

The purpose of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society is to encourage the study, protection, propagation, appreciation and use of Oklahoma's native plants.

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Summer 1996

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

☛ Contributions from members are welcome!

The Oklahoma Native Plant Society Newsletter

Gaillardia

CALENDAR

Note: the events dated below are identified either by a page number for a fuller description of the event or the name of a person to contact. Phone numbers are at the bottom of the page.

- September 1 Cutoff date for nominations for the Anne Long Award. (page 12)
- September 9 Next evening meeting for Tulsa Chapter, Betty Kemm, Tulsa Garden Center.
- October 12-13 Annual Meeting at Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. Mike Palmer & Nora Jones. A reservation form will be inserted in the fall Gaillardia, but reserve the dates now
- October 28 First indoor meeting of Central Chapter. Plant & Seed Exchange, planning session. 7:30 p.m. at OSU Horticulture Center, OKC
- 1 December Deadline for 1997 Photo Contest Entries. Now is the time to be selecting your best shots for entry. Entry form will be inserted in the Fall Gaillardia.

Note: all members are invited to all chapter field trips or meetings, and are encouraged to bring guests. Many field trips are suitable for children: ask first.

*Betty Kemm (918)742-4351, Connie Taylor (405)924-0121. Jim Norman (918)682-1896



Echinacea spp. The next endangered species? See pp 8-9

PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPH

by Frank Carl

The 19th Annual Wildflower Workshop in McAlester was well attended and enjoyed by all. The programs and field trip sites were interesting, educational and stimulating. Gave me an urge to grab the field guides and take a trip to someplace exotic.

Congratulations are in order for Doctors Constance (Connie) and John Taylor. They were awarded the 6th Annual Bess Snodgrass Memorial Award for outstanding contribution to Oklahoma's wildflowers. This is an honor, not only for them, but also for our organization. It makes all of us feel very proud.

Congratulations also to the winners of the annual photo contest. As usual, the photographs were great and provided a spectacular photo display at the Wildflower Workshop.

Visiting with Native Plant Society members and also from personal experience, I have been made aware of a need for more program givers (similar, I suppose, to care givers). This organization receives many requests from various organizations for programs. We have a message to send out and those few people involved in program presentations are unable to fulfill all the requests.

So: step forward! You don't have to be a professional botanist or professional gardener or anything else. You can speak of your own experiences, attempts at establishing native plants, (or painting or photographing them), show a few slides of about anything nature-related, and I guarantee you will be well-rewarded. Programs are fun, you meet a lot of people with similar interests, and you get to eat great meals.

The Society has a slide file and hopefully in the future, copies of slides will be made available, along with descriptions, to be used in program presentations. Call me at (405)822-3660 if you are interested or have any questions.

Ed. note: We do indeed have a few slides from past photo contests, and I have many more that are available for checkout. It wouldn't take much encouragement for me to make up some ready-made programs if supplied with topics.

paf

WINNERS: WE GOT WINNERS!

by Pat Folley

First, the annual Harriet Barclay awards, given to the Senior and Junior-High School students presenting the best papers on botany at the Junior Academy in April. McLoud High School wins again! Under the outstanding sponsorship of their teacher, Bruce Smith, Kari Courkamp won the Senior paper award and Cory White won the Junior High award. The quality of this year's papers is equal to any undergraduate-level college work I've seen.

Then, Steve and Sherry Bieberich, owners of Sunshine Nursery and Arboretum in Clinton, won the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation's "Soil Conservationist of the Year" award. The Bieberichs are ONPS members, known to most of us through their generous gifts of time to present programs and seminars and to host field trips.

And John and Connie Taylor jointly won the annual Bess Snodgrass award for outstanding contributions to wildflower conservation. In their case, the achievements are both in improving knowledge, by their "Annotated List of the Ferns, Fern Allies, Gymnosperms and Flowering Plants of Oklahoma", and also for the many fine young botanists they have trained.

Last, but not least, the winners of the 1996 Photography Contest, sponsored by the ONPS and presented at the annual Wildflower Workshops. Our newest contest chairman, Jim Norman, secured three outstanding photographers to judge the annual event: Bob Lindsey, Jerry Willis, and Monica Macklin. We thank them all.

Winners, by category, are:

(BEGINNERS)

1st Place: Barbara Tarbutton, Noble
2nd Place: Patrick Earnest, Norman
3rd Place: Ann Sikes, Roswell, GA
Honorable mention: Carolyn Sanders, Sayre

(AMATEUR)

1st Place: Violet Williams, Henryetta
2nd Place: Barbara Tarbutton, Noble
3rd Place: Dick Clapp, Noble
Honorable Mention: Larry Williams, Henryetta

(ADVANCED CLOSE-UP)

1st Place: Jeri McMahon, Ft. Gibson
2nd Place: Patricia Folley, Noble
3rd Place: James W. Taylor, Hinton
Honorable Mention: Jeri McMahon, Ft. Gibson

(HABITAT)

1st Place: Paul Buck, Tulsa
2nd Place: Dorothy Norris, Tulsa
3rd Place: Helen Jordan, Stillwater
Honorable Mention: Carolyn Sanders, Sayre

ONPS provides cash awards to each winner, along with a certificate of award. All entries are mounted on large display boards, protected with clear plastic, and kept on public display throughout the state. To schedule a display time, contact Photo Curators Ruth Boyd, 812 Jordan Dr., Noble OK 73068, (405)872-9652; or Sue Amstutz, 4190 E. 46th Pl., Tulsa OK 74135, (918)742-8374. (They deliver.)

GARDENING ON THE WILD SIDE

by Susan Chambers

TALE OF A "NATIVE" SON

By now, most members of the Central Chapter of ONPS have either heard of, or been to visit, Steve and Sherry Bieberich's Sunshine Nursery and Arboretum in Clinton, Oklahoma. Those who have made the trip will know about the unusual plant selections found at this nursery. Some may even have wondered how a nursery/ greenhouse in small-town western Oklahoma could become the mecca for people looking for tough, durable native plants. This is the story of how Sunshine Nursery and Arboretum came into being, what they're about and where they're going.

At the age of 15, Steve Bieberich was looking for an after-school job. He appeared at the doorstep of Cabaniss Nursery, owned by Sherry's mom and dad. Steve went to work in the growing fields and around the nursery, learning, so to speak, from the ground up. He began absorbing the basics of growing plants and of landscaping. Eventually, he left for Sayre Jr. College, followed by Southwestern State College and years of self-instruction in botany and horticulture.

Years went by, and in 1981, Steve and Sherry were married with a family of three children to support. Their most pressing need was a business that would keep five people fed, clothed and sheltered. On land that had been in Sherry's family, they started a wholesale nursery, concentrating on the common varieties and selections available in the industry. Building a business of this sort is very slow, so they took landscaping jobs on the side.

In the winter of 1983-84, they lost the majority of their stock to a hard winter freeze. Disenchanted with the commercially-available plants, they turned to plants already succeeding around them. The first of their wildings was a population of sugar maples growing in the canyons of Caddo County. Starting with plant production methods developed by Carl Whitcomb, they adjusted the process to local conditions and marketed the successes to nurseries and arboreta across the U.S. The Bieberichs searched for any plants that would thrive in western Oklahoma. In 1993 this search led Steve to China with a group associated with the University of Nebraska. His objective was to find plant species that would tolerate harsh climates, and then push them to the limit of their adaptability. One very important principle which the Bieberichs express is that the origin, or *provenance*, of the seed, grafting or cutting stock determines to a great extent its survival.

Their ever-widening selection of native perennials, shrubs and trees expanded to fill the retail shop and greenhouses, built by Steve and Sherry in 1985. Although they've never advertised, the number of growing and overwintering houses has risen to 13. Display beds have been added to serve the customers who need to see the plant growing naturally to believe it will thrive.

By 1996, the Bieberichs have established a wholesale business supplying mostly woody plants to nurseries in Kansas, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska and Oklahoma. They also sell herbaceous plant material to nurseries in Oklahoma and one in Texas. All of this is accomplished with no formal catalog or price-list. Contact with all these nurseries has inevitably led to even more plant discoveries and plant swaps.

Through all these endeavors, Steve has pursued his own personal research in trees of the elm/hackberry family. He has worked since 1988 with the National Arboretum on the reintroduction of elm hybrids and species with similar form to replace the native American Elms lost to Dutch Elm disease. Now he maintains a collection of every known elm species that is hardy to western Oklahoma, testing them for toughness and hardiness. George Ware, of the Morton Arboretum, has worked with Steve in this endeavor. His favorite reference guide in this search has been Reader's Manual of Cultivated Plants (grouped according to families).

With all these contacts has come a continuing parade of interested parties through the arboretum, trial gardens, growing houses and retail areas of the nursery. There have been teaching seminars through the extension center; herb, horticulture and native plant societies; master gardeners, botanical gardens, park and arboretum staffs; the OKC zoo; university representatives; owners and employees of other nurseries; even a delegation from China. It makes you wonder how they get any work done! (They say it's loyal, skilled employees.)

Current projects include working with Steve George, of Texas A & M Extension Service, to provide native Oklahoma plants what will thrive in Texas. Their future plans are mainly concerned with broadening the plant palette available to consumers by testing new types of all plants. They try to promote only the plants that work the best. They're also working hard at perfecting production methods that will produce healthier plants. At present, their nursery stock is offered in 2" pots, quarts, 1- 2- and 5-gallon pots, and field-grown trees. Being truly terminal horticulturists, they are content to buy-in the common stuff and grow the "weird stuff" themselves.

When you decide to visit, the Sunshine Nursery and Arboretum is located north of Clinton, Oklahoma on Highway 183. Their address is Rte 1, Box 4030, zip 73601. The phone is (405)323-6259.

"Shame on you! you who add house to house and join field to field, until not an acre remains, and you are left to dwell alone in the land." *Isaiah 5: 8, New English version*

CONSERVATION CORNER

by Patricia Folley

At last! After two years of threatening to write these columns myself, if ever the committee chairmen failed to do so, I get my chance. (No names, though, because I might not want to write it every time.)

COLLECTING, or

"You want proof? I'll give you proof!"

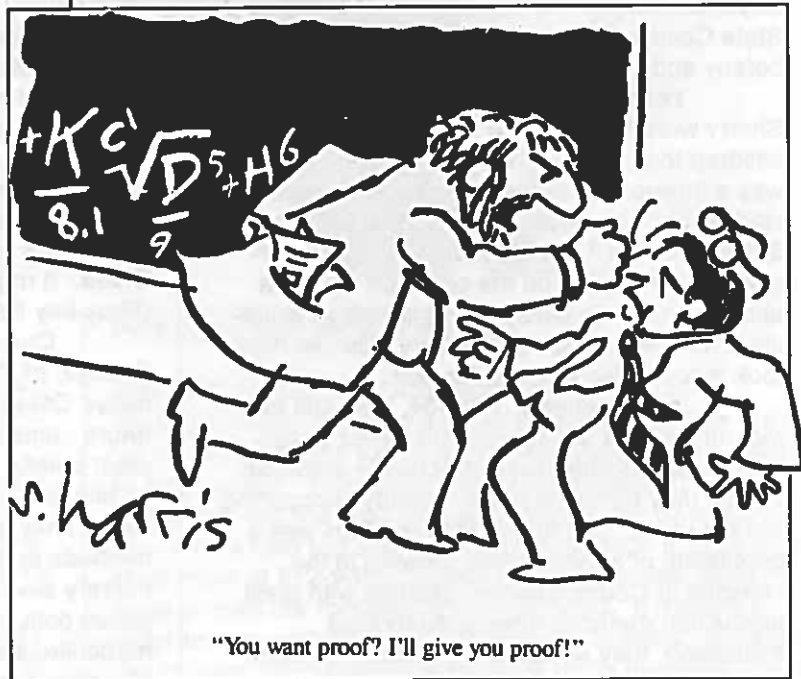
Ever since I started hanging-out at the Bebb Herbarium on the second floor of OU's Botany Department, I've had an uneasy feeling that there is something very like larceny, or even murder, involved in the taking of scientific specimens. A dark suspicion that many of the plants uprooted (mice, snakes, butterflies, etc., may be substituted for "plants" throughout) in the name of science wind up as landfill has been, unfortunately, verified by years of experience watching the janitors sweep out the remains of taxonomy lab classes at term's end. Much of this waste is caused by a lack of support equipment and personnel: it takes a very minimum of one hour to prepare a plant specimen for storage, plus archival mounting paper, supplies, and labeling. Students bring in thousands of specimens in the course of a school year, and they aren't all needed, of course. If you require the services of an experienced taxonomist to *verify* the student's guess (called a "field ID"), the demand for such specimens drops to nil: there aren't enough such folks to go around. A collection filled with unverified specimens, however, isn't worth the storage space it consumes. Ah, the tyranny of political economics.

We have discussed the problem of student collections in this newsletter before, and I, for one, am willing to discuss it again, but not here. The problem of the day is not the curation of specimens, but the crime itself. To wit, the problem of ownership of the wild plant or animal desired. Easy to say: "Ask the landowner's permission". If you can find him/her. After he/she stops laughing at you, the answer usually is "sure - take the whole field of weeds if you like". What about public property? We used to know that weeds growing along highways were free for the taking, until Joanne Orr and her crews started planting wildflowers there. And it is public knowledge that nothing must be removed from public parks - or is it?

In the case of parks operated by the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation, a permit is very easy to obtain. It involves the completion of a one-page form,

which is signed by both the collector and the facility manager. I have secured permits for the two state facilities in which I often work, and feel very comfortable about the process. It is far preferable to the embarrassment and delay caused by getting arrested. Actually, I was arrested, once, by a very junior park officer, but not for stealing weeds. It seems he had just completed drug-interdiction training and recognized my posture (prone in a bar-ditch) as a sure proof of misdeeds. The fact that I was wearing 3 1/4 pounds of camera gear didn't make a bit of difference. (The case was dismissed by the park manager, and I got a permit signed while I was there.)

Why do we collect, anyway? Because it is often necessary to compare the specimen with others that have been studied by experts in the taxa before being sure of our identification. A properly prepared and preserved specimen is proof of the existence of the plant at a point in space and a point in time. Also, significant advances in scientific method require the re-examination of material generated historically in the habitat or location named. For example, DNA analysis is increasingly available for use in making distinctions based on one or two genes, or for determining the parent species of hybrids. Two generations ago, pollen was useless as a determinant. Then, every school installed an electron microscope. Now, pollen analysis is convenient.



"You want proof? I'll give you proof!"

The fact is that collection is necessary to the preservation of information about a place, a time, and a species. Collection made for grade-points is wasteful and can easily be escalated to scientific collection if the instructor is willing to be a bit creative. Substitute photographs, for example. Or make a classroom exhibit; each species collected only once. Donate it to the local library at end of term. Larceny in the name of collection can be prevented by advance planning and common courtesy. Of course, ask! The embarrassment of being told "no" is small compared with the embarrassment of eviction or arrest.

BOTANY BAY**THE GREAT LAND EXCHANGE**

by Constance Taylor

The public, that's us, in Oklahoma and Arkansas will acquire 180,586 acres of land from Weyerhaeuser in exchange for 47,486 acres of public owned National Forest Service lands. Of this 3 plus to 1 land exchange the greater part will be in Oklahoma. We would acquire 114,905 acres in the Broken Bow Lake, Glover River, and Cucumber Creek areas and give up 28,093 acres in the Tiak District south-east of Idabel. That is a difference of 86,842 acres. This is an equal value exchange. Weyerhaeuser would acquire mostly mature pine stands and some younger stands of timber of NFS land that is on high quality farmland that can grow 80 foot plus trees in 50 years. Ideal land for a timber industry. They would trade off land that is scenic, hilly, and poorer quality for fast growing pine agriculture, but has great values for wildlife, both plant and animal, and recreation.

In the ecological assessment prepared by The Nature Conservancy, botanists found numerous plants that are rare or of limited distribution in Oklahoma, either endemic or occurring at their edge of range. These include, Chalk maple, Ouachita Leadplant, Ouachita Blue Star, Texas Dutchman's Pipe, Narrow-leaved White Aster, Bush's Poppy Mallow, Sandgrass, several sedges, Witchhazel, Ouachita Bluet, Axl-leaved St. John's Wort, Carolina Holly, American Holly, Crested Dwarf iris, Ouachita Horsemint, Mock Orange, Prickly Gooseberry, Ouachita Goldenrod, Twistflower, American Snowbell, Horse Sugar, Bald Cypress, Cranefly Orchid, Ozark Spiderwort, Palmer's Cornsalad, Muscadine Grape, and others.

Of course, a bunch of interesting animals also occur there.

The bill to make the land exchange has passed the Senate. It has not yet been introduced into the House as far as I know. There are some groups opposed to the Great Land Exchange, and some in favor of it.

Benefits include: 1. more public lands for Oklahoma, particularly around the critical habitat area of the Glover River, and the Nature Conservancy area of Cucumber Creek. While Weyerhaeuser allows public access, this would insure permanent public access and increases recreational opportunities in southeastern Okla-

homa. 2. More key wildlife habitat protected. In Arkansas, 24,245 of fabulous, flooding and wet mature bottomlands around Pond Creek, Cossatot River and Little River would become a National Wildlife Refuge. 3. Weyerhaeuser's acquisition of better production lands means more timber produced on fewer acres, therefore fewer acres clear-cut.

The main drawback is that USFS would acquire about 25,000 acres of pine plantations and therefore continue to be in the monoculture business. Many feel that national forest lands should absolutely not be in pine monoculture. Therefore the future of these lands in an important conservation issue that should be decided perhaps before the transfer.

Dr. Constance Taylor is Professor of Botany at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, the current President of Oklahoma Academy of Science, a former president of ONPS, author of many books and articles on plant taxonomy, an exciting field-trip leader, and a very nice lady to know.

MUSKOGEE SAVES DOLLARS

condensed from the Okla. Dept. of Transportation's KOB Newsletter, original by Rick Ewing, City of Muskogee

Like many Oklahoma communities, Muskogee has turned to a private manager for its solid-waste disposal. While a savings in tax money resulted, the community was left with no "free" space to dispose of the more than 250 trees cut by the City during an average year. Unlike many communities, Muskogee has developed a combination of uses for those materials which is both cost-effective and environmentally sound.

After three major storms left the city with a huge problem, a local firewood contractor was found to be willing to cut and haul away the salable portion of the wood, on-site as it lay. That action alone reduced the problem to a residue of limbs and debris. Then the Muskogee Parks and Recreation Department bought a grinder to reduce the limbs to a mulch consistency. At first, the material was used on city parks and tree-planting projects. The remainder was then distributed free-of-charge to citizens who were willing to load it themselves. No advertising was needed: those gardeners knew a good thing when they heard about it.

Ewing says "We do not advertise the availability of the mulch to the general citizenry because we do not feel we have a sufficient quantity. What began as a costly problem has turned into a steady supply of mulch for our civic properties as well as the property of the city's homeowners. This allows us to recycle the wood waste, save money (about \$9,000) and KEEP OKLAHOMA BEAUTIFUL all at the same time."

Ed. note: I know that Norman has a successful recycling program for yard wastes of all kinds, including the mountains of grass clippings generated by all those dull lawns, and have heard that Edmond is considering a similar one. If your community is recycling, let us know.

19th ANNUAL WILDFLOWER WORKSHOP
McAlester, OK, May 10-11, 1996

Report by Joanne Orr

Butterflies and Herbs Attract Wildflower
Lovers

Thunderstorms were featured Friday evening at the 19th Annual Wildflower Workshop, along with two days of butterflies, herbs, and wildflower wisdom. A total of 171 people registered for the workshop, dinner, and Saturday field trip.

Everyone enjoyed the expertise of Dr. Gary Noel Ross, international butterfly expert, who left his National Geographic research site on a mountain-top in Arkansas to drive over to McAlester for the conference. Other popular topics included *Landscaping with Wildflowers* by Darlene Michael, Great Plains Design; Dr. Paul Buck's knowledgeable presentation of *Kiamichi Area Wildflowers*, and *Herbal Uses of Native Plants*, by Sue Anglin, Wildwoman Wildflowers, Eufaula. Opportunities to buy wildflowers, herbs, and native species abounded with two growers, Wildwoman Herb Farm and Clear Creek Farm, presenting a plethora of choices.

At the Friday evening dinner, Dr. Connie Taylor and Dr. John Taylor were presented the Sixth Annual Bess Snodgrass Award. The honor consists of a framed photograph of wildflowers and one acre of wildflower seeds to be planted on a highway site selected by the winners. The award is given in memory of Bess Snodgrass of Ardmore, who led the effort to plant *Coreopsis* in the Arbuckle Mountain area. It is given by John and Frank Snodgrass, her sons, and honors individuals who have followed in Bess Snodgrass' footsteps in preserving and encouraging Oklahoma's legacy of wildflowers.

Saturday's field trip started out with cool weather, and workshop field trippers contributed to McAlester's economy by rushing to Walmart to buy sweatshirts. Stops were made at Lake Eufaula's SH 31 landing and Wildwoman Herb Farm, with lunch at Robbers Cave State Park. Everyone was charmed by a wildflower meadow adjacent to the Eastern Russian Orthodox Church in Hartshome. By good fortune, the priest was there (he resides in Dallas and was in Hartshome for a special religious observance) and many folks enjoyed a rare opportunity to learn about the church and the Russian miners who founded it.

The Annual Wildflower Workshop is sponsored by the Oklahoma Native Plant Society the

Oklahoma Garden Clubs, Inc., and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. The next Workshop will be held in Duncan in May, 1997. The date and meeting site will be announced within the next few months. See you then!

Joanne Orr is the director of Highway Beautification for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

MORE SNAKEROOT STORIES

It isn't often that this newsletter has to handle "breaking news", as it is a quarterly publication and just getting the calendar completed that far ahead is a hassle. But the aftermath of the disastrous blunder made by the *Tulsa World* (see the Northeast Chapter report on page 9) has had our lines buzzing.

Alert ONPS members Paul Buck and Mike Palmer managed to get statements about the moral and legal angles of the problem published in the *World*, but the damage has already been done: refuge managers and property owners all over the state have already begun reporting significant habitat disturbance and the illegal harvesting of entire populations of this lovely wildflower.

Joanne Orr faxed copies of the published material available to her, while sending the Wildflower Workshop report. Joanne feels that nothing less than a law specifically forbidding collection for sale of wild plants from public property and rights-of-way will make much difference to the diggers who are just out to make a quick profit without any thought to the consequences.

An insight to the problem facing landowners is contained in a follow-up article appearing in the *Tulsa World* on May 30. There, an Okmulgee County sheriff is quoted as saying "We've got the prison system overflowing as it is". Maybe a lesson from the "drug wars" could be applied here, with a law specifying a heavy fine and confiscation of the equipment used in commission of the crime. Would the state's county offices have any use for a hundred or so old pickup trucks? Would they have any more interest in such a law, provided we could get it passed, if there were an opportunity to collect fines?

At any rate, it will be necessary for this organization to draft a bill for submission to the next legislature. Surely some one of our multi-talented members knows how it should be done. Probably, the DOT and the Nature Conservancy will assist. ONPS President Frank Carl, who considers himself to be "legality challenged", is willing to coordinate efforts to produce a suitable document, and you should contact him at his home address, P.O. Box 743, Okeene, OK 73763-0743 or phone at (405)822-3660 to volunteer.

For a copy of the complete file to date, contact *Gaillardia* editor Pat Folley at the address on page 12. Include a long, self-addressed stamped envelope bearing 55 ¢ postage.

FIELD TRIPS PAST

Pontotoc Ridge Nature Preserve
by Patricia Folley

On April 13, twenty-eight of us gathered under the shade of huge post-oak trees to explore just-a-bit of The Nature Conservancy's newest preserve: Pontotoc Ridge. As the announced "leader", I had done my homework -- came down on the prior Wednesday and made lists of everything in bloom. It was very dry, that day, and not much out. Then, typically for an Oklahoma April, the Ridge got 4 inches of rain the night before our arrival. Entry on the old ranch road was impossible. We changed our gathering point and walked in.

To one of the most spectacular shows that any site has presented for one of our tours:



Podophyllum peltatum, or Mayapples, in the rare bright pink form! There were even a few *Dodecatheon meadii*, or shooting stars, also bright pink, and a week or more earlier than expected. In fact, there was so much excitement that I completely lost track of the various groups, prompting site manager Jim Erwin to remark that leading one of our groups was like "herding cats"!

With visitors like Jim Norman, Connie Taylor, Frank Carl, Nora Jones and Barry and Sydney Carpenter, I didn't need to do much leading. The spring in the cave was gushing bravely away, the little crystal brooks were their pristine best, and no one went away disappointed. There were even a few morel mushrooms to tempt us. It was hard to remember that our instructions from TNC were to "take only pictures -- and don't even leave footprints".

Pontotoc Ridge is a gift to the future made by M. W. "Buddy" Smith of Ada, who loves this beautiful place enough to give it away rather than see it turned into a rock or beef mine, as most of the land in the area has been treated. Over 2,000 acres in extent, it covers two limestone ridges, innumerable springs, caves, ledges, prairie openings, forested bottoms, and plum thickets. Because it contains the headwaters of its creeks, they are clean and pure. The biological diversity reflects the variety of the landforms, to include five species of poisonous snakes (and many more really nice ones), a plant list that already lists 330 species and will, I'm sure, top 500 when we get access to the far interior.

Though little publicity has been released on this central-Oklahoma site, it is already in great demand as a study site by teachers and students at nearby East Central University in Ada. Permission to enter must be secured in advance from TNC Science Director Nora Jones at the Oklahoma Chapter headquarters in Tulsa: (918)585-1117.

A file-print from my data base, (to include just what has been processed at that date) on Pontotoc Ridge plants may be ordered from Pat Folley (address on back page). Please send a large self-addressed envelope with \$0.55 postage.

CHICKASAW NRA

Central Chapter joined Connie Taylor and her forestry class on April 6 for a tour of the forest around Antelope Spring, followed by a visit to the great view from Buffalo Point and a great game of what-was-it played in a patch of prairie nearby.

Though there weren't many plants in bloom at that early date, we were treated to lots of good tips on identifying

the trees by their: bark, shape, end buds and habitat. Some of the bloomers included: butterfly violet, *Viola sororia*; Johnny-jump-up, *V. raffinesquii*; Redbud, *Cercis canadensis*; early daisy, *Erigeron philadelphicus*; loose sedge, *Carex laxiflora*; roundleaf groundsel, *Senecio obovata*; sand spikerush, *Eleocharis montevidensis*; skunkbush, *Rhus trilobata*; cutleaf verbena, *Verbena bipinnatifida*; windflower, *Anemone caroliniana*; mountain juniper, *Juniperus ashii*, and that strange "elbow bush", *Forestiera pubescens*.

A picnic lunch punctuated the two explorations, and a more congenial crowd would be hard to find. Our field trips just get better and better! Ruth and I can remember when, 6 or 7 years ago, we sometimes had more leaders than followers show up. Not any more; these days, the problem is parking. None of our leaders and planners is paid -- not even for expenses. Why not make a point to express your thanks, next time you meet Connie or Paul or Jim on a trail?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The state-wide spring field trip to McCurtain County sites was held on June 8-9 as planned. While it was much too long after the 15 May cutoff for this newsletter, we were able to get some results to report, thanks to Frank Carl and Joanne Orr, who phoned it in.

First, the weather was perfect for the event. You needn't have lived long in Oklahoma for this to seem like a significant statement! The rainy weather just preceding our visit did preclude entry into the McCurtain County Wilderness Area, as the road was under water. Maybe we can schedule a visit there for a full day in spring, in another year. In fact, all who went out mentioned that each site visited was worth the trip, all by itself. Are we trying to do too much at one time?

The 38 members and friends who assembled at Charles Wesley Lodge in Broken Bow on Saturday morning visited the state champion willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) in Broken Bow and the record-bearing loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) in the Ouachita National Forest nearby. The oak is listed as 88 feet tall and having a crown spread of 102 feet. Wonder how they keep the electric company from building a line through it! The pine is 123 feet tall and has a circumference of 12 feet. There are many more "record" trees in McCurtain Co., 46 in all, including such wonders as "horse-sugar", or *Symplocos tinctoria*.

On with the trip: There was a lunch stop at the small lake in the national forest near Bokhoma — arguably the single loveliest spot in Oklahoma. Then a tour of the limestone glades on the Tiac, led by Sydney Carpenter and Nora Jones of the Nature Conservancy. The butterflies there were remarkable for number and variety, and included the rare Diana. Everywhere, the recent rains had brought out a wonderful selection of mushrooms of all kinds and colors. Some were like little red and orange lights in the edge of paths.

Another site visit (I think this was on Sunday) took the crowd to the Little River National Wildlife Reservation, where manager Berlin Heck led us into the bald cypress swamp. Tall baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*) trees seemed to reach into the clouds, bearing a heron rookery at the top end and fantastic "knees" at the other. Wild roses lined the forest road and vines of all kinds laced the whole thing together. The cool sunny weather made this "swamp crawl" an enchanting adventure, quite opposed to its reputation as a tick-creeping snake infested jungle. In fact, the group saw not a single snake the entire time, to the disappointment of some.

Many thanks are due to organizers and leaders Jim Norman and Nora Jones, and to site-managers Sydney Carpenter and Berlin Heck.

Note: Jim Norman plans to lead another Orchid Tour this August, probably on the 3rd or 10th. Couldn't reach Jim to get any details, so if you want to be included, call him at the number at the end of the Calendar, page 1.

FIELD TRIP RULES

- > Pre-registration is now required for all field trips.
- > Announcements will include the name, address, and telephone number of the leader. If you have doubts about terrain, difficult, etc., ask.
- > Field trips take place rain or shine. Proper dress and shoes, hat, etc., are essential. Long pants and sleeves are best, as some of the best flowers grow in thickets.
- > Bring lunch or a hearty snack and water, unless advised that they will be provided. Sunscreen and insect repellent are always a good idea.
- > Participation is at your own risk.
- > All ONPS field trips are open to the public at no charge, unless per-member charges are indicated in the announcement. Visitors and friends are always welcome. Many of our field trips are suitable for children. If in doubt, ask.
- > These rules apply to chapter-initiated field trips too.

**Mini-profile: Inland Seaoads
(*Chasmanthium latifolium*)**

This lovely grass grows in the shade in moist places and is a favorite of children, who often call it fish-on-a-pole for its fountain of scaly spikelets that do, indeed look like a good harvest of fresh-caught fish dangling from a pole.

C. latifolium is easily grown from seed or by digging the shallow roots after it goes to seed in the fall. It isn't fussy about soil as long as it is damp, but will not thrive where any afternoon sun strikes it. That makes it perfect for our shady lawns. It is usually about knee-high in central Oklahoma, and its willowy foliage is beautiful.



NE CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

by Betty Kemm

SPRING EVENTS

The evening meeting at Tulsa Garden Center on 11 March featured Jim Norman with his stunning slides of eastern Oklahoma spring wildflowers. Jim's enthusiasm must have been contagious, because we then persuaded him to lead a field trip.

The field trip left Tahlequah on the morning of April 9, and wound up and around the Illinois River. Despite drouth and a truly terrible winter, the spring flowers did not disappoint us. Jim does know all the best places, and all about what lives there, too.

Then, on May 6, another evening meeting brought Frank Carl, ONPS president, with a slide program made mostly in his west-central Oklahoma garden. The butterfly pictures were incredible, and the presentation inspiring. **Note: Betty has two serving spoons left over from this meeting. Call her to claim yours!**

May 9-10, over 30 NE chapter members attended the 19th annual Wildflower Workshop in McAlester. There, a day of outstanding programs was capped by a 4-inch downpour, mostly during the Friday evening banquet, and the Saturday field trip was cool and wet.

Then, on the 17th of May we tripped again: to the Zink ranch. Escorted by Mrs. Zinc, we toured Scout camps and wildflower meadows on the property, listing more than 30 kinds of flowers in bloom. Mrs. Zinc even served lunch! Though no more field trips are planned for the summer, we remain open to suggestions and possibilities.

The next evening meeting will take place on September 9 at the Tulsa Garden Center.

Ed. note: Betty Kemm also sent an article cut from the Tulsa World, requesting that we use the remainder of her page to encourage all ONPS members to respond in the strongest possible manner to this renewed threat to our treasured wild plants. We hear reports of people out digging up the State Parks, roadsides, even private property: This is incitement to crime, and the victims have only us to speak for them. You may inform anyone who asks that, while it is not illegal to collect wild plants in

Oklahoma, it is certainly illegal to do so without the owner's permission.

UNDER A HEADLINE, THEN, "HERB BRINGS HIGH PRICE", the *Tulsa World* article continues: "Bartlesville isn't the Klondike or California, but a modern-day gold rush of sorts has the world beating a path to the door of James Ainsworth. Traffic flows steadily to the shady lot five miles east of Bartlesville on U.S. 60 where Ainsworth is paying cash for 'black gold'. The much valued ore comes in the form of piles of twisted brown snakeroot, which Ainsworth sells for use in research and pharmaceutical markets.

"I've bought up to \$9,000 of it at one time", Ainsworth says, as he hands out \$100 bills to a customer. His current going price: up to \$21 a pound. A buyer of wild herbs, Ainsworth has been dealing with snakeroot -- otherwise known as *Echinacea* or purple coneflower -- for seven years. He dug it himself for about 25 years, and still likes to chew on it."

The article goes on in like vein for another several inches, lauding Ainsworth's enterprising nature and willingness to buy for cash, source unquestioned, all the *Echinacea*, "Indian tobacco, pink root, mistletoe, skullcap, prickly ash, Solomon's seal, ginseng, slippery elm, golden-seal and witch hazel leaves" he can get. There is not a word about prudent or responsible collecting, even though none of the plants mentioned is in excess supply. Many of them, in fact, have been so over-collected through the years that they are quite rare. Ainsworth is quoted as dealing with 150 to 250 diggers per week. That's enough diggers to eliminate poison ivy if they were trying to do the state some good!

While no-one should risk injury by confronting such poaching in person, you can certainly report incidents to the local police, urge landowners to file trespassing charges, and the like. Best of all, speak up, when given an opportunity, to defend one of Oklahoma's most beautiful wildflowers. It is possible that *Echinacea* spp. (the state has six species) has a valid medicinal use. In that case, farmers having the appropriate kinds of land should be planting it as a crop. In central Oklahoma, they often grow on old prairie soils, poor and rocky, eroded land that isn't currently being used for more productive crops. Readers who might live in the Tulsa World's business district should write letters to the editor pointing out the shady side of this business, a detail which seems to have escaped the reporter.

Even in the 1990's, when a dollar value seems to be attached to everything, there is another value transcending the merely commercial. Purple coneflower is beautiful, inoffensive, a wild thing making glad our roadsides and asking nothing from us but to be left alone. It seems little enough to ask.

We notice that the Missouri Native Plant Society has a journal called "Missouriensis". Having spent many delightful hours with George Goodman and James Estes, I now wonder whether it is true that botany causes punning?

CENTRAL CHAPTER REPORTS

by Ruth Boyd

MEETINGS PAST:

In spite of the preceding several days having high temperatures of only about 30 degrees, 20 of us donned our winter layers and headed for **Sunshine Nursery in Clinton** on Saturday, March 9. It was surely misnamed on that over-cast windy day. A good part of the chill was dispelled by the warm welcome from owners and ONPS members, **Steve & Sherry Bieberich**. The waiting hot beverages and donuts also helped.

After about an hour of touring the arboretum we were all ready for the relative warmth of the propagation sheds. Among the things we learned that day were the most efficient methods of propagating tree seeds and how air-pruning works. The nursery offers most of the garden plants and trees one finds in other nurseries, but they specialize in natives and items that can take the difficult weather in central and western Oklahoma.

Although it was too cold to consider getting out to dig plants for the annual spring exchange (the high and low that day were 36 and 22), we had an excellent program at the **Kirkpatrick Horticulture Center** in Oklahoma City on the evening of March 25. ONPS President **Frank Carl** entertained and informed 23 of us with his very beautiful slides of flowers and the critters who feed on them. If you have trouble telling a viceroy from a monarch, just ask anyone who was there.

Then, after we wondered if warm weather would ever come, it arrived with a vengeance the third week of April. However, a cool front moved through about 3:30 a.m. on April 20, providing a perfect day for our outing to the **Edmond Park** portion of **Lake Arcadia** near Edmond. There were only eleven of us, but apparently it was the right eleven. For many of us, it was the first opportunity of the year for a stroll in the country on a pleasant spring day. Park personnel are in the process of creating a nature trail and we followed its path.

We didn't see anything startling or rare, but were treated to all the old favorite central Oklahoma early spring wildflowers. Among them were pussytoes (*Antennaria parlinii*), spiderworts (*Tradescantia spp.*), funnel lily (*Androstaphium coeruleum*), daisy fleabane (*Erigeron philadelphicus*), winecup / cowboy rose (*Callirhoe involucrata*) and sand plums (*prunus gracilis*). A large yellow Tiger

Swallowtail butterfly got everyone's attention. Rarely had any of us seen or heard more Blue-gray Gnatcatchers than were in those woods. A Gnatcatcher nest not much larger than a Hummingbird's nest was also seen. Among the other birds seen and/or heard were a Redheaded Woodpecker, Brown Thrashers, Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Robins, Cardinals, Bluejays and a large flock of Double-crested Cormorants.

After our leisurely walk, we drove to another part of the park to a picnic area where we ate our brown-bag lunches. Iced mint tea, lemonade and generous servings of a rich brownie cake provided by some of the members added to our enjoyment. Our thanks to member **Lynn Allen**, who arranged this outing with the able assistance of

Steve and Sherry Bieberich tending their store



Park Naturalist Melissa Wasson.

FUTURE PLANS: PLEASE NOTE!

Central Chapter officers have not planned any other outings for the summer, but will cooperate with anyone who wants to arrange one. During the spring, it is difficult to find an open date, but the next couple of months will be easier. If you want a field trip and are willing to arrange it, please call Ruth Boyd at 872-9652. Beginning with October 28 we hope to start our monthly indoor meetings. If there is a program you wish to see presented or a speaker you would like to hear, please let us know. We really need your help.

ONPS Photo Contest Displays

Our beautiful posters of Oklahoma Wildflowers from past entries in the annual photo contest are available for display anywhere in the state.

Call Ruth Boyd at (405)872-9652 or Sue Amstutz at (918)742-8374 to schedule a display. You will need a secure location, where they can be locked up at night, if the posters are to remain in a location for several days.

ONPS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

- Jimmie Byers, Durant
- Virginia Vice, Sapulpa
- Connie Arnold, Pryor
- Clara L. Bishop, Oklahoma City
- Rich Brown, Black Mesa State Park
- Elizabeth Collins, Ramona
- Phyllis Connally, Tulsa
- Tom Dilatush, Robbinsville, N.J.
- Debra Folkert, Lawton
- Marian Lichtler, Heavener
- Eleanor Yturria Irvin, Tulsa
- Wallace R. Mohr, Bethany
- Paul E. Southerland, Oklahoma City
- Edwin Thompson, Norman
- Aleda Carpenter, Bells, TX
- Sunya Dixon, Antlers
- Wayne Elisens, Norman
- Sandra Goodson, Tulsa
- Donna Lenon, Ft. Gibson
- David & Sheila Leppert, Norman
- Keila R. McCain, Tulsa
- Mary McIntyre, Broken Arrow
- Lynn Michael, Claremore
- James Ownby, Stillwater
- Sophonia Roe, Stillwater
- Bonnie Winchester, Douglas
- Don & Sonya Wrightsman, Cordell

Know any of these good folks? Let them know we're glad to have them with us!

FORMING A NEW CHAPTER

Several members have mentioned that they are interested in forming local chapters. It's really very easy to do: first you ask Darlene Michael to make you a printout from the membership data-base for your area. It is easier to do if you give her the zip codes that you want included. Then, contact your prospects (Darlene can make your list on mailing labels, if you ask). Schedule a meeting at a place with parking available, maybe bring some cookies and a pot of coffee, and stand back!

We've learned by working with the Central chapter that field trips are not very good for organizing -- all of us are more interested in the wildflowers than in electing officers -- and that a minimum of one Chairman, to schedule meetings, a Delegate to attend the statewide Board Meetings (can be a current officer who would be going anyway), and a Program Chairman. Titles are optional. Our first elected leader in the Central Chapter, Mike Bush, wanted to be called "Czar". A Secretary /Treasurer to take notes and keep records is good, too. The state board will pay the chapter's reasonable expenses, and chapters are not expected to raise funds unless for local projects.

Keep it light, keep it flexible, and make it interesting and fun. We're an educational and personal-involvement organization -- not a political party. When you decide to make it official, schedule a visit with the Board or with President Frank Carl.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please renew my membership in the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, or add the name below to the membership list in the category checked.

NAME _____ HOME PHONE () _____

AFFILIATION (School, Business or Avocation) _____

ADDRESS _____ BUSINESS PHONE() _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ please don't list my phone

_____ \$15.00 Family _____ \$10.00 Individual _____ \$5.00 Student _____ Gift from _____

LIFE MEMBERSHIP _____ \$300.00 Family _____ or \$200.00 Individual. Renewal New Member

DONATION TO: ANNE LONG FUND _____ HARRIET BARCLAY FUND _____

I am enclosing an additional \$2.50 (to cover cost of printing and mailing) for a complete ONPS directory.

Please make checks payable to Oklahoma Native Plant Society and mail to:
Oklahoma Native Plant Society / 2435 South Peoria / Tulsa, OK 74114

The Gaillardia

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Secretary	Darlene 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

*Gaillardia articles may be reprinted at will. Please
acknowledge the source and author!*

REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS

Each year at the Annual Meeting (in 1996, October 12-13), 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 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 (those listed in the box at the left). 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 sheet, explain why you think the nominee deserves the award. All nominations are kept confidential, and the names of the nominator(s) are not revealed.

**Oklahoma Native Plant Society
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