographic Society's *Instituto de Biologia* (Mexico). He is the author of *Gardening for Butterflies in Louisiana* and *Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Butterflies*, both recently published books that have become standard references.

The dinner on Friday evening, May 10, will include an Herb Festival - "Tradition and Trendy" - and presentation of awards to the winners of the ONPS Photo Contest. The Annual Bess Snodgrass Award will be given to a person that has done outstanding work in the preservation and promotion of wildflowers. The award includes one acre of wildflowers planted wherever the recipient chooses.

The field trip on Saturday, May 11, will tour a scenic loop-drive that includes stops at Mud Creek Bottomland Forest area, a box lunch at Robber's Cave State Park, plus Veterans Colony Aquatic Vegetation site, and Hartshorne Eastern Orthodox Church. Dr. Gary N. Ross will accompany the field trip to describe butterflies seen, and Oklahoma Native Plant Society members, under the direction of Dr. Paul Buck, will act as tour guides. [Ed. note: I hear that the field trip will be by deluxe air-conditioned busses with bathroom facilities.]

Displays, plant specimen tables, display of the ONPS' wildflower photo contest winners, and sales of T-shirts, plants, etc., will add interest to the Friday Seminar.

Sponsors of the event are the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Oklahoma Garden Clubs, Oklahoma Native Plant Society, and the Holly, Zinnia, and Daffodil Garden Clubs of McAlester. Traditionally, the workshop rotates to a different region of the state each year. In 1995, Boise City hosted the workshop, which included field trips to Black Mesa, Dinosaur Tracks, and the Santa Fe Trail. Other adventurous tours have included the Arbuckle Mountains, Tallgrass Prairie, Talimena Drive, and the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

ONPS members will automatically receive a Wildflower Workshop brochure and application from labels we supply. Others may contact the Beautification Office, Oklahoma Department of Transportation, 200 N.E. 21st Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma or phone (405)521-4037.

NEED A FEW EXTRA COPIES? JUST ASK!

Many of us belong to other organizations with similar interests. If you know you will need some extra copies of the *Gaillardia* for distribution as promotion of the ONPS, just write Patricia Folley or Ruth Boyd by the regular cutoff date, so we can order enough.

GOPHER PATROL

by Wayne Chambers

Ignorance is bliss. For the first couple of years on our place, we were both hunky and dory. We would put plants into the ground and happily walk away, foolishly believing Mother Nature would take care of them. Little did we realize that a furry terror lurked beneath our feet. A terror that we wouldn't fully realize until.....*The Gaillardia Incident*.....

The Gaillardia Incident

As Susan and I were leaving for work one bright summer's morn we noticed a large Gaillardia wifiting. We watered it, then left for work. When we returned for lunch we found the plant was gone – missing – disappeared – vanished without a trace. After much blinking, staring, and eye rubbing, followed by a frantic search, I finally noticed the tell-tale signs of gopher moundage. I dug up the area and found my Gaillardia. Chewed into pieces and stacked like cordwood in a storage tunnel – blooms and all.

THAT'S WHEN MY LEFT EYE BEGAN TO TWITCH.

Susan knew the trouble signs. She got the rock garden just after I had smeared my face with camo paint and clenched a dandelion digger between my front teeth. I was going in after that black-hearted devil. She stopped me dead in my tracks by reminding me that I am claustrophobic. As I whimpered toward the house for lunch she reassured me that we could buy another gaillardia.

We never did replace that plant, though. There's still an open spot in the garden where the cold north wind sweeps through the sad emptiness. After the Gaillardia incident things were a blur. An ongoing series of poisonings, trappings and other methods aimed at ridding the world of that scourge of the underworld – the pocket gopher.

Some of my instincts had returned from my earlier days on Gopher Patrol while with the city of Edmond's park department. That's where I had learned such valuable tricks as tying the trap to a piece of re-bar to keep the gopher from dragging it back to his den and figuring out how it works. Once rodents master technology things could get really ugly. I also learned that some people really like killing gophers.

A suggestion was to hang their carcasses on fences like coyotes. What's next: hunting them from airplanes?

There are many things I've learned about bagging the elusive gopher. Here are a few tips. I've cleaned them up for

the benefit of any women and children who might be offended, or faint. Or worse – tell me they've caught more gophers.

POISONS. These can make your dog's eyes swell shut. I have no idea what they do to anything else.

TRAPS. I've had success with the spring-steel traps, but more with one called "The Black Hole". I thought at first that when you caught one in the Black Hole it flung them deep into outer space. It doesn't. You have to dump them into the trash. Folks have told me to wear rubber gloves to disguise the human scent when setting traps. I want to see them set a gopher trap while wearing rubber gloves.

Traps don't always work because pocket gophers didn't get to be in every yard in the nation by being stupid.

DETERRENTS. Castor beans or plants work, according to one neighbor. So does Gopher spurge (or is that Gopher's purge?) according to another source. I've read that Castor beans can be toxic to little kids, though I don't know what the dosage might be.

WINDFLOWERS AND WHIRLIGIGS.

I've heard these work. There also seems to be one problem. The vibration runs the earthworms out of the soil. Maybe your experience will differ.

CAGES. Most everything I plant now is in a wire-mesh basket. I like 1/2 inch hardware cloth secured on sides and bottom. I finally figured out I couldn't catch gophers

fast enough. The baskets at least give the plants a chance.

THE ULTIMATE WEAPON. A 35-pound, ten-year-old brown dog named Rocky. He can get them gophers. But he can also dig up them flower beds. Susan is not pleased by this. It doesn't bother me so much even though I did tumble into a hole he dug. Susan had to throw me a rope to get me out. Rocky may catch more rodents than I do. But at least I don't lay my catches at the back door and roll around on them. I just bring them in the house to show Susan and say "Rodent: it's what's for dinner." Or "Gopher: the other white meat". Then I go outside and sleep with Rocky.

DISCLAIMER

Gophers probably occupy a valuable ecological niche. They turn and loosen soil, thus promoting drainage. I've even heard of a gardener who used the loose soil pushed up by gophers to pot her plants in. No doubt other critters use their burrows. They move around seeds and roots, and this may help distribute plants. Given the decline of Prairie Dogs, a decision to trap gophers should be weighed thoughtfully.



POCKET GOPHER

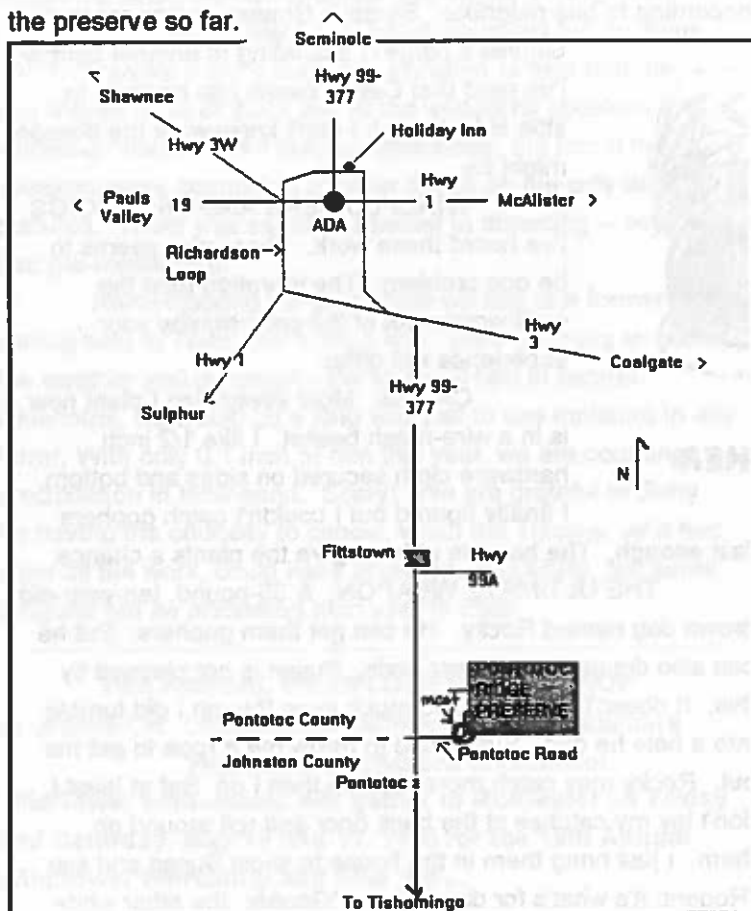
STATE-WIDE FIELD TRIPS

SPRING FIELD TRIP:

PONTOTOC RIDGE NATURE PRESERVE

South-Central Oklahoma – see map

Pontotoc Ridge Nature Preserve, The Nature Conservancy's newest preserve in Oklahoma, will be the site for the ONPS spring field trip from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 13, 1996. Pontotoc Ridge is approximately 20 miles south of Ada at the eastern edge of the Arbuckle Uplift. The 2,500 acre preserve was donated to The Nature Conservancy in 1994 by Buddy Smith, an Ada area businessman. Pat Folley, who has been studying the flora of the site for two years, will lead the trip for ONPS members and guests. Pat and other botanists have identified over 250 plant species at the preserve so far.



The site boasts very diverse habitats. Steep north-facing slopes support mixed hardwood forests, giving way to rich bottomlands along spring-fed streams. Ridges support mixed-grass prairies on thin limestone outcrops and tallgrass prairies on deeper soils. A wealth of butterflies and birds will also delight visitors.

Terrain is moderate, but wear good hiking boots. Bring a sack lunch, drink and water. A hat, binoculars and

field guides will enhance the field trip experience.

We will meet at the preserve border (circled on map) at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 13. Field trip will be held rain or shine. Participation is at your own risk, and is open to all members, visitors and newcomers. Please register with Pat Folley, (405)872-8361 / 15100 Etowah Road / Noble, OK 73068 no later than April 10. There is no charge for the outing.

A list of Ada area motels and restaurants may be obtained from the Ada area Chamber of Commerce, (405)332-2506. Motels include a Holiday Inn at (405)332-9000 and a Best Western at (405)332-6262. ☺

SUMMER FIELD TRIP

JUNE 8-9 IN McCURTAIN COUNTY

ONPS field trippers will explore McCurtain County native plant sites during a two-day outing to the extreme southeast corner of the state. McCurtain County is renowned for its diversity of plants and plant communities, including cypress swamps, old-growth shortleaf pine forests, orchids, palmettos and spider lilies. Rich bottomlands along the Little River divide the rugged Ouachita Mountains on the county's north border from the gentler Gulf-Coastal Plain on the south. The meeting is set for June 8-9, 1996, and will be centered at the Charles Wesley Motor Lodge in Broken Bow.

Participants will meet at the Charles Wesley Motor Lodge at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 8, and will return to the motel by 6:00 p.m. for a dinner at the Lodge's restaurant at 6:30. A buffet-style dinner will include meal, drinks, taxes and tip for only \$7.65, (paid at the time of the meal, as we are not collecting any advance payments this time). Following dinner, Bruce and Lana Ewing, ONPS members and naturalists from Mena, Arkansas, will present a slide show on the plants and animals of the Ouachitas. Bruce and Lana are well-known for their excellent slides and their wide-ranging knowledge of the plants and animals of the area.

On Sunday, June 9, we will again meet at the Lodge, but at 8:00 a.m. for a field trip which will end by 3:00 p.m. We will tour McCurtain County Wilderness Area, a Red-cockaded Woodpecker site and home of several rare plant species as well; Beaver's Bend State Park and Forked Lake during the two-day period, with the sequence and schedule to be somewhat dictated by the weather and other variables. We will also visit sites of spider-lilies, palmettos and other McCurtain County specialties. The birds and butterflies should be just as extraordinary as the plants.

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Jim Norman and Nora Jones will be coordinating the weekend outings. For more information, Jim may be reached at (918)682-1896 or 502 N. 14th St., Muskogee, OK 74401. Nora can be reached at (918)585-1117, ext. 19, or 3605 E. 49th St., Tulsa, OK 74135.

A block of 20 rooms at the Charles Wesley Motor Lodge has been set aside for ONPS members for the evening of June 8. **You must call the motel directly at (405)584-3303 no later than 1 May to reserve a room.** Tell the reservations clerk that you are with the Oklahoma Native Plant Society and that you want one of the rooms that has been blocked off. Most rooms have two beds. Cost for 1 person is \$32; for 2 people it's \$39; for 3 it's \$43, and for 4 it's \$47 — all plus tax. Camping and other accommodations are available in the vicinity. Be aware, though, that the rooms and camp sites fill up quickly. Make your reservations early.

Each participant must pre-register with Dr. Jeffrey Burkhart, Phillips University, J S. University, Enid OK 73701 / (405)-548-2330, no later than May 1, 1996. We must have a head count by 1 May for the June 8 dinner. There is no charge for the outing itself. Please read the instructions in the box below before packing! We want you to have a good, memorable time.

>NOTICE

- > Preregistration is now required for all field trips.
- > Field trip announcements will contain the name, address, and telephone number of the leader. If you have doubts about terrain, difficulty, etc., ask.
- > Field trips take place rain or shine. Hiking boots, long pants and a hat are essential. **Bring water and lunch.** Sunscreen and insect repellent are always in demand. Field guides, a camera and binoculars are nice.
- > Participation is at your own risk
- > All ONPS field trips are open to the public at no charge, unless charges per member are specified in the announcement. Visitors and newcomers are always welcome.

EXTRA! CHICKASAW NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Dr. Connie Taylor, who teaches biology at Southeastern Oklahoma State University when she isn't running the ONPS and OAS and a few other organizations, has invited us to accompany her forestry class for a hike into the forests at Chickasaw National Rec. Area south of Sulphur. The date is **April 6** (the day before Easter), and the time is 10:00 a.m. We'll meet Connie and her class at the Nature Center, easily reached by taking an east turn off US177, just south of SH7 in downtown Sulphur. Then follow the signs. There is plenty of parking, restrooms and such in a beautiful Arbuckles setting. Since the class will go anyway, you can even make a last-minute decision and go unregistered, but call Pat Folley at (405)872-8361 and register if you can. A great way to enjoy the woods in spring and get college-level class instruction at the same time! **No exam, honest.**

'NORTHEAST NEWS

by Betty Kemm

Plans: A regular chapter meeting on Monday, 11 March. 7:30 p.m. at the Tulsa Garden Center. Jim Norman will bring a program on area wild-flowers. [Ed. note: I doubt your Gaillardia will come in time. Hope it was fun and informative!] Also planned for the 11 March meeting is the scheduling for the spring field trips. Wish we didn't have such a long lead time for this Newsletter.....

Monday, May 6: Chapter meeting at the Tulsa Garden Center, this time at 6:30 p.m. for a potluck supper, followed by a program by ONPS President Frank Carl of Okeene. Frank is a retired naturalist and wildlife photographer. You will enjoy his comprehensive approach to witnessing nature.

p.s. Sadly, we are unable to get permission to conduct a plant rescue at Gluedobbers' Field. New owners say they are concerned about liability ...[yeah, sure].

CENTRAL CHAPTER REPORTS

by Patricia Folley

It's been a long time since we had a Central Chapter meeting, as we planned to get together at the Indoor Outing in February, and it was too late to schedule a replacement meeting. However, we are going to Clinton on Saturday, March 9, to visit Steve and Sherry Bieberich at the Sunshine Nursery. This will be during the time that the *Gaillardia* is in the printer's, so must be reported next time. It is so dry here that we need to see some real survivors, and that is the specialty of the Bieberichs'.

CENTRAL CHAPTER PLANS

by Ruth Boyd

25 March will see our first meeting of the year, an indoor affair at the OSU Horticulture Center, 4th & Portland in Oklahoma City. Our featured speaker is ONPS President Frank Carl; a busy man, as you

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.....continued from page 9: Central Chapter News

can see from this newsletter, despite being officially retired. Time is 7:30 p.m. Guests always welcome. If you have native plants to exchange, bring them along – we sure aren't competing with any local businessmen, who don't carry any native plants to speak of. So far, our rule is, bring it if you can, and adopt it if you have room for it. No sales or trades required..

Then, on **Saturday, April 20, a field trip to Arcadia Lake, near Edmond.** Meet at the gatehouse at 10:00 a.m. Our host will be the recreation director / naturalist at Arcadia. She will give a brief program and then take us on a short walk. After approximately one hour we will be allowed to ramble on our own. There are ample picnic facilities, and you are invited to bring a sack lunch. Central Chapter members will provide drinks and dessert.



To reach Lake Arcadia from the intersection of Route 66 and I-35, go east on 66 about 4 miles to Midwest Boulevard. There is a sign that says "Edmond Park" or "Lake Arcadia". Guests are welcome and there is no charge. For more information, call Lynn Allen (evenings) at 282-8239 or Ruth Boyd at 872-9652. ☺

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hilltop Arboretum, of Baton Rouge, LA, announces a Gulf Coast Regional Native Plant Conference, June 12-15, at Louisiana State University. Gulf Coast doesn't exclude Oklahoma, as our southeastern counties bordering the Red River sport "coastal plain" endemics. Contact Marion Drummond at (504)767-6916 for more information.

Joanne Orr sends an interesting document on a new **Federal Department of Agriculture policy.** It implements a Presidential Executive Memorandum published in the *Federal Register* last August 10. In brief, when federal highway funds are used in a project, it requires the use of regionally-native plants for landscaping, minimizing adverse effects on natural habitat when building, pollution-prevention and energy and water-conservation, and the *creation of outdoor demonstration projects.* No additional funds are provided for the carrying-out of these policies. ODOT will provide copies to interested parties for a SASE with 55 cents postage attached.

The Oklahoma Wildlife Federation wants to publish a book for community groups desiring to develop public lands like

school yards and city parks. It is inviting all organizations and citizens to contribute their expertise to the book's development. The object is to plant for encouraging wildlife habitat in urban settings. With a cutoff date of June, 1996, information should be sent immediately. Contact Kathy Draper at (405)525-7045

MOTHER NATURE SENDS A PINK SLIP

To: Homo Sapiens

Re: Termination

My business is producing life. The bottom line is, you are not cost-effective workers. Over the millennia, I have repeatedly clarified my management goals and objectives. Your failure to comply is well-documented. It stems from your inability to be a team player: (1) You interact badly with co-workers; (2) contaminate the workplace; (3) sabotage the machinery; (4) hold up production; and (5) consume the profits. In short, you are a disloyal species.

Within the last decade, I have given you three warnings: (1) made the workplace too hot for you; (2) shaken up your home office; and (3) utilized plague to cut back personnel. Your failure to take appropriate action has locked these warnings into the Phase-out Mode, which will result in termination. No appeal.

clipped from The Herbal Newsletter, some time back. by Marylou Awaikta.

"I felt culture in its deepest sense, what civilizes people, as only a thin veneer, like the new houses which turn out to have a brick facade pasted onto some other material. And how incredible it was, in autumn, to swing past acres and acres of fancy French Provincial, Spanish, or Tudor houses where not a leaf is allowed to rest on the immaculate lawns! So beautiful in a *House and Garden* sort of way, so empty of poetry. For poetry lives in places where people work in their gardens or let them go wild and do not leave it to impersonal firms of gardeners to plant and trim."
.....from *Journal of a Solitude* by May Sarton

"**ONPS** readers are welcome to recycle our articles to other newsletters if desired. Some are just too good to use only once! Please, though, give our authors credit.

The editor apologizes to all those who sent material for which there is no room, or that was too late to be of use.

REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS

Each year at the Annual Meeting (usually in October), an award is made in the name of Anne Long, one of the organizers of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, who died before it became a reality. Anne loved the native plants of Oklahoma and the people who cared enough to help preserve them.

Nominations for this award may be made by any ONPS member, and are for a person or organization who has been a shining example of the execution of our Purpose during the past year or years. Members of the current Board, though, are not eligible for the award (they are listed on the back page). To refresh your memory, the Purpose is stated on page 1, under the logo.

RULES: Send the name of the person or group you wish to nominate, with your own name and address to Dr. Paul Buck, 1623 S. Delaware Pl., Tulsa, OK 74104-5915. On a separate piece of paper, explain why you think the nominee deserves the award. All nominations are kept confidential, and the nominator(s) are not revealed. ☺

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy.
I woke and saw that life was duty.
I acted, and behold, duty was joy!"
.....Rabindrath Tagore

ONPS WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS

- Bobbie Mardis, Norman
- Lisa Euchner, Flower Mound, Texas
- Frank Bowers, Stevens Point, WI
- Ann Sikes, Roswell, Georgia
- Eileen Parker, Noble
- Michael Seth, Enid
- Kurt and Judith Schaefer, Texhoma
- Katy B. Manker, Perkins
- Kurt Marfurt, Tulsa
- Mary Richie, Tahlequah
- Barry & Sydney Carpenter, Hugo
- Ghislaine Rabin, Norman
- Aurice Huguley, Norman
- Dorothy Spoonemore, Moore
- Nova Boyd, Purcell
- Linda Conaway, Edmond
- Mary Wood, Antlers

Know any of these fine folks? Give them a call and let them know we're happy they joined us – and then make sure they are personally invited to one of our outstanding programs or field trips. We're glad to have them!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please renew my membership in the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, or add the name below to the membership list for the category checked. My dues payment is enclosed. Make checks payable to *Oklahoma Native Plant Society*, and mail to: Oklahoma Native Plant Society / 2435 South Peoria / Tulsa, OK 74114

\$15.00 Family \$10.00 Individual Gift from _____
 \$5.00 Student \$200.00 Lifetime Individual
 \$300.00 Lifetime Family Renewal New Membership
 \$ _____ contribution for _____ (All contributions are tax deductible)

NAME _____ HOME PHONE _____

AFFILIATION (School, Business or Avocation) _____

ADDRESS _____ BUSINESS PH. _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

The Gaillardia

Published quarterly by the Oklahoma Native Plant Society
2435 S. Peoria, Tulsa OK 74114

President:	Frank Carl
Vice President	Ann Randle
Secretary	Dartene Michael
Treasurer	Judy Jordan
Historian	Karen Haworth

Boardmembers-at-Large
1996: Anais Starr and T. H. Milby
1997: Mike Palmer and Richard Bradley
1998: Sheila Strawn and Betty Kemm



Edited by Patricia Folley
Copy to: 15100 Etowah Road, Noble OK 73068
Telephone (405)872-8361

"The old log in the woods will never be a great tree again - things never go back - yet lying there, covered with moss, it is creating new life, which in turn will be great and beautiful. The fish eats the insect, the bird the fish, the mammal the bird, and the insect the mammal. As each, in a universal rhythm is creating new life; for there is no life except life, which comes from life.

Waters flow where daisies grew. Trees grow where swans once swam. All things upon this earth are developing into new things - from what is here must come what is to be. There is no other material.

This is the fulfilment of the promise of life: nothing can be destroyed; everything is being created.from *These things are Ours*, by Gwen Frostic

RENEWAL TIME!

Please look down at your mailing label  If the top line has a date entry of 12-95 or before in the third "word" position, your renewal for 1996 is due. (The first "word" is your membership group: IM for individuals, FM for families, SM for students. The second "word" indicates the time you joined ONPS.) 

Oklahoma Native Plant Society
c/o Tulsa Garden Center
2435 South Peoria
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74114

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