

# Leatherwood alert: A new shrub species!

A new species of leatherwood, *Dirca decipiens*, was recently described by Aaron Floden, and is so far only known from a few locations in Missouri, Arkansas and Kansas.

The Flora of Missouri Project needs your help to document the range of the two species of leatherwood, so please collect (with permission) flowering or fruiting samples of leatherwood this spring. The samples can consist of a few twigs about 6 inches long, pressed in a telephone book (with heavier books on top to weigh it down).

Pressed specimens can be submitted directly to George Yatskievych, Susan Farrington, Malissa Underwood or any plant biologist who can get the specimens to George. They also can be mailed directly by placing them between two pieces of cardboard. Mail to: George Yatskievych, Missouri Botanical Garden, PO Box 299, St. Louis, MO 63166.

Include information on where, when and by whom the collection was made, as accurately as possible, to complete the collection.

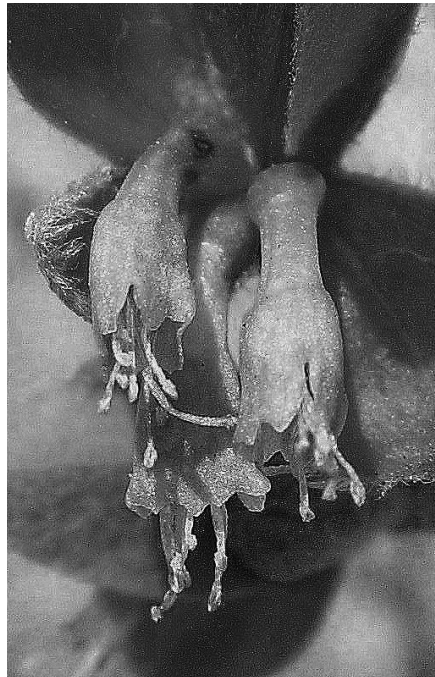
Leatherwoods are some of the very first shrubs to bloom, flowering as early as mid-March or into April. The new leatherwood is very similar to the ordinary leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*).

Here are some differences:

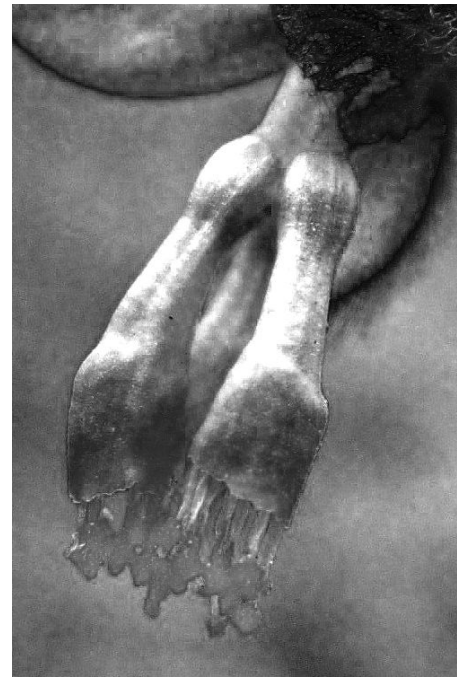
■ **Flower stalk:** the flowers of the new species have little or no flower stalk. The ordinary leatherwood flowers start out without a stalk, but the stalk rapidly elongates after fertilization.

■ **Lobes:** the calyx of the new species is usually four-lobed, while flowers of the ordinary species are unlobed.

■ **Habitat:** ordinary leatherwood is typically found in low woods near a creek or river. The new leatherwood has been found on north-facing bluffs and slopes above rivers, associated with oaks and cedars.



The flowers of the new species, *Dirca decipiens*, have little or no flower stalk.



Flowers on the ordinary leatherwood, *Dirca palustris*, start out without a stalk, but the stalk rapidly elongates after fertilization.



The foliage of *Dirca decipiens* closely resembles that of *D. palustris*.

Photos by Aaron Floden

# Calendar of Events

## Hawthorn Chapter

**Saturday, March 6:** Wanda Parscal's (Holt's Summit) for winter tree identification and spring flower leaf identification. Jean Everett will join us from South Carolina. Meet at MDC (College & Stadium) at 10 a.m. Lunch at Summit Winery.

**Monday, March 8:** Regular membership meeting at the Unitarian Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd.

**Thursday, March 18:** Lunch with native plant enthusiasts. 11:30 a.m. Uprise Bakery, Hitt Street south of Broadway.

**Saturday, March 27:** Snow Trillium and leeks at Jim's 100-Acre Woods. Wear waterproof boots. Meet at MDC (College & Stadium) at 12:30 p.m. for carpool to lunch at Heuer's Store followed by mosey to the Trillium site.

**Saturday, April 3:** Serviceberry at Basket Area (Ashland) Meet at MDC (College & Stadium) at 11am for carpool. Bring daypack with water, lunch, camera. Picnic at the creek. Depending on weather and blooming trees, this could be postponed to Sunday, April 11.

**Saturday, April 10:** Plant sale at Bradford Farm.

**Thursday, April 15:** Lunch with native plant enthusiasts. 11:30 a.m. at Uprise Bakery, Hitt Street, south of Broadway.

**Saturday, April 17:** Saturday: Ha Ha Tonka State Park near Camdenton. Tour open woodlands, glades, sinkholes, and castle if time allows. Probably not in town at noon for lunch so bring daypack, water, snacks/lunch, camera. Many restaurants available on return trip. For carpool, meet at MDC (College & Stadium) at 9 a.m.; return 4 p.m.

April 25, Sunday — Earth Day Booth in Columbia Peace Park 9 a.m.-6 p.m..

## Kansas City Chapter

**Tuesday, March 2:** Chapter meeting at 7 p.m. at the Discovery Center, 4750 Troost, Kansas City, MO. This is between KFC and Brush Creek. The program is to be determined.

**Sunday, April 18:** Field trip to the property of Lisa and John Richter. The land is north of Richmond. Check the Kansas City chapter newsletter for more details.

**Friday, April 23:** Field Trip to Linda Hall Library. Sue Hollis has developed extensive native plant gardens on the grounds of Linda Hall Library. We will meet at the library starting at 5:00 pm for a great tour of the gardens led by Sue. The location is adjacent to the UMKC main campus at 5109 Cherry Street, Kansas City, Mo.

## Osage Plains Chapter

No calendar set at press time.

## Ozarks Chapter

**Tuesday, March 16:** Chapter meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the MDC Ozark Regional Office, 551 Joe Jones Blvd, West Plains. Mike Skinner, MDC natural history biologist, will share his experiences monitoring two federally threatened spring blooming plants: geocarpon (*Geocarpon minimum*) and Missouri bladderpod (*Lesquerella filiformis*).

**Tuesday, April 20:** Chapter meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the MDC Ozark Regional Office, 551 Joe Jones Blvd, West Plains. Aaron Stevenson, MDC Fire ecologist, will present "From the Geologic Past to Today: A Brief History of the Flora and Fauna of the Ozarks."

## Perennis Chapter

**March 27:** At 10 a.m., join esteemed bryologist and botanist Nels Holmberg on a search through city parks and cemeteries of Malden for *Hedyotis australis*, a small annual white bluet. Meet at Blades City, a short block west of Hwy. 25, at the intersection of North Douglas and Santie Drive. This is about 3/4 mile south of the airport in north Malden, and just north of where Business 25 splits off from Highway 25. If you have questions about this event, feel free to contact Allison Vaughn at [allisonjv@yahoo.com](mailto:allisonjv@yahoo.com).

## St. Louis Chapter

**March 24 :** At 7:30 p.m. Program on "Natural Areas of St Charles County Parks" by Ben Grossmann, Forester. Program will be held at Powder Valley Nature Center, 11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO.

**March 27:** At 9 a.m. Hike on Lewis and Clark Trail, through Weldon Springs Conservation Area and Weldon Springs Natural Area. Hike will be at least 5.3 miles through some fairly rough terrain. We hope to find signs of spring flora blooming in the Natural Area. Meet at the Lewis and Clark trailhead parking lot on north side of Highway 94. Map can be found at [http://mdc.mo.gov/documents/area\\_brochures/7404map.pdf](http://mdc.mo.gov/documents/area_brochures/7404map.pdf).

**April 28:** 7:30 p.m. Program on "Reflections on Flora of Missouri" by George Yatskievych, curator and director of the Flora of Missouri Project at Missouri Botanical Garden. Program scheduled at Powder Valley Nature Center, 11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, Mo.

## New members

- John George, Columbia
- Wanda Force, Deepwater
- Patricia Samel, St. Louis
- Jennifer Hopwood, St. Louis
- Andy Weiss, Steelville
- William Hoss, Webster Groves
- Art Booth, Richland
- Ross Shuman, St. Joseph
- Missouri State University — West Plains, Garnett Library
- Rick Gray, St. Louis
- Dawn Smallen, Florissant
- Daniel Huff, St. Louis

# Board member nominations for 2010

The following slate of candidates has been submitted by the Nominating Committee for 2010. John Oliver and Bruce Schuette, previous board members, are each willing to serve another three-year term.

Additional nominations for the two vacant board positions can be made through March 20. Please send them by e-mail or snail mail to:

Sherry Leis  
533 S Forest CT  
Springfield, MO 65806  
E-mail: prairienut@hotmail.com

Standing officers and board members for 2010 are:

**PRESIDENT**  
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Leonard "Ted" Bolich (2009-12)

Robin Kennedy (2008-11)

Sherry Leis (2009-12)

Allison Vaughn (2008-11)

## CHAPTER REPORTS

### Hawthorn Chapter

Submitted by Nadia Navarrete-Tindall, chapter representative

The annual Holiday Party was held at 2 p.m. on Dec. 13 at Vanessa Melton and David Silvey's home. The weather was mild for mid-December. Several members attended and share great food.

On Jan. 11 during our regular membership meeting, president Vanessa Melton invited members for a planning discussion for 2010 and for elections. Among the topics discussed include ideas for future program speakers. Members expressed interest in having speakers to discuss subjects such as medicinal, mushrooms and bryophytes. Members also discussed about field days or other events where the chapter can have an exhibit to sell books and plants and give advice to the public.

We plan to attend the Native Plant Sale at Bradford Research and Extension Center on April 10 and the Earth Day Festival in Columbia. We will decide later on if we would attend other events such as the "In Touch of Nature" at Lincoln University in September and the MU-Chestnut Festival in October.

New secretary Ann Wakeman and Vanessa Melton (president for a second term) were elected. Congratulations to both and thank you for serving our group.

The second workshop of the series about native plant propagation was offered by Becky Erickson at Laura Hillman's home on Jan. 23. The event was a joint effort of our chapter with Wild Ones and Master Naturalists. Attendees look forward to participate in the potting workshop in May so the chapter can provide new plants for sale at the booth next year.

We are having a special speaker, Jean Everett, for our regular meeting in March. She is a Senior Instructor at the College of Charleston, SC and will discuss about the longleaf pine ecosystem which was once the most extensive and diverse system in the Southeast. This important system has been reduced less than 3%. Longleaf systems have many similarities to prairies, both with unparalleled beauty. This richly illustrated lecture will describe the longleaf system and what happened that it is now so nearly extirpated.

### Kansas City Chapter

Submitted by Daniel Rice, chapter representative

The Kansas City Chapter held its first meeting of the year on Jan. 21 at the home of Dave and Kathy Winn. This was our annual election of officers and field-trip planning meeting. I am happy to announce the officers for 2010:

- Dave Winn, president
- Lance Jesse, vice president
- Kathy Winn, secretary
- Ed O'Donnell, treasurer
- Dan Rice, chapter representative

We also voted to change our meeting date from the third Thursday of the month to the first Tuesday. This was because of a change in policy at the Discovery Center. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 2, at 7 p.m. in the Discovery Center.

Our other main order of business was to establish dates of field trips for the coming year. The first field trip will be to the property of members Lisa and John Richter on Sunday, April 18. A second field trip is scheduled for Friday, April 23, to the native plant garden Sue Hollis has established at Linda Hall Library. Meeting times and places for both field trips will be announced at a later date.

That's about it for now. If you have any questions about meetings or field trips, feel free to contact me.

### Osage Plains Chapter

Submitted by Sharon Warnaca, chapter representative

There have been no meetings since the last report.

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Continued next page



*Photo by Kent Fothergill*

*Christmas winds knocked over the last of the state champion oak trees at Big Oak Tree State Park.*

From the previous page

## Ozarks Chapter

**Submitted by Susan Farrington, chapter representative**

Our chapter takes December and January off, so we have no news to report for this issue. We're looking forward to spring!

## Perennis Chapter

**Submitted by Allison Vaughn, chapter representative**

Full force winds whipped through southeast Missouri this Christmas, winds strong enough to topple over the last of the state champion oak trees at Big Oak Tree State Park.

Perennis President Kent Fothergill discovered the fallen tree on Dec. 26. Estimated at 450-600 years of age, this mighty bur oak represented in size and species the stately tree for which the park was named in the 1930s.

Ken McCarty, natural resource management chief for the Missouri state park system, reminds us that this bur oak stood as a symbol of a once vast landscape that stretched for millions of acres.

"Even fallen, this bur oak tree remains a significant natural and historical artifact; that throughout this last stage of its existence will remind us of the wind and larger forces that shape a forest ecosys-

*A small white bluet, *Hedyotis australis*, will be the quarry of a Perennis Chapter native plant hunt planned for March 27. Details are in the calendar.*



tem, and the smaller ones which return even its ancient members to the soil in which they once thrived," McCarty said. "That state parks contain trees whose lives span centuries is a signature attribute of our mission to preserve Missouri's natural landscapes. More so that even as one aged tree melts away, it remains in place as other life springs forward and the essence of the old growth forest continues on."

## St. Louis Chapter

**Submitted by Pat Harris, chapter representative**

Our first meeting of the year was Jan. 27. Treasurer Mary Smidt reported on the status of our accounts.

Our presenter for the evening was David Bogler of the Missouri Botanical Garden. He is working under contract at USDA to develop interactive keys for the Internet. He uses SLIKS (Stinger's Lightweight Interactive Key Software). It is made to work on Internet Explorer.

He has completed work on the grasses and legumes with a particular focus on Missouri plants. He is continuing this work for the remaining monocots.

He started by addressing the economic importance of the grasses and their different habitats in Missouri. Grasses have been cultivated for at least 10,000 years. Seventy percent of the world's farmland is planted in grasses. They are used for food for humans and livestock. Fifty percent of humanity's calories come from grass.

The grass family (Poaceae) has 700 genera and 11,000 species. It's the fourth largest plant family.

Thanks to Catherine McGrane, Powder Valley's Nature Center assistant manager, we were able to use her computer to connect to the internet, which permitted David to demonstrate how the keys can be used.

Here are the URLs for you to try out for yourselves:

- <http://davidbogler.com/Legumes/LegumesUSA.html>
- <http://davidbogler.com/Grasses/GrassesUSA.html>

On Saturday, Jan. 30, five of our members, braved below freezing weather for a walk in the snow at the Shaw Nature Reserve.

One of them said it was interesting looking at the animal tracks in the snow. After lunch, three of them and several other MONPS members, joined the Missouri Prairie Foundation board members to listen to Dr. James Trager, reserve biologist. He gave a presentation on woodland, glade, and prairie restoration and reconstruction at the reserve.

## Plant steward James Whitley dies

James Whitley, who was awarded the MONPS Plant Stewardship Award last fall, died Dec. 17. He was 88.

Whitley was born in Jamesport, Mo. He attended the the University of Missouri, where he earned masters and doctorate degrees after an interruption for serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

He joined the Missouri Department of Conservation in 1962 and retired as assistant division chief of fisheries research in 1990.

During his tenure with the department, Whitley authored 25 technical publications and 23 popular articles concerning water quality and pollutants, including "Water Plants for Missouri Ponds."

Whitley played a leading role in establishing water quality standards for Missouri streams, lakes and ponds. In the early 1970s, he was called upon to offer expert testimony for the National Wildlife Federation on the regulation of oxygen levels in some of Missouri's river dams, as well as many other state and national enforcement actions during his career.

Before last fall's MONPS honor, Whitley was given MONPS Blazing Star recognition in 2008. Other honors include Water Conservationist Award, Conservation Federation of Missouri and National Wildlife Society, 1970; American Motors Conservation Award, 1971; United States Environmental Protection Agency, Environmental Award, 1978; and Award of Excellence, Missouri Chapter, American Fisheries Society, 1981.

Whitley is survived by his wife, Joanna, of Columbia; sisters Mary Hawkins and Carrol Key of Trenton; and his brother John of Trenton.

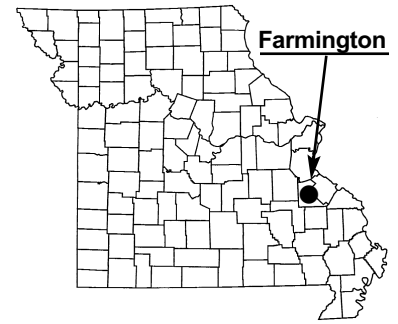
## Field trip planned for May

Plans have not been set for the planned April 30-May 2 field trip to the Farmington, Mo., area. Watch the *Petal Pusher* and the MONPS Web site for details, but put the dates on your calendar.

Farmington is about 60 miles south of St. Louis. Hikes have not been planned. However, Don Kurz's book "Missouri Natural Wonders Guidebook" lists Hawn State Park and Hickory Canyons Natural Area as worthy places for hiking near Farmington.

At Hawn State Park, Kurz suggests the Pickle Creek Trail, which enters into the Pickle Creek Natural Area. Pickle Creek is a high-quality stream with more than 20 species of fish, small rapids and pools.

At Hickory Canyons, hikers are greeted by "scenic box canyons and cliffs draped with ferns and mosses," Kurz writes. It was dedicated as a natural area in 1974 and now comprises 280 acres.



## Award nominations due April 1

The MONPS Awards Committee seeks nominations of people who have supported the preservation of Missouri's flora. MONPS offers five awards:

- Erna Eisendrath Memorial Education Award, recognizing individuals who, through teaching, writing, or other activity have conveyed to others a significant appreciation and knowledge of Missouri's native flora.

- Arthur Christ Research Award, recognizing an individual's significant contribution in furthering the knowledge of Missouri flora.

- Plant Stewardship Award, recognizing an individual or organization for the preservation of important elements of Missouri's flora through purchase, registry, and/or management practice.

- The John E. Wylie Award, recognizing individuals who have provided exceptional service to the Society.

- Julian A. Steyermark Award, the society's highest award, given to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to any and all aspects of Missouri botany.

The deadline for nominations is April 1.

Nominations should contain the full name of the nominee and the name of the person making the nomination, and they should set forth the contributions of the individual or organization that merits recognition.

Award recipients need not be members of MONPS.

Please submit nominations to Awards Committee Chairwoman Nadia Navarrete-Tindall. Her contact information is on the back page of the *Petal Pusher*.

### INFORMATION ON JOINING THE MISSOURI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Life .....\$200

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Osage Plains .....\$5  
Ozarks Native Plant .....\$5  
Perennis .....\$5  
St. Louis .....\$5

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- Board and award nominations are due

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