

A message from the president-in-exile

By George Yatskievych
MONPS President

Those who attended the Society's 30th Anniversary celebration recently may have thought that our past president, Rex Hill, had staged a coup, and in a way he did. Your current president was living in exile. He was in the far flung land of Nepal at the time, having experienced travel delays that prevented a return in time for the meeting.



President-in-exile

(Note to self: Next time don't try to fly home internationally on the very day before an important event.) My return trip took a grueling 37 hours, so even had I been in attendance I likely would not have been fully awake most of the time.

Rex's coup was not the "political takeover" kind, but instead the "perform amazing feats" type. Along with vice president Paul McKenzie, Rex stepped in on short notice and made sure that everything ran smoothly. All of the events were a big success because of the efforts of Rex and Paul, along with many others who volunteered their time and talents. I was very sorry to have missed the fun.

Thanks are due to our generous hosts for the Saturday field trip, Henry and Lorna Domke. Even the early morning showers couldn't dampen the spirits of the 80-some visitors at the Prairie Garden Trust. Also to be thanked are the speakers at the afternoon symposium, Doug Ladd, Paul Nelson, Bill Summers, and Jim Wilson, who kept the large audience entertained and informed, challenging everyone to think about the future of conservation and



Photo by Steve R. Turner

Showing his typical pastoral concern for members of the Missouri Native Plant Society, Immediate Past President Rex Hill fills in for the far-flung current president.

nature study, as well as the roles that MONPS and each individual can play in making the world a better place. They also pointed to some of the good works of our group and exciting discoveries made during its history. We will try to put together a summary of the symposium in the society's journal, *Missouriensis*. The evening banquet was not just a good meal and good companionship, but also a chance to listen to some wonderful anecdotes and a summary of milestones in the history of MONPS by Larry Morrison, who has taken on the role of society historian. Thanks are due also to our archivist, Jack Harris, for putting together an interesting and informative display.

The 30th anniversary meeting was a chance to bring together founding and early members of our group (some of whom have not been as active in MONPS

in recent years) with newer and younger members who embody the future of our group. Thirty years of existence is a wonderful benchmark for any society, and the fact that MONPS continues to provide a vibrant, stimulating and fulfilling experience for its membership is something of which we can be proud.

Let's not stop there, however. I would like to invite everyone to attend the society's annual business meeting on Saturday, Dec. 5. (in Columbia at the University of Missouri's Dunn-Palmer Herbarium), where, among other things, the board will be planning next year's events.

I encourage our membership to stay active by suggesting places around the state to have meetings and field trips, as well as bringing ideas for future projects that MONPS can work on. For example, in recent years our group has completed valuable plant inventories for two national wildlife refuges (Mingo and Squaw Creek) and we may work on the Big Muddy Refuge in the coming year. We should also be involved in organizing plant salvage events at sites slated to be destroyed by highway improvements or other construction projects, and could become more active in educating Missourians on the benefits of landscaping with native plants. There also is still room for more local chapters — it would be great to have chapters in cities like Kirksville, Rolla and Springfield.

As MONPS enters its fourth decade, the membership can be proud of the group's history and accomplishments, but let's also look to the future and ways that the Society can continue to expand its good works. In most cases, all it takes is a few dedicated organizers to run with an idea that our group can support.

MONPS board schedules planning meeting

All Missouri Native Plant Society members and friends are invited to attend the winter MONPS state board meeting on Saturday, Dec. 5.

If you want to have a voice in MONPS, now is your chance. This is a business meeting, so plan to stay all day.

The meeting begins at 10 a.m. and will end no later than 4 p.m. We will be meeting at the Dunn-Palmer Herbarium.

We will be ordering lunch in, or you may bring a lunch if desired.

The board will be planning the field trips associated with the quarterly board meetings. If you have a favorite site you would like to visit with the society, join the board in

Columbia or contact an officer or board member before the meeting with your ideas.

Directions to Dunn-Palmer Herbarium

From the east: Drive west on I-70 to U.S. Highway. 63 South (Exit 128); head south towards Jefferson City to the Stadium Blvd. exit.

Turn right (west) and go to the fourth traffic light (the street at this intersection is called College Avenue to the north and Rock Quarry Road to the south).

Turn left (south) and go about 1/8 mile on Rock Quarry Road.

Turn right into the driveway of the

Museum Support Center (parking in front or along side driveway).

From the west: Drive east on I-70 to Stadium Blvd. exit (Exit 124); turn right (south).

Stay on Stadium Blvd. as it goes south and then turns east, past the MU football stadium and the Hearnese basketball arena.

Turn right (south) on Rock Quarry Road (stoplight here).

Drive south about 1/8 mile and turn right into the driveway of the Museum Support Center (parking in front or along side driveway).

Calendar of Events

Hawthorn Chapter

November — Anyone who wants to go to wild places for seed collecting can contact Becky Erickson at (573) 657-2314 for a weekday midday collection walk at one of the public areas.

Nov. 9 — Regular meeting at 7 p.m. at the Unitarian Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd. Our speaker will be Dr. Adrian Andrei, professor of Wildlife Science in the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Science at Lincoln University. Dr. Andrei will discuss the economic and ecological importance of pollination. He will give examples of common pollinators in Missouri and advice on planting and backyard management to help pollinators.

Nov. 14: Cookout and wreath making party at Laura Ellifrit's

Dec. 13: Winter Holiday Party at 2 p.m. at Vanessa Melton's in Booneville, look for information in the November Hawthorn Chapter newsletter.

January: Seed stratification workshop and May Potting party. More information in coming newsletters.

For more information please contact Paula at (573) 474-4225

Kansas City Chapter

Nov. 19 — Chapter meeting at 7 p.m. in the Discovery Center, 4705 Troost. The program is to be determined. For additional information, contact David Winn at (913) 432-4220.

Osage Plains Chapter

No dates submitted

Ozarks Chapter

Tuesday, Nov. 17 — Chapter meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the MDC Ozark Regional Office, 551 Joe Jones Blvd, West Plains. "Winter tree identification" presented by Susan Farrington. This will be the last meeting for the season. We will resume our meetings in February. For more information, contact Susan Farrington (contact info on back).

Perennis Chapter

See www.semonps.org.

St. Louis Chapter

No meetings in November or December.

Mailing address

Because our post office branch has moved to a new location, the MONPS post office box and ZIP plus four ZIP code have been changed by the Postal Service. The new P.O. Box number is 440353, and the zip plus four is now 63144-0353. We will still receive mail addressed using the previous post office box number, but only until the end of 2009, so please update your records and begin using the new mailing address.

New members

- John Gwaltney, Crystal Springs, Miss.
- George Lippert, Chanute, Kan.
- Lee Hughes, Rolla
- Paul Cork, Columbia
- Bob Grinstead, Edwardsville, Ill.
- Anne Wamser, St. Louis
- Josh Higgins, Pacific
- Staria and Richard Vanderpool, Fulton
- Brian Davidson, Rolla
- Danny McMurphy, Sullivan
- Edith Starbuck, Rolla
- Robert Kremer, Columbia

2009 MONPS awards announced

By Steve Buback

At the 30th Anniversary celebration in September, the Missouri Native Plant Society announced five awards recipients for the previous year. MONPS has never before given five awards in a year, so it must have been a productive year for Missouri botanists.

These awards have been presented since 1986 and provide a method for the Missouri Native Plant Society to recognize individuals or groups throughout the state for outstanding accomplishments in accordance with the society's mission of promoting education, conservation, research and restoration of Missouri's native plants.

Nadia Navarrete-Tindall — Erna Eisendrath Memorial Education Award

Nadia was presented with the Educational Award based upon her work with the cooperative research and extension at Lincoln University. She promotes native plants in agricultural and residential settings, and is conducting research on expanding the use of native plants in these areas. Nadia has also worked to expand the availability of native plant information in Spanish and has conducted bilingual workshops.

Gregg Galbraith — Plant Stewardship Award

Gregg founded and ran the Ozark Regional Land Trust for 25 years. The Ozark Regional Land Trust has permanently protected nearly 19,000 acres of land throughout the Ozarks through the use of conservation easements and land purchases. These acquisitions include several important properties such as Sarcoxie Cave, Woods Prairie, Alford Forest and the Fishtrap Preserve. Gregg's award was presented to him at the Ozark Regional Land Trust's 25th Anniversary celebration in October.

James R. Whitley — Plant Stewardship Award

Jim was presented the Plant Stewardship Award for his superior achievements in the preservation and conservation of Missouri native plants. Jim co-authored the book "Water Plants for Missouri Ponds" and has been actively



Photos by Steve R. Turner

Bill Summers accepts the John E. Wylie Award



Paul Nelson offers thanks for receiving the Julian Steyermark Award.

involved in the propagation, conservation and restoration of water and terrestrial plants throughout the state. He has been an authoritative source of information on aquatic plants for numerous land owners and public agencies.

Bill Summers — John E. Wylie Award



Nadia Navarrete-Tindall accepts the Erna Eisendrath Memorial Education Award.

Bill received the John E. Wylie Award based upon his outstanding service to the Missouri Native Plant Society. Bill authored the book "Orchids of Missouri" and is renowned for his abilities to locate not only rare orchids but rare plants of all types. He has led numerous outings for the society, was long-active in the state organization and St. Louis Chapter (a past president of both groups), and also helped to found the chapter in West Plains. Bill was the first recipient of the Art Christ Research Award in 1986.

Paul Nelson — Julian Steyermark Award

Paul was presented with the Steyermark Award for his long career of research into the preservation and management of Missouri plants and landscapes.

Paul authored the book "Terrestrial Natural Communities of Missouri" and has served as the scientific illustrator on 11 volumes of plant-related literature (so far). Paul works for the Mark Twain National Forest and worked on the forest's most recent management plan. He has been a successful advocate for the use of fire in natural ecosystems for restoration and management purposes.

Paul previously received the Erna Eisendrath Education Award and the Art Christ Research Award from the Missouri Native Plant Society.

Hawthorn Chapter

Submitted by Nadia Navarrete-Tindall, chapter representative

Report for July and August

Our group always has a variety of activities in spite of the time of the year. July was very mild this year and the group took advantage of that. Our guest speaker during our regular meeting was Dr. John Dyer who shared his experience breeding heritage apple trees on his farm in Rocheport. Later the group visited Paintbrush and Friendly prairies where several members enjoyed the beauty of both prairies and the mild weather (70's in July!). (Article, page 6)

In August, the group took a relaxing canoe trip. Four members of the chapter enjoyed a beautiful and peaceful day canoeing and botanizing along the Gasconade River. Ann, Lea, Becky and Vanessa described their glorious day to encourage others to join them for future trips like this one.

In addition to relaxing, the group managed to do some river cleanup that included two tires, a blue barrel, a piece of culvert, a plastic raft, and a whole bag of trash. They enjoyed seeing spotted osprey with a sunfish, bald eagles, red shouldered hawk, kingfisher, fox squirrel, pee-wee, cardinal flower, button bush, sunflowers, golden-glow, Dutchman's pipe, three square, hibiscus, Virginia smartweed and other water plants.

On Aug. 30, the group visited Stephanie Smith's and Otto Fagan's wetlands, both in Boone County. Several members participated and had the opportunity of observing cardinal flowers in full bloom among other interesting wetland plant species.

Report for September and October.

During the bimonthly meeting on Sept. 14, Ann Koenig, MDC

Forester from the Columbia Research Center gave a tree identification tour to 13 members of the Hawthorn Chapter that took place at the Water's House at the MDC Regional Office. Everyone enjoyed the perfect weather and learned from Ann's expertise.

On Sept. 17, MONPS members and friends enjoyed the traditional lunch at the Uprise Bakery at 10 Hitt St., near Broadway, where members and friends are always welcome to attend to bring ideas or simply to enjoy good company.

The chapter participated with a booth during the In Touch with Nature field day at Lincoln University Busby Farm in Jefferson City. Native plants and nature books were sold at our booth while members offer information about native plants growth and establishment. The event was hosted by the Native Plants Program at Lincoln University Cooperative Extension and included wagon tours and exhibits presented by other institutions such as the Missouri Prairie Foundation, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Extension and others.

A fall prairie walk on Oct. 10 was offered by Becky Erickson, as the first of three propagation workshops. The two additional workshops will be offered in January and May of 2010, dates will be announced later on.

Jim Whitley was given the Plant Stewardship Award by the Missouri Native Plant Society during the banquet dinner to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the society. Becky Erickson received it for him because Jim was unable to attend. A lunch organized by Ann Wakeman and Becky Erickson was offered to present him the award at Flat Branch Brewing in Columbia on Oct.4. Twenty members of the society attended the lunch to honor Jim. We are proud of him!

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Carol Davit of the Missouri Prairie Foundation talks about the prairies of Missouri during the In Touch with Nature field day at Lincoln University's Busby Farm in Jefferson City. She also showed how rope can be made from native plant fibers of plants including swamp milkweed, yucca and rattlesnake master.

Photo by Randy Tindall

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In Memoriam

George Brackage, long time member of the Hawthorn chapter passed away Sept. 11. He was the husband of Nancy Brackage, also member of the society. Nancy and George had recently received the Blazing Star Award for their contribution to the Society. George received degrees in wildlife conservation from the University of Missouri and had a 40-year career as a waterfowl biologist. He worked for the Missouri Department of Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Ducks Unlimited before retiring in 1992. He was an avid outdoorsman and conservationist. Those interested in learning about his interesting and charismatic personality can visit a Web-based memorial at www.georgebrackage.com put together by two of his children.

Kansas City Chapter

Submitted by Daniel Rice, chapter representative

The Kansas City Chapter had its first meeting of the fall on 17 September at the All Souls Unitarian Church in Kansas City. We had a great meeting discussing our summer field trips, our upcoming field trips, and the upcoming KCWildlands events.

One of the KCWildlands seed savers had sent me an e-mail on the 15th giving a brief accounting of what was blooming at Jerry Smith Park, the location of our next field trip. We also discussed the KCWildlands honeysuckle cutting, all of which are full for the fall! We do have a great group of volunteers in the Kansas City area!

Our first fall field trip was on Sept. 19 to Jerry Smith Park. There is now a trail (of sorts) around the park, but being the intrepid botanists we are, we just had to leave the trail to see the neat stuff! Besides the usual suspects, i.e. rosinweed, various sunflowers, blue sage, and the various goldenrods, we also saw auriculate false foxglove, downy blue gentian and two species of *Spiranthes*, *lacera* and *cernua*. Not too bad for a three-hour field trip in the city!

The next chapter meeting will be Thursday, Nov. 19, at the Discovery Center in Kansas City. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. We also had a field trip on Oct. 17 to Maple Woods Park. The fall foliage was great, and there are some neat late fall fruit (persimmons) to be found. That's it for now!

Osage Plains Chapter

Submitted by Sharon Warnaca, chapter president

On July 25, a rainy morning turned into a great field trip. Four members met and drove down to Whitaker Lake in the Deepwater area. A pleasant two-hour jaunt yielded 51 plant species in the area.

Aug. 22, our field trip was not on native wildflowers but on water gardens at Elzie and June Berry's home near Tightwad. The weather was pleasantly cool for August. Elzie has created three water gardens. The first one was made from a satellite dish surrounded by rocks and water plants. Three species of water lotus plants with three colors made this garden a pleasure to observe.

The second garden was named "Six Bit" after the first fish he

bought for the pond. The fish cost him six bits. The third garden has a water wheel and fountain surrounded by numerous flowers and has a garden bench to sit and relax. The 12 that attended brought a sack lunch, and June Berry served drinks and dessert.

On Sept. 20, a field trip and a potluck were planned at Marlene and Jack Miller's home. A torrential rain cancelled the field trip, but we enjoyed a wonderful potluck. Marlene Miller gave a talk on paint brush.

Ted Bolich, Marlene Miller and Sharon Warnaca attended MONPS 30th Anniversary in Fulton.

On October, our chapter planned a contest on wildflower decorations and art at our meeting.

Ozarks Chapter

Submitted by Susan Farrington, chapter representative

Our August meeting was a plant identification night; we learned about the characteristics of the major plant families, and practiced keying out some plants brought in by members. The attendees expressed interest in having more plant ID practice, so we will work on tree ID in November.

At our September meeting, our own Adele Voss presented a talk about wild edibles, teaching us about a number of plants that often occur in our backyards. It was a very informative presentation.

Our secretary is now working nights, and cannot make our meetings, so we are searching for a new secretary. Anyone interested should contact Susan Farrington. Thanks!

Perennis Chapter

Submitted by Allison Vaughn, chapter representative

On Sunday, Sept. 27, Perennis members traveled to Mingo National Wildlife Refuge for a brief meeting and wildflower hike. Many fall-blooming composites were out that day. Members noted a wide variety of non-native plants and insects on their hike, though they saw plenty of plants native to southeast Missouri.

After the hike, members discussed plans for a fall color canoe trip as well as the recent decision to begin conducting outreach efforts in local schools. Several schools will be chosen to be the recipient of various species of milkweeds and information on native plant gardening. The chapter hopes to bring native plant gardening to local schools in areas where no other native plantings exist.

Please consult the Perennis Chapter Web site for more photos from Mingo National Wildlife Refuge and upcoming events at www.semonps.org.

St. Louis Chapter

Submitted by Pat Harris, chapter representative

Forty-five people attended our Aug. 26 meeting. Dennis Hogan,

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Seven presidents of MONPS



Photo by John Oliver

Seven former presidents of the Missouri Native Plant Society attended the 30th anniversary celebration banquet in Fulton, Mo. From left: Doug Ladd, Paul Redfearn Jr., Bill Summers, Karen Haller, Jack Harris, Larry Morrison and Rex Hill.

CHAPTER REPORTS

From the previous page

environmental resource specialist for St. Louis County Parks, gave us some highlights from his 35 years with the department.

There are 13,000 acres divided up into 72 parks. At Greensfelder County Park, he manages 15 glades by annual burning and now performs plant surveys. This park has four known populations of *Cypripedium calceolus* var. *pubescens* (large yellow lady's slipper) and is the only park in the system that is known to have *Dodecatheon meadia* (shooting star).

From a site once known as a field full of the exotic invasive *Sorghum halepense* (Johnson grass), West Tyson County Park now has 35 acres of diverse prairie. They plowed, used Round-up and started annual burning as part of the re-construction.

Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park had 1,000 acres before the Page Avenue Extension went through the park. Through wetland mitigation, they are trying to restore/reconstruct wetland areas.

Rock Hollow, off Al Foster Trail in Wildwood, has 110 acres, forested with "cedar" groves they may be able to restore to glades with burning.

The last areas in the county for open space are along the Meramec River. One open space they already have is the Lower Meramec County Park that's mostly bottomland forest. It is subject to seasonal flooding. Another is the undeveloped Hunter's Ford County Park in Allenton. Sand deposited by the Meramec River makes a portion of it a small sand prairie. It contains *Opuntia humifusa* (eastern prickly pear) and *Heterotheca camporum* (golden aster). It's across the Meramec River from LaBarque

Creek watershed, an MDC-designated conservation opportunity area.

On Saturday, Aug. 29, Steve Buback led a field trip to Trail of Tears State Park. Attending the walk were seven St. Louis members that were joined by several members from the Perennis Chapter. They explored the steep topography with a strong representation of *Fagus grandifolia* (American beech), *Liriodendron tulipifera* (tulip poplar) and *Aralia spinosa* (devil's walking stick). Some of the plants they saw were: *Carex albursina* (carex) *Arundinaria gigantea* (giant cane), *Phegopteris hexagonoptera* (broad beech fern), *Solidago caesia* (blue-stemmed goldenrod), and *S. drummondii* (Ozark goldenrod). They also discovered one early flowering *Epifagus virginiana* (beech drop).

At our Sept. 23 meeting, Nicole Miller, a Washington University doctoral student, shared some of her research with us. She was the 2008 recipient of MONPS Hudson Award. Her research was on pollination specialization and stress-adaptation in glade endemic plants and the implications for species distributions. The following plant species were the main subject in her research: *Echinacea paradoxa* (yellow coneflower) and *E. pallida* (pale purple coneflower); *Delphinium treleasei* (Trelease's larkspur) & *D. carolinianum* (Carolina larkspur); and *Scutellaria bushii* (Bush's skullcap) and *S. ovata* (heart-leaved skullcap). The first species in the sets were endemic to glades, and the second were more widespread. Many comments and questions after the presentation indicated much interest in the subject.

(For more information on Nicole's research see the "Missouri Prairie Journal," 2009, Volume 30, No. 3.)

Paintbrush and Friendly prairies abloom in Pettis County

By Vanessa Melton

President of the Hawthorn Chapter

Several members of the Hawthorn Chapter visited Paintbrush and Friendly prairies on Aug.30. It was a perfect day with many prairie wildflowers in bloom and the temperature in the 70s.

First we visited Paintbrush Prairie.

We observed a diversity of wildflowers in the southern section, burned last winter, including two blazing stars (*Liatris pycnostachya* and *L. aspera*), slender mountain mint, curlytop ironweed (*Vernonia arkansana*), purple-headed sneezeweed (*Helenium flexuosum*), hairy petunia, ladies tresses (two or more species of *Spiranthes*), milkwort/vetch, early goldenrod, tall green milkweed (*Asclepias hirtella*), short green milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora*), and trumpet creeper. Blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*), bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*), hawkweed, rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) and seed box (*Ludwigia alternifolia*) were all at the peak of blooming.

Those that were faded and setting seed were pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*), goats rue (*Tephrosia virginiana*), blue hearts, black-eyed susan, cacalia, pale penstemon (*Penstemon pallidus*), *Baptisia alba* and *B. bracteata*, sensitive briar (*Schrankia uncinata*); pencil flower, lead plant (*Amorpha canescens*), golden alexander (*Zizia aurea*), spotted St. John's wort (*Hypericum punctatum*) and swamp candle (*Lysimachia terrestris*).

If one were to return in the next few weeks, he could see new flowers on grooved flax, flowering spurge, winged sumac, roundheaded bushclover (*Lespedeza capitata*) and downy gentian in October.

We then went to Friendly Prairie just west of Paintbrush Prairie and found many of the same species — in different quantities, mind you — along with a few additional species. There was a discussion on how to differentiate purple and white prairie clover in the seed stage. We saw good patches of rosinweed (*Silphium integrifolium*) and ashy sunflower (*Helianthus mollis*) and learned to tell them apart.

A good find was our native loosestrife



Photo by Becky Erickson

Regal fritillaries on blazing stars.

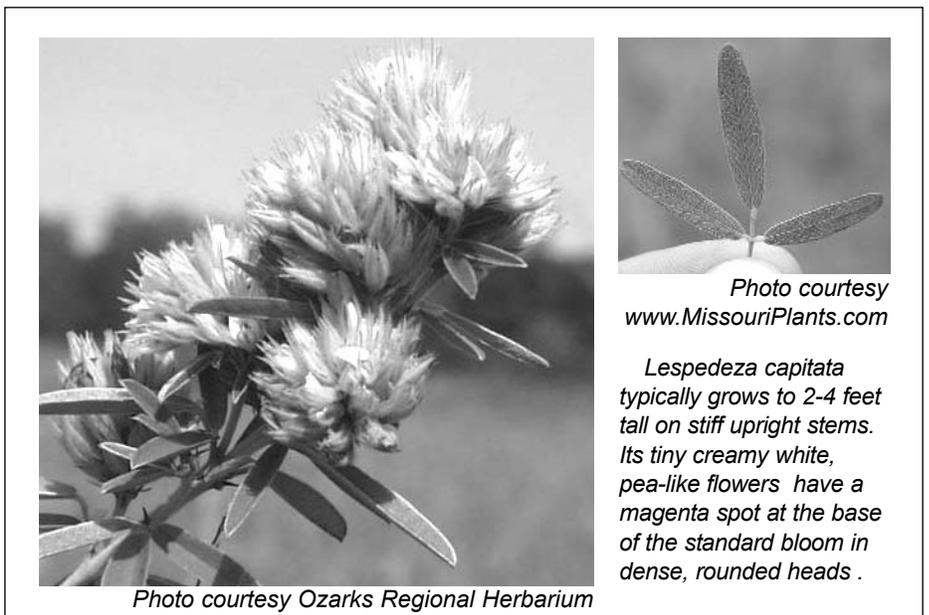


Photo courtesy
www.MissouriPlants.com

Lespedeza capitata typically grows to 2-4 feet tall on stiff upright stems. Its tiny creamy white, pea-like flowers have a magenta spot at the base of the standard bloom in dense, rounded heads.

Photo courtesy Ozarks Regional Herbarium

(*Lythrum alatum*). Ohio spiderwort, wild strawberry, pussy toes, butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), prairie coreopsis (*Coreopsis palmata*), betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*) were all setting seed. Sky

blue aster (*Aster azureus*) and significant numbers of *Desmodium canadensis* were ready to bloom. We did some weeding of *Lespedeza cuneata*, the invasive non-native lespedeza, before it flowered.

Wandering the wild lands

By Kelly D. Norris
Iowa State University

I've been fascinated with the Ozarks since I was about 8 years old. My grandparents took my brother and me to Branson. The stark, rigid and karstic topography intrigued me. I wondered what caused rocks to tumble from high cliffs above the road and why some plants could seemingly survive in solid rock. While I easily had the inclination to find out myself, I never was successful in persuading grandpa and grandma to stop the car.

With those puerile memories in mind for all these years, I was thrilled to finally return to the Ozarks this June in an effort to answer those persistent questions, though with a much different approach than I could've imagined 14 years ago. As a horticulturist, my fascination with the Ozarks is rooted in the possibilities its native flora holds for landscapes across the Midwest. As a side note, I take slight offense to the characterization that all horticultural plant explorers approach collecting with a plunder and pillage persona when roving about wild areas. While I can't apologize for the mistakes and misguidance of historical figures, I do hope that the tenor of my essay here sheds light on the work that some of us hope to pursue in concert with biodiversity.

My appreciation with native plants ironically began about the same time I became fascinated with the Ozarks. My family rented a farm across the road from an elderly, amateur botanist. For three summers from the time I was 8, she led me along with a troupe of stray dogs she looked after up and down a dusty, little-traveled section of road north of our houses. In its ditches grew boundless diversity, or what seemed so to me at the time. I recall plainly the exact spot where I first saw *Campanulastrum americanum*, which I fell in love with immediately. I learned of the herbal properties of

Monarda fistulosa near an abandoned house, liking its flowers only some and despising its pungent odor more. I remember walking up the ditch bank from picking raspberries and discovering my clothes covered in dyes from the fading blossoms of *Tradescantia ohiensis*. She taught me about seed collection and we even dug a plant or two from the roadside when construction threatened to



Photo courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden

Passiflora incarnata typically occurs in sandy soils, low moist woods and open areas. It has three-lobed, dark green leaves and showy, 2.5-inch diameter, fringed flowers with white petals and sepals and a central crown of pinkish-purple filaments.

clear a large section of fencerow. I took these plants home to my garden, a little bed of flowers and odd things in front of our stately house. At 8 years old, I grew my first native plants, a seminal moment I only would come to appreciate later in life.

Fast forward 14 years. I'm a masters student in horticulture at Iowa State University, a seasoned writer and nursery owner and an undownable plantsman. While I've done a good deal of plant exploring in the wild in the last 14 years, I'd never made it back to the Ozarks. With a rare few days of time to spare forecasted in mid-June, I decided on a

snowy day in early January to organize an exploratory mission of sorts to Shannon County, Missouri, in search of natives worthy of horticultural attention.

Vines

While we only found it at one location, *Passiflora incarnata* tops my list of choice vines that deserve greater attention. The plant has enjoyed attention in the collector circles, though surpassed in floral excellence by an ever-growing array of hybrids with it, *P. coccinea* and other subtropical species. For those of us in the blustery north, it's potentially hardy if mulched well. A garden should never grow without vines, and the exotic nature of this species surely opens the doors for interesting permutations in Zones 5b and up. I've unsuccessfully overwintered plants from southerly provinces but would like to obtain germplasm from the farther limits of its range in central Missouri and Illinois.

Another passionflower with some merit is *Passiflora lutea*, though perhaps not at face value. Unassuming, rambling and often unnoticed, the yellow passionflower undoubtedly possesses genes for hardiness, something potentially combined in breeding with hardier provenances of *P. incarnata*. Hardy passionflower hybrids remain a possibility, with a little ingenuity on the part of the breeder.

My first encounter with *Rhynchosia latifolia*, the prairie snout bean, a wandering perennial vine with yellow, pea-like blossoms, left me wondering what I'd actually seen. Unfamiliar with this species until this trip, I noted it in my journal as "reminiscent of a *Psoralea* with yellow flowers," an obvious oxymoron. Does this rambler have any ornamental potential? I don't know. I'm drawn to it, but maybe that's just because it's so weird and new to my palette. It would ideally need to be situated with small shrubs or taller herba-
see WILD LANDS, next page

WILD LANDS, from the previous page

ceous perennials with which it could intertwine and combine. But this probably stretches the imagination for even the keenest of gardeners. As a wise mentor once said, “sometimes you just can’t fight the paradigm.”

I’ve been enchanted with the milkvines (*Matelea* spp.) since I first read about them in floras in my early years of college. The bizarre flowers, fall colors and even the smells enticed my senses. Underappreciated by the few familiar with them and virtually unknown to the rest, these sprawling vines beg for a home in modern gardens. We encountered *Matelea decipiens* several times during our trip. Of all things it’s chocolate-colored, satiny textured flowers warrant a closer look (imagine a trellis or arbor wrought with their silken blooms!), though admittedly with fingers placed over nose. The smell emanating from these sumptuous blossoms reminds me of oil aging in a deep fat fryer. Hardiness has largely been untested from what I can gather, and the length of our northern autumns might determine the staying power of their yellowish fall color.

We first observed *Clematis pitcheri* entangled among *Matelea decipiens* in a dense thicket. Wouldn’t so many species in the Viorna group look smashing mingling through roses or shrubs? *Clematis pitcheri*, the leatherflower, sports smallish but cute-as-a-button flowers in various two-tone combos. We found at least three color variants throughout the week all happily vining up viburnums, hydrangeas and hops trees (*Ptelea trifoliata*). I imagine the flowers would look charming cut in a nosegay with antique roses, the perfect combination of texture, color and geometry. *Clematis versicolor* can’t go unmentioned either, but then again neither can the rest of the subgenus in my opinion. Space limits me from extolling my excitement further!

A final vine that made the list, on MDC botanist Susan Farrington’s advice, was *Lonicera flava*, a vine I regarded with some familiarity but which all told remains ignored. How so? Perhaps the stigma associated with its generic name. Too many non-native *Lonicera* have sullied the market, and rightly so considering their less-than-grand reputation as

total thugs. But unlike Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), golden honeysuckle hardly gets weedy. Imagine it rambling over a fence with a clematis or crawling across the ground in a meadow? I had the pleasure of photographing the former vignette in a garden a few summers back, truly inviting draped in dewdrops in early morning light. Arguably the attractive fruit, wildlife value and fragrance outpace the flowers, presenting the gardener with a truly admirable suite of characteristics. Golden honeysuckle represents the kind of good educational work that can grow from earnest, well-intentioned promotion of native plants. The native alternative rivals the non-native. Isn’t that the message we’re working for?

Into the woods

The skullcaps (*Scutellaria*) were another focus of the trip. This wonderfully diverse genus of plants potentially offers solutions to many gardeners across the Great Plains in search of everything from mid-summer color in shade to sub-shrubs capable of withstanding baking heat. In the case of shade, *Scutellaria incana* is absolutely exquisite and needs to be the starlet of woodland gardens everywhere. Blue flowers for shade in June and July? A considerable amount of selection work and controlled breeding needs done to select forms of compact habits and high stem density, but even raw forms would grow marvelously alongside sturdy

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Photo by Jeff McMillan/USDA
Rhynchosia latifolia, prairie snoutbean, can be found in southern Missouri as well as Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture online plants profile database.



Photo courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden
Lonicera flava occurs in rocky soils in woods, slopes, bluffs, ledges and stream margins in the Ozark region.

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shrubs, whose rigid strength supports the former's sprawling tendencies.

Perhaps the highlight of the day was finding another Ozark endemic, Bush's skullcap (*Scutellaria bushii*). I've pondered the ornamental features of this plant from time to time since so many of its cousins shape up into fine garden plants. We tagged two occurrences, both with a limited number of individuals, for future visits. Though small, they easily attract attention from a distance. I don't think anyone should rush to the garden centers or feverishly flip through catalogs looking for them, but they may catch some attention in the future with serious collectors looking for subtle impact in the rock garden or other settings.

Another rock garden starlet waiting in the wings, false aloe (*Manfreda virginica*) first caught my attention on a visit to the Missouri Botanical Garden years ago. I'm



Photo courtesy Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission

Bush's skullcap, Scutellaria bushii has oblong rounded leaves and brilliant deep blue-purple flowers that bloom in May and June. It grows on limestone glades and bald knobs. The leaves are opposite and typically erect.

amazed at the variety of spotted and speckled forms that abound in the wild, since the few available from specialist nurseries hover near "plain Jane." Hardiness remains questionable for gardeners north of Zones 5b/6a, but worth a try considering false aloe's unique textural feeling and "golly that's different" look.

Not far from a very photogenic outcropping of false aloe, *Rhamnus caroliniana*, a shrub with tremendous, unheralded value waited anxiously for its turn in front of the lens. I was first introduced to this plant in my woody plant identification course in college, which when taken during a long, protracted fall offered me the perfect opportunity to witness a truly noteworthy autumnal color display. Fall color selections alone could make hay for an enterprising propagator willing to seek out choice forms in the peak of their glory. The viburnum-like fruit, Technicolor and ever-changing, is an added bonus. Let not your opinions of buckthorns jade your hope for this native shrub!

Good lookin' glade flora

But really, tramping about woods and crawling through vines come in second to the glades of the Ozarks. The glades offered us the chance to experience a truly unique, endemic and fragile ecosystem with enormous potential for keen plant lovers. The best glade we had the opportunity to scavenge was that owned by Susan Farrington and Dan Drees. Susan and Dan are some of the kindest people I've ever met, and my gratitude can hardly be expressed in words for their invaluable assistance during my adventure.

We turned up lots of *Echinacea simulata* throughout the week (not surprising considering we hit it at peak bloom season), the kissing cousin to the pale purple coneflower (*E. pallida*) of prairies here and farther north. Personally I think *E. simulata* has showier flowers with richer coloration, but other than a minute difference in pollen color (*E. pallida* is white, *E. simulata* is yellow) they look virtually identical. *E. simulata* probably has some breeding potential for variation in flower form and intense coloration. I don't know of any major coneflower breeder who currently uses this species, something I've brought to the attention of at least two that I know! Seeing thousands of plants of a single species in the height

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Photo courtesy Wikipedia
Nemastylis geminiflora in fruit. Also called prairie celestial, it has one to four grass-like leaves that are linear to sword-shaped and 5-18 inches long by 1/8 to 2/5 inch wide. They are folded together lengthwise and have prominent ribs. When it blooms in April and May, it has five-petaled blue flowers. Each flower lasts a day. The flowers usually open in the morning and close before sunset. The perianth segments curl by midafternoon. The plant can be found in moist to dry prairies and open oak woods in limestone or chalk soils.

of its bloom season gives any observer the chance to sift through Mother Nature's treasure chest. The best form I've witnessed to date grew on Susan and Dan's glade, a head-turning starlet that caught my eye from 50 feet away.

As an unabashed lover and collector of Iridaceae, I jumped at the opportunity to witness prairie celestial (*Nemastylis geminiflora*), even if only in fruit. I suppose it basically looks like a blue-eyed grass on steroids with giant, starry blue flowers held above grassy foliage. But it still has an amazing quality unrivaled by other blue irids in the spring. Susan led us to one of several populations where we collected seed, my first seed collection of the trip.

Prairie celestial is another species I came to know thanks to Claude Barr's out-of-print tome "Jewels of the Prairie," which happily extolled its many ornamental virtues. Though the flowers last only one day (and the longest of any *Nemastylis*, mind you), the two to three weeks each clump remains in bloom satisfies want and yearn for blue in the spring garden. Why not appreciate the emblems of the season and the joy of the moment instead of desiring everything in the garden to bloom for months? While I love the idea of my favorite plants (irises!) staying in bloom for longer than they do, it would be akin to Christmas every day if they did. And mom always said that would never be much fun.

Topping our list of must-finds were the two red catchflies, *Silene virginica* and *S. regia*. The latter, commonly dubbed royal catchfly, starts flowering in the Ozarks in mid-June. The former, called fire pink, blooms three to four weeks earlier and had already set and dispersed seed by



Photo courtesy Ozarks Regional Herbarium

Asclepias variegata, redring milkweed, grows in dry or rocky woods, sandy open ground, ravine bottoms, low woods, slopes, ridges and roadsides in southeastern Missouri. There is a red ring at the base of each white flower in the umbrel.

our visit. Many gardeners already grow both of these striking beauties, but with a little selection work, these natives can become even better. I think fire pink especially will prove promising for those seeking dianthus-like plants in better colors with superior heat tolerance and garden carrying capacity. Why grow sad, meltable *Dianthus* when you could grow a rough, tough and red-flowered *Silene*?

One plant Susan and I both agree warrants additional attention is the seductively beautiful *Asclepias variegata*, the redring milkweed. The native milkweeds (with the exception of *A. syriaca*) make such great garden plants! They thrive, if sited well, without much care and continue to reward the gardener for a lifetime. I've kept an eye out for four or five species this week, particularly *A. variegata* which typically is found farther south.

The redring milkweed sings a siren song to me — reddish stems, red rings subtending coronate petals, and a little white for contrast. Say no more!

Conclusion

As a plant explorer you can't help but feel caught in a tide of emotions that pulls you in multiple directions, but two important ones come to mind. One direction tugs at the heartstrings inciting wistfulness for the unfortunate, ephemeral beauty of nature in this fast-developing world. Does a plant explorer simply chart the unknown for posterity to only shut away his findings? What value comes from hoarding knowledge and experience so central to my own passion for the outdoor world?

In this light another direction reveals an obligation as a witness to the raw potential of nature — to extol its virtues and vest them with relevance. Wandering wild lands comes at the cost of sharing it with all who will listen. How can we possibly promote interest in wild lands, wild places and wild plants when people lack an appreciation for what they even are? Our work should foster interactions between plants and people. Why deprive the ignorant of enlightenment simply because we lack the trust to try?

Gardening isn't some idle abuse of small spaces with vegetation foreign and alien. It's a royal opportunity to teach people about ecology, environmental interactions and sustainable thinking. Though I confess that I'm not a purist, I'm an advocate for a sustainable practice of gardening and landscaping, one rich with awareness of the ambient and extensional landscape. To promote such discourse and practice requires a voracious curiosity of the wilderness and the plants that might teach us more about our world.

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