

Photo courtesy Missouri Department of Conservation

Diamond Grove Prairie Natural Area is the site for the April 30-May 2 MONPS field trip.

## MONPS field trip dates scheduled for 2011

State field trip locations for 2011 were chosen at the December board meeting. Details for each trip will follow in future *Petal Pusher* issues, but here is the line-up.

- April 30-May 2: We will travel to Joplin in southwestern Missouri. Our tour sites will include Diamond Grove Prairie Natural Area, an outstanding example of a dry-mesic chert prairie, and Wildcat Glade Natural Area, the best example of a chert glade in Missouri (a very rare habitat for us). These are two gems you won't want to miss!
- June 10-12: We will base ourselves in Ironton in southeastern Missouri. We will tour Johnson's Shut-in State Park, to see the results of restoration work done there after the big reservoir break five years ago. We will also tour nearby fens, and perhaps even spot a federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly!
- Sept 9-11: We will meet in Sedalia and view some of the close-by outstanding prairies in the region.
- Dec. 3: Board meeting in Columbia.  
We look forward to seeing you out on the trail!

## 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.

Nadia Navarrete-Tindall  
2116 Grant Lane  
Columbia, MO 65203  
navarrete-tindalln@lincolnu.edu

# Officer, board candidates sought

Susan Farrington has agreed to chair the Nominating Committee for the upcoming state Missouri Native Plant Society elections.

For 2011, we are required to hold an election for all of the officers (president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer). Each of these officers serves a two-year term. Also up for election are two three-year board member positions.

The Nominating Committee will nominate one or more candidates for each available position, and the slate of candidates will be published in the March-April *Petal Pusher*. Additional nominations from the membership may also be made and should be submitted to the Nominating Committee Chairwoman. Each nomination should be accompanied by a written second from an additional member as well as a written confirmation of willingness to serve by the nominee.

Please send nominations by e-mail or snail mail to:

Susan Farrington  
551 Joe Jones Blvd  
West Plains, MO 65775

E-mail: [susan.farrington@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:susan.farrington@mdc.mo.gov)  
(417) 255-9561 x 307

For more information about the duties of any office, please contact board President George Yatskievych, the person filling that position, or Susan.

## Petal Pusher needs an editor

If you have a desire to edit and lay out the *Petal Pusher*, contact a board member or officer. Sadly, the present editor finds himself pressed for time and unable to contribute as much as he would like.

The editor solicits articles and reminds board members to submit newsworthy items and those pertinent to the business of the society for the six issues produced annually. The editor compiles and lays out the *Petal Pusher* using whatever desktop publishing software they prefer (MONPS has a copy of PageMaker 7.0 available). The editor produces a PDF of the newsletter and sends it by e-mail to the printer. After that, with mailing labels from Membership Chairwoman Ann Earley, Distribution Manager Bill Knight takes it from there to make sure the newsletter gets folded, stamped, addressed and mailed. The *Petal Pusher* editor does not necessarily have to live in the St. Louis area.

## New members

- Thecla Gibson, Cape Girardeau
- Ioana Popescu, Rogersville
- M. Rose Atchley, Branson
- Bob & Barbara Kipfer, Springfield
- Jeanie Skibiski, Ozark
- Lee Ann Googe, Kansas City

## Calendar of Events

### Hawthorn Chapter

**Monday, Jan. 10 at 5:30 p.m.** — Chapter meeting at the Unitarian Church, 2651 Shepard Blvd., Columbia.

**Thursday, Jan. 20 at 11:30 a.m.** — Lunch with Native Plant Enthusiasts at the Uprise Bakery (RagTag Theater), 10 Hitt St., just South of Broadway, Columbia.

### Kansas City Chapter

**Tuesday, Jan. 4 at 7 p.m.** — Meeting at the Discovery Center, between KFC and Brush Creek at 4750 Troost, Kansas City, Mo. Program to be determined.

### Osage Plains Chapter

No calendar items submitted

### Ozarks Chapter

**Tuesday, Feb 15** — Chapter meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the MDC Ozark Regional Office, 551 Joe Jones Blvd, West Plains. Brooks Blevins, associate professor of Ozarks studies at Missouri State University-Springfield, will present a historical look at the Ozarks titled "The Who, What, and Where of the Ozarks." For more information, contact Susan Farrington (contact info on back).

### Perennis Chapter

**Jan. 15** — Winter meeting, chili cookout at 2 p.m., at President Kent Fothergill's house in Portageville. Directions on [www.semonps.org](http://www.semonps.org)

**Feb. 19** — Ste. Genevieve Norton Tour. Details forthcoming on [www.semonps.org](http://www.semonps.org)

### St. Louis Chapter

**Wednesday, Jan. 26** — Program to be announced. Meeting will be at 7:30 at Powder Nature Center, 11715 Cragwood Road, Kirkwood, Mo.

**Wednesday, Feb. 23** — Program to be announced. Meeting will be at 7:30 at Powder Nature Center, 11715 Cragwood Road, Kirkwood, Mo.

### Southwest Missouri Chapter

**Thursday, Jan. 20** — Chapter's monthly meeting, 6 p.m. at Springfield Botanical Center. Topic: "Fire Ecology amidst Lions, Giraffes, Elephants and Rhinos" presented by Sherry Leis, fire ecologist for the National Park Service.

**Thursday, Feb. 17** — Chapter's monthly meeting, 6 p.m. at Springfield Botanical Center. Topic to be determined.

# Hawthorn Chapter

Submitted by John White, chapter representative

October brought the chapter enjoyable trips to four interesting areas. There are still a few flowering plants blooming in October and November, some low in the foliage with more protection from the wind and cooler temperatures, holding on as a last effort before the snow starts blowing.

We visited Ha Ha Tonka State Park on Oct. 4 and were fortunate to have Allison Vaughn (Missouri Department of Natural Resources naturalist) as our host. In presettlement times a savanna landscape was found throughout the area and a few still remain today. Controlled burning management is being used to preserve a variety of landscapes including the savannas and prairies. The karst topography has produced many interesting geological features. On the self-guided Dolomite Rock Trail alone, one can explore diverse communities such as sinkholes with a cave with a "losing stream," a savanna and a dolomite glade where over 80 native plant species have been found. The old castle ruins, on a bluff top overlooking the Lake of the Ozarks and Ha Ha Tonka Spring, has an interesting history related to the park. Among the plants observed were yellow false foxglove and fall glade onion.

Several members attended a seed collection trip to two areas north of Columbia on Oct. 10. At The Hole, a privately owned area in northeast Boone County, we found downy gentian (*Gentiana puberula*) blooming. At Rudolf Bennett Conservation Area in Howard County, closed bottle gentian (*Gentiana clausa*) was in bloom. Seed collections from the two areas included wild quinine, tall coreopsis, rough blazing star, rattlesnake master and others to be used in the propagation workshop.

On Oct. 24, several members visited Painted Rock Conservation Area in Osage county near Westphalia. A 1.6 mile self guided trail leads through a portion of the 1480 acre Painted Rock State Forest.

Highlights are areas of timber stand improvement, an Indian burial cairn, an area of sugar maple encroachment, and an interesting rock outcrop with a base layer of dolomite, a dolomite and chert fragment layer and an upper sandstone layer. The lower, softer dolomite erodes faster, the dolomite-chert layer breaks up and falls down slope, then the sand-

stone breaks and slides over. This leaves a sandstone overhang with various rock fragments collecting down slope.

Two overlooks, on the 140-foot cliff edge, afford an exceptional view of the Osage River and floodplain. To the north on the Osage River is Bloody Island which, according to stories, contained buried treasure, but none has been found.

The river-bluff cliff paintings, (not accessible from the trail), one a pictograph of a buffalo, were painted by Indians probably between 1200 and 1300 A.D. This is a very diverse and picturesque area, with only a moderately difficult trail, making it outstanding for a "fall mosey."

Twelve miles north of Columbia, on Highway 63, a 77-acre natural area called the Pinnacles Youth

Park can be found. A group of Hawthorn members and guest visited the park Nov. 6. The 80-foot Burlington limestone formations, over 300 million years old, formed from water erosion over those millions of years. Silver Fork Creek doubled back on itself and crowded Kelly Branch Creek, carving the 1,000-foot long ridge. It is a surprising and somewhat amazing sight when first encountered.

At the south end of the pinnacles is a Shelving Rock, 40 feet deep, 125 feet long and a maximum 10 feet high, undercut by

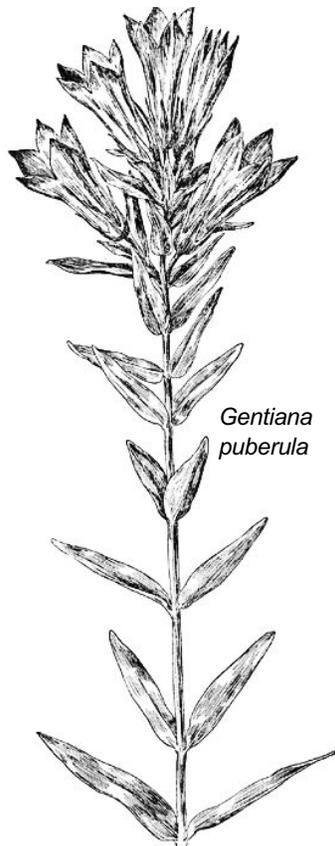
water erosion. It contains mosses, lichens, and interesting geological creations. (Ref: Columbia Missourian, "Pinnacles Youth Park, a hidden gem" by Ellie Hensley, April 15, 2009).

Our group climbed to the ridge top just south of the highest pinnacle. Along the trail and growing out of portions of the bedrock some of the plants found are as follows: Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*); figwort (*Scrophularia marilandica*); Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*); maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*); hepatica (*Anemone americana*) and woodland strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*) growing along side cliff-brake (*Pellaea*).

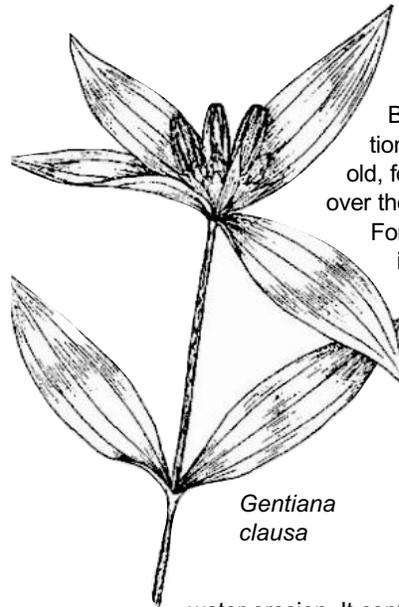
The Hawthorn regular meeting was held at the Unitarian Church on Nov. 8. An excellent presentation was given by Dr. Robin Kennedy, curator of the Dunn-Palmer Herbarium. The topic was "Herbarium Type Specimens."

A holotype is the original specimen of a species, collected, named and designated by the author at the time of publication as the type specimen of the named species. There can be only one holotype specimen. There are several other type specimen designations.

Other interesting information included herbarium purpose and functions and worldwide herbariums. Thomas Nuttall (1776-1859)



*Gentiana puberula*



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and his Missouri collections was discussed as well as Lewis and Clark losing their entire 1805 spring collections, including Missouri plants, when a winter cache was destroyed by floodwater.

Our booth at the Chestnut Festival in New Franklin, Mo., on Oct. 16 brought in \$516, mostly for books and calendars.

## Kansas City Chapter

Submitted by Daniel Rice, chapter representative

Members of the Kansas City Chapter met on Nov. 2 at the Discovery Center in Kansas City. This was our last meeting of the year, and was a time to re-visit our accomplishments for the year.

We have had several very good plant sales this year, expanding our sales to two new venues. The proceeds from the sale of our own plants have been donated to the Hudson Fund, while the proceeds from our joint sales with Missouri Wildflower Nursery have replenished the chapter's treasury.

We also discussed the fall field trip and state board meeting that took place in September. Everyone who attended thought that it went well. The field trip to Jerry Smith Park was the highlight for those who attended.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, Jan. 4, at 7 p.m. at the Discovery Center in Kansas City. This will be the meeting when our slate of officers will be announced. Everyone is welcome!

## Osage Plains Chapter

Submitted by Sharon Warnaca, chapter representative

Eight club members had a lot of fun putting together birdseed wreaths, at our September meeting. Birds in the Clinton area will have a bountiful feast in the coming cold months.

We enjoyed an informative program on fire control in Africa by Sherry Leis. If you have not had the opportunity to see this presentation, I would encourage you to invite Sherry to present this for any organization.

December and January we take a winter vacation and will resume in February. We will then be choosing our new officers, decide on the year's programs and field trips.

Hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and are staying warm throughout the winter weather.

## Ozarks Chapter

Submitted by Susan Farrington, chapter representative

Our October meeting featured a program on edible mushrooms, presented by Susan Farrington. The recent publication of a new Missouri Department of Conservation book, "Missouri's Wild Mushrooms" by Maxine Stone, has generated a lot of interest, so the program was timely.

Approximately 30 people attended, including several new to the organization.

Our November meeting featured a very interesting program about medicinal herbs presented by Rose Scarlet. She shared

her recipe for a homemade cough syrup and other herbal preparations. We had a good turnout for that program as well.

Our chapter takes December and January off. Our next meeting is planned for Feb. 15.

## Perennis Chapter

Submitted by Kent Fothergill, chapter president

If one has interest in conservation of native plants and the habitats they require, you simply must engage people; this is why we are a native plant society. While native plants are our *raison d'être*, we are a group of people, not plants. Conservation is not a natural activity. It is a human activity. Often not only are we the agents of conservation, but also the reason for the need for conservation activities in the first place.

Ultimately, conservation is about human values. Engaging people with the idea of valuing native plants is how we further our conservation cause.

As entomologists, Kelly and I really like milkweeds. They are beautiful native plants, easy to grow, have interesting insects associated with them, and have a wonderful story to tell. For these reasons we planned to help the Wardell Elementary School grow a milkweed garden, as well as to grow milkweeds on one acre of private property to provide seed for this and other projects.

Well, school teachers can be awfully busy folk, so the Wardell school project hasn't materialized. The field we intended to plant remained flooded most of the summer, so the Perennis Chapter didn't plant the milkweed patch for seed increase.

However, we were invited out to speak about insects in Murfreesboro, Tenn. We created a few hundred milkweed kits consisting of: Jiffy pots, seeds (*Asclepias tuberosa*, *A. verticillata*, and *A. incarnata*) and instruction/information sheets for distribution to the classes we were speaking to.

From experience in Idaho (with *A. speciosa*), these milkweed kits work well, are easy to maintain and easily introduce children to native plants, insect associations and native landscaping!

In 2010, we failed to engage the children of southeast Missouri, but were successful engaging neighboring children in Tennessee. Missouri's next!



*Asclepias verticillata*, whorled milkweed

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## St. Louis Chapter

Submitted by Pat Harris, chapter representative

October's chapter meeting was our annual show and tell. John Oliver started us off with a look through the year of the Monday botany groups field trips. He deviated from Missouri for his trip to Italy in October.

Casey Galvin concentrated on rare plants he saw in Missouri and surrounding states.

Steve Turner showed images of plants that he saw this year that were new to him.

Jane Walker showed off photos taken with her new camera. One was a hawk moth that she caught with his wings open.

Nels Holmberg showed some plants that are unusual to our area, and some invasive exotics.

Larry Morrison finally gave in and bought his first digital camera. He used it on his trip to Yosemite this year.

Mary Smidt went to New Mexico with some family members in August. She showed images of some of the cacti that they saw.

George Yatskievych showed us the difference between the more common *Dirca palustris* with the newly described *D. decipiens*. He also showed us *Cenchrus spinifex*, a new record for Missouri.

Pat Harris showed images of some of the orchids seen on her trip in June with the Native Orchid Conference. The field trips were to Wagner Natural Area, just west of Edmonton and Jasper National Park in Alberta. More photos were shown from a side trip to East Glacier on the way home.

Our chapter does not meet in November or December.

## Southwest Missouri Chapter

Submitted by Brian Edmond, chapter representative

Our October meeting was held at the new Springfield Botanical Center, and we got a first-hand look at the meeting facilities there.

Starting in 2011, we'll change our meetings to the third Thursday of every month to accommodate other groups with second Tuesday conflicts. The new venue will be at the Center itself. The facilities there are very good and the center is happy to have us on board.

We agreed to adopt three gardens at the center (wildflower, native shrub, rain garden) and took a quick tour of these sites.

A few days later, several members, led by Larry Wegmann, chapter president, met to do the rain garden planting. They added 13 species in groupings of five each in the garden. Plants were purchased from Missouri Wildflowers and Easy Wildflower Nursery with the costs covered by Friends of the Garden.

The other gardens will be planned at an upcoming meeting.

More than 20 people gathered to share an outdoor meal and campfire at Michelle Bowe and Brian Edmond's home in Walnut Grove. A few brave souls went on a twilight tour of the area before the rest of the group arrived. Larry and Linda were late but they provided hot dogs for everyone, so all was forgiven.

Everyone agreed that the potluck was a success and that we should make it an annual event!

## Book salutes 85 years of Shaw Nature Reserve

Shaw Nature Reserve, on the western outskirts of the St. Louis metropolitan area, marks 2010 as its 85th year, and a new commemorative book celebrates the anniversary.

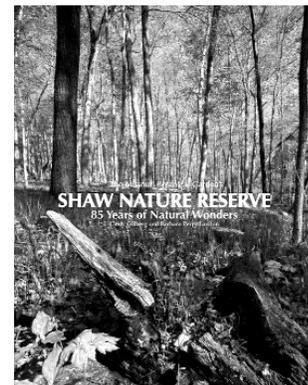
"The Missouri Botanical Garden's Shaw Nature Reserve: 85 Years of Natural Wonders" by mother-and-daughter team of Barbara Perry Lawton and Cindy Gilberg.

Gilberg is a landscape designer and contract employee of the Shaw Nature Reserve. She was co-founder of Gilberg Perennial Farms in St. Louis.

Barbara Perry Lawton has written extensively on gardening and horticulture.

The Shaw Nature Reserve is a division of the Missouri Botanical Garden. In 1925, 1,300 acres of farm land was purchased 35 miles west in Gray Summit, Mo., as a possible place to relocate the botanic garden. It has grown to 2,400 acres and is a refuge plant and animal diversity, environmental education and recreation.

The book retails for \$19.95 and is available for purchase at the Missouri Botanical Garden's Garden Gate Shop and the Shaw Nature Reserve's Visitor Center. You may also order copies online at [www.gardengateshop.org](http://www.gardengateshop.org) or call at (314) 577-0865.



## 'Bringing Nature Home' author to speak in Carbondale, Ill.

The Southern Chapter of the Illinois Plant Society is sponsoring a presentation by Dr. Douglas Tallamy titled, "Bringing Nature Home, How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants" at 7 p.m. Feb. 18, at Browne Auditorium in the Parkinson Lab Building in Southern Illinois University-Carbondale.

The event is free, and everyone is welcome to attend.

Tallamy's book "Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in our Gardens" was awarded the 2008 Silver Medal by the Garden Writer's Association.

Tallamy is professor and chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology and director of the Center for Managed Ecosystems at the University of Delaware in Newark, Del.

The Southern Chapter of the Illinois Plant Society seeks co-sponsors from other organizations. Checks can be made out to So IL Chapter INPS and mailed to INPS PO Box 271 Carbondale, IL 62901

For more information contact:

Laurel Toussaint  
laureltous@hotmail.com  
(618) 549-5163

Or  
Nadia Navarrete-Tindall  
Navarrete-tindall@iucolnu.edu

# Patch-burn-grazing sparks debate

By Steve Buback

Most readers of the *Petal Pusher* are likely familiar with the prairies of Missouri.

The tall-grass prairies that once constituted 13,000,000 acres of Missouri are now reduced to around 70,000 acres (Nelson, 1985). Missouri now contains some of the best examples of diverse tall-grass prairie left anywhere, but most of these remnants are scattered and highly fragmented.

From a large quilt that once covered 30% of the state, we have only a few squares left. These squares require management and attention to maintain the flora and fauna that once populated the region.

Patch-burn grazing is a management tool that is becoming increasingly common on prairies throughout Missouri and the Midwest.

The purpose of patch-burn-grazing is generally to increase landscape heterogeneity by allowing grazers, often cattle though occasionally native grazers such as bison, to graze recently burned areas. The grazers tend to reduce native warm-season grasses such as big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) and allow native forbs and cool-season grasses to flourish from the reduced competition.

The result is a landscape that provides a variety of treatment types that theoretically allow for increased flora and fauna diversity.

As of 2009, this system is being applied by the Missouri Department of Conservation on 11 prairies managed by MDC representing 17% of the prairies managed by MDC. Included within the prairies are several designated Natural Areas, including Niawathe and Taberville prairies, which were visited by the Missouri Native Plant Society on a state field trip in June 2009. The result of the patch-burn grazing upon flora compositions of the treated natural areas has been the source of much contention lately.

## Evaluation is tough

Patch-burn grazing undoubtedly contributes a different aesthetic to prairies than the traditional spring burns or mowing that MONPS members are used to seeing. In addition, to having to cross cattle guards and deal with large ungulates, cattle grazing often results in the creation of a "grazing lawn," where the cattle keep all vegetation



A strategy for managing remnants of tall-grass prairie in Missouri would have cattle or other large herbivores graze on patches of recently burned land.



very short and reduces blooming and subsequent seed set of palatable plants. This grazing lawn is a sight we are unaccustomed to, but begs a different question: does this grazing reduce conservative prairie plants in the managed areas?

Unfortunately, the literature is thin in respect to this question, especially in regards to Missouri.

A report provided by MDC to MONPS, in addition to references tabulated by Paul Nelson and Don Kurz in recent reports, address much of the knowledge. Both reports acknowledge uncertainty when it comes to the specific impacts upon individual species. The traditional classification of species as "increasers" or "decreasers" under grazing are often based upon studies using other, more intensive forms of grazing. The impacts under patch-burn grazing may mimic these or may diverge.

## Coefficients and indicies

Brent Jamison and Malissa Underwood of MDC undertook a study that presented a finding that patch-burn grazing had no statistically significant effect upon species richness, diversity, or FQI. What does all this mean?

One tool often used by ecologists to rate the desirability of plants is the "coefficient of conservatism" (CC) value. A plant that is restricted to high-quality remnant prairies is assigned a CC value of 10 and a plant found only in highly disturbed habitats is assigned a value of 0. These values are often tabulated for an entire site but can also be averaged for sampling quadrats throughout a site. Thus, one can compare average CC values and determine if a given site contains more conservative species than another.

CC values can also be used to tabulate an index known as the floristic quality index

(FQI), which incorporates the number of overall species found on a site as well as the average CC values of a site. These analyses tell us one attempt at overall quality of a site, but they do not speak to overall abundance of species.

Consider two sites, each with identical plant species — western prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*, CC=10), Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*, CC=2, and white wreath aster (*Symphiotrichum ericoides*, CC=4). If one site contains 98 orchids, one Indian grass and one aster, and the other site contains one orchid, 98 Indian grass, and one aster, they will have identical average CC (5.33 for those keeping score at home) and FQI (9.23). The two sites also contain equal species richness and any measure of diversity (such as Shannon and Simpson's indices) will show equal values as well. Are these equal in terms of the quality of the prairie?

As the discussion about patch-burn grazing continues, please bear many of these issues in mind. It is extremely difficult to discuss quality of natural habitats, and in order to do so we all need to be speaking the same language. One person's pasture is another virgin prairie.

In order for MONPS members to be as well educated on the issue as possible, some research would be handy. For more information, please see the Missouri Prairie Foundation spring 2010 issue, and contact any of the board members for some recent reports by illustrious biologists that have been circulating. This is not an easy issue to form an opinion on, and the more information you have the better.

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MONPS member Steve Buback is plant ecologist for Forest Park Forever, St. Louis.

# Witch Hazel

By Barbara Fairchild

If gray, gloomy days make you long for a dash of color in your winter landscape, take a look at vernal witch hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*).

This early-blooming Missouri native shrub unfurls its spidery petals in January or early February and blooms for as long as four weeks — even when a light snow dusts its blossoms. Four, narrow petals (typically lemon-yellow, but sometimes red-orange or bronze) surround a leathery, mahogany calyx, creating a burst of color on a drab winter day. These delicate blossoms not only delight the eye, but also the nose, with a sweet, spicy fragrance that attracts insect visitors, even in the midst of winter.

Survival techniques practiced by the shrub include the ability to roll up its wispy flower petals when temperatures drop at night or on extremely cold days. This mechanism allows them to endure frigid temperatures that would decimate any other flower bold enough to bloom in January. When temperatures warm, the dainty blossoms once more extend their petals and welcome pollinators.

The shrub's half-inch-long seed capsules demonstrate another useful survival trick. The dry, woody capsules, filled with black seeds, split open, in late summer, with an explosive force that sends seeds flying 20 to 30 feet through the air. This attribute places seeds far enough from the parent plant that seedlings don't have to compete with the parent for moisture and sunlight.

In Missouri, vernal witch hazel typically is found along gravelly creek banks in the

Ozarks, while its relative, eastern witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), is found on nearby upland slopes. Vernal witch hazel prefers moist, acidic, organically rich soils, but tolerates heavy clay soils and is easily grown in average, medium wet, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. For best flowering, it needs full sun.

## 'At the Same Time'

The shrub's botanical name comes from two Greek words: hama, which means coming together or at the same time, and mela, which translates as apple or fruit. Together they refer to the fact that fruit, seed and next year's leaf buds exist on the branches of the plant at the same time, a novelty in the shrub world. Vernalis refers to the plant's spring-blooming habit.

"At the same time" also may include the leaves (a showy yellow in fall) from the previous season. They often remain on the shrub as it begins to bloom, shrouding the dainty flowers. For the most spectacular impact, they should be removed by hand. Your efforts will be rewarded by an impressive winter display of hundreds, maybe even thousands, of blossoms at peak bloom.

Native Americans discovered the bark of witch hazel has an astringent compound that is particularly pungent after the growing season is finished. They simmered the bark into a syrupy mixture that they used to treat coughs and fevers. Bark, along with leaves, was turned into a potion that Native Americans found soothing and cooling to the skin—the forerunner of witch hazel lotions that are used today.

When European settlers arrived in the Midwest, they found another use for forked

branches cut from the shrub: witching or dowsing water. To this day, some believe underground water can be located by grasping the forked ends of a branch in each hand, extending the stick in front of them and walking across a designated area. As the searcher (dowser), moves across the ground, he watches the end of the stick for a downward tug that indicates the proper location to dig for water.

## Worthy Landscape Choice

The compact shape (8-10 feet tall, 6-10 feet wide) and slow growth of witch hazel, as well as its early-bloom period, make it a desirable addition to the landscape. Its ability to form dense colonies through suckering is capturing the attention of contractors and landscapers faced with the need to control erosion. It is an excellent shrub for a naturalized setting, and some homeowners plant it as a specimen shrub near a house entrance so they can inhale its delightful fragrance as they come and go on winter days. To prevent a specimen plant from colonizing, suckers must be pruned promptly.

Its best use, however, may be as a focal point from the window in a cozy room, where a homeowner can relax on a winter day and marvel at that dash of color in the drab winter landscape. Cutting a few of the branches for a table-top floral arrangement will bring the sweet, spicy fragrance into the house.

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*Barbara Fairchild is the communications specialist for Grow Native. For more information about native plants, visit [www.grownative.org](http://www.grownative.org).*

## INFORMATION ON JOINING THE MISSOURI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

### SOCIETY DUES

(Chapter dues additional)	
Student dues	.....\$5
Regular	.....\$10
Contributing	.....\$20
Life	.....\$200

### CHAPTER DUES

Columbia	.....\$6
Kansas City	.....\$5
Osage Plains	.....\$5
Ozarks Native Plant	.....\$5
Perennis	.....\$5
St. Louis	.....\$5
Southwest Missouri	.....\$5

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