



# Kansas Native Plant Society

# Spring Newsletter



Volume 30 Number 2

April 2008

## The Rites of Spring Burning "Residential" Prairie Land

By Ann Feyerharm, MS, Landscape Architecture and 15 Year Prairie Dweller

Photo by Valerie Wright

A smoky haze begins to edge the Flint Hills by the end of March. Ranchers have started to lay plans for spring burns— a few have even begun to light up the night-time horizons. Encounters with neighbors in our rural subdivision near Tuttle Creek Reservoir in Pottawatomie County inevitably include "We gonna burn this



Controlled Prairie Burn Fireline

year? Who's gonna organize it? Who's bringin' the beer!" Burning acres of open pastureland is one thing, managing fires between houses on the urban fringe is quite another. It's a tricky procedure but necessary if the surrounding land is to remain prairie. Too often new country land-

owners have no idea how to manage their expanded holdings. During the last few years, my husband Bill and I have tried to initiate operations in our neck of the prairie.

**First on the list** is deciding whether it's a burn year or not; then comes figuring out the burn boundaries. Ranchers burn for optimum grass production; we burn for safety, control of woody species and encouragement of wildflowers. There's no magic formula for selecting the burn schedule because Mother Nature usually has the last say. Last year we had to re-schedule three times because of winds and rain. The year before we gave up! For us, a two-year interval is best.

**Two** is to update the neighborhood and friends' telephone and e-mail list. We have to be able to contact participants on short notice. Plus the more willing and diligent helpers, the better. Often, former neighbors come out to help.

**Three** is to inform and educate all who will participate in the burning, especially new residents. Several years ago we contacted our rural township fire department personnel to talk to us about the procedure— and the dangers. Some fire volunteers help neighborhoods conduct their burn.

(Continued on Page 6)

### Inside This Issue

President's Message	Page 2
News Notes	Page 2
Prairie Landscaping	Page 4
Lichens	Page 5
Coming Events	Page 7
Westward Ho!	Page 9
Updated Website	Page 9
Members Show and Tell	Page 9
Featured Plant	Page 13
Membership Policies	Page 13
Membership News	Page 13

Have you renewed your membership in KNPS? Check the first line in your address for your membership expiration date. If the date is 12/31/2007, your membership has expired. To continue receiving the newsletter, please renew now.

The Kansas Native Plant Society Newsletter is printed four times a year: Winter (January), Spring (April), Summer (July), Fall (October). The deadline for submitted material is the 5th of December, March, June and September.

The mission of the Kansas Native Plant Society is to encourage awareness and appreciation of the native plants of Kansas in their habitats and in our landscapes by promoting education, stewardship, and scientific knowledge.



# KNPS President's Message

by Michael Heffron

It is this time of the year that I get most excited about the native plants of Kansas. Delightful memories of my earliest wildflower experiences rush back into my consciousness, and I quickly



Dutchman's Breeches  
*Dicentra cucullaria*

remember why I first got so enthused about these precious little miracles of nature. It has been several months since the fall native plants last showed us their handsome flowers and

foliage. Now that we have survived several ice and/or snow storms, the first native plants of spring are once again preparing to express their beauty for our seasonal enjoyment. Please keep an eye out for some of the common earliest risers such as Johnny-Jump-Ups (*Viola rafinesqui*), Hop clovers (*Trifolium dubium*), Yellow Wood Sorrells (*Oxalis stricta*), Speedwells (*Veronica officinalis*) and Pussy-toes (*Antennaria neglecta*). Pussy-toes have even been known to push their heads up through the snow. (See p. 10 for more about Pussy-toes) Two of my personal spring favorite native plants to anticipate are the Dog-tooth Lily (*Erythronium albidum*), which blossoms for a very short period of time and often disappears before Easter, and the Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), which is one of the very earliest trees to bloom in Kansas.

Some of my other favorites to look forward to during early spring include Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), May Apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), Yellow Violets (*Viola pubescens*), Ground Plum (*Astragalus crassicaarpus*), Fringed Puccoon (*Lithospermum incsum*), and Prairie Ragwort (*Packera plattensis*). For me Prairie Ragworts with their bright yellow ray-flowers and bright orange disk-flowers epitomize the spring Kansas prairies (see p. 4). Of course, like most other wildflower enthusiasts, I could go on and on, but we all have our own personal list of favorites to enjoy; so I'll stop there. (I will stop listing, but I will never stop enjoying – hee, hee.)

I hope this brief discussion of some of the early blooming native plants in my area of south-central Kansas helps everyone reading this message get in the mood for another unbelievably exciting year of stalking and enjoying the unique native plants of Kansas. With all of the moisture we have received this winter, this year's wildflowers could be extra sensational. So pray for sunshine and warmth! Also, please do yourself a big favor, and when the weather permits, get outside with your field guides and enthusiasm and start learning about and enjoying these precious floral gifts from nature. Also, remember that KNPS sponsors many wildflower tours and walks throughout the state during the wildflower season. So please check out the schedule of KNPS sponsored tours (pp.7-8) and join other wildflower enthusiast for an even more ecstatic experience. You definitely do not want to miss out on any of the fun and adventure. And sometime during our upcoming wildflower season, I hope to look over and see you beside me peering into the petals and pollen of ??????.

**JULY COLOR ISSUE. Share your write-ups and pictures of 2008 outings with us. Written summaries of about one-half page that focus on the "facts" (place, date, number attending, etc.) and unusual or spectacular plant sightings are recommended. Send manuscripts and pictures to nag@ksu.edu by June 15.**



## News Notes

by KNPS Contributors

**Symphony in the Flint Hills.** KNPS members have been asked again this year to lead Prairie Walks the afternoon of the Symphony in the Flint Hills, June 14. We will also have a booth about Kansas native plants and our organization. In her invitation to KNPS to participate in the event Sue Kidd from the Symphony team wrote, "Folks LOVED the Prairie

Walks last year– and the KNPS brought soooooo much expertise and excitement to the day." We estimated that last year KNPS representatives had face-to-face communication about native plants with 1,000 visitors!

(Continued on Page 3)



## News Notes - Continued

**Symphony - continued.** The location for this year is a privately owned prairie in Morris County just south of Council Grove. KNPS has been allotted 16 volunteers to help with the walks and booth. Each volunteer receives one free ticket to the symphony for approximately three-hour's of work. As you may know, tickets again this year sold out almost instantly.



KNPS members lead tours at the 2007 Symphony.

A number of members have already put their names on the volunteer list. If you would like be a part of this exciting KNPS event, send an e-mail to KNPS at: [email@ksnps.org](mailto:email@ksnps.org).



A capacity crowd enjoys the serenity and beauty of the prairie while awaiting the start of the 2007 Symphony.

**Governor's Proclamation: Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month.** As we have the last two years, KNPS is once more sending a request to Governor Kathleen Sebelius to proclaim June as Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month. The proclamation is designed to draw attention to the bounty and beauty of the native Kansas plants found in a variety of habitats across the state.

One of the times when the display of our wildflowers is most stunning is June, and as you can see from the events list, we already have close to a dozen opportunities scheduled for you to join a group, enjoy the natural setting and learn more about the special plants of our state.

**More Counties Adding County-wide Wildflower Tours.** KNPS is continuing to help organize County-wide Wildflower Tour Events in 2008. This year KNPS is working for the first time with Coffey County on their wildflower tour scheduled for May 31st. The tour area will be near New Strawn, north of Burlington, and will be followed by a free cookout lunch. The county-wide wildflower tours are an excellent opportunity to view and learn about wildflowers in the company of other wildflower enthusiasts and educators. Each county provides an opportunity to see different types of wildflowers in different soil types and regional growing characteristics.

KNPS is working to gather information on other amenities each county has to offer in terms of lodging, dining, shopping and area attractions you may enjoy in conjunction with a wildflower tour. Please check our online calendar for county-wide wildflower tours currently scheduled for Barber, Coffey, Comanche, Cowley, Neosho, Russell and Wilson Counties. We will be adding links on our calendar web page leading to more information you can use to plan an enjoyable day with wildflowers. June is always a very busy month; so check the online calendar for updates and deadlines for registering for wildflower tour events. Make a day of it!

**Little Blue Initiative Update.** Special appreciation goes out to those KNPS members who contacted their local schools and teachers asking them to participate in the movement for naming Little Bluestem as the Kansas State Grass. Their efforts resulted in letters from school children and supporters being sent to state representatives. Unfortunately, it looks as if there will not be a hearing on House Bill (No. 2386) to select Little Blue this legislative session. BUT we are ready to try again next year.

Valerie Wright, who has provided enthusiastic leadership for the campaign from the beginning, remarked "We should not give up."



Little Blue

*(Continued on page 4)*





## News Notes - Continued

**Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve Wildflower Weekend.** The timing is perfect for visitors to catch late summer/early autumn blooms at their peak on September 13 and 14 at Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. KNPS has been invited again this year to lead wildflower walks (on both days) and provide lectures and demonstrations related to native plants. Members who participated last year had a wonderful time and some are already



Tallgrass Prairie Path

signed up to help again this year. If you would like to volunteer, send an email to

email@ksnps.org. This is another special opportunity for KNPS to share knowledge and appreciation of native plants with large numbers of visitors who might otherwise not be aware of our botanical treasures.

This is an excellent event for those who are already native plant enthusiasts to bring family and friends. If walking is not their thing, there will be other activities including the widely acclaimed bus ride into the prairie with NPS rangers as guides.



## Prairie Landscaping

by Jeff Hansen

With this issue, the KNPS Newsletter is introducing a new feature—a column written by Jeff Hansen focusing on how to grow and use native plants in home and public landscapes.

**Landscaping with Prairie Ragwort.** The warm weather of spring gets many people excited about what to grow in their landscapes. One of my favorite spring native wildflowers is prairie ragwort or groundsel, *Packera plattensis*. Ragwort and groundsel are old world names for the genus *Senecio*. Recently the genus *Senecio* was divided into *Packera* and *Senecio*. *P. plattensis* was previously known as *Senecio plattensis*. If you are researching the species, be sure to search using both scientific names. Ragwort is a member of the Aster family, Kansas' largest plant family.

There are a few reasons that ragwort makes such a good addition to your garden. It's relatively short, 10 to 20 inches tall, it's not aggressive, and the

color of the flowers is an intense golden yellow. It flowers in April and May and about a month later the seeds develop in fluffy white heads. Seeds are dispersed by the wind. The early foliage is also attractive as it often takes on a purple color.

Not only do the plants spread by seed but sometimes also reproduce by underground stems known as rhizomes. From these rhizomes, new clones arise forming a colony. Using the clones is the easiest way to produce more plants, but if you want to grow them from seed be sure to collect it before the seeds are dispersed. I've had success planting the seeds in the spring, but they may also germinate in the fall, which won't harm them.

Prairie ragwort's culture requires partial sun to full sun. It does not tolerate taller vegetation that will crowd it out. In nature, it's usually found in upland sites where the vegetation doesn't get as tall. It tolerates all types of soil: clay, sand, loam, and rocky. The richness of the soil will affect how tall the plants get, with poorer soil producing smaller plants.

Another feature of the plant is that it often becomes dormant during the heat of summer, but with cooler temperatures of fall, the plant's leaves will again emerge. Gardeners must remember this so that they don't assume their plants have died and they replace them with something else. Their leaves often stay green all winter long in my yard.

You can purchase plants, buy seed, or get a cutting from an existing plant. Instead of digging up whole plants from the wild, an alternative is to take a cutting from a wild plant. All it takes is about an inch of root and you can start a plant. I never advocate digging plants from the wild, but there are a few species that taking a cutting doesn't harm the parent plant. The majority of plants shouldn't be removed from the wild.

I sell the seed and plants through my website [www.ksplants.com](http://www.ksplants.com) and the Dyck arboretum in Hesston may be another source to check.



Prairie Ragwort  
*Senecio plattensis*

# Lichens in Kansas

By Caleb Morse, Collection Manager, R.L. McGregor Herbarium

For the past several years, McGregor Herbarium staff have been studying Kansas lichens. These tiny, but colorful and important, organisms are found throughout our state.



*Caloplaca Holocarpa*

If you've ever admired Dakota Hills near Salina, and seen yellow, sea green, brown, orange, and grey organisms covering the sandstone outcrops, or noticed a bright yellow wash on a concrete wall in town, you've been looking at lichens. But what are they? And why are they important?

**What lichens are.** Unlike birds, great apes, or flowering plants, lichens aren't a natural group. Rather, they represent a highly specialized, symbiotic relationship between a fungus and one or more photosynthetic organisms. (Biology lesson! Photosynthesis is the process by which some organisms can, in the presence of sunlight, use carbon dioxide and water to make carbohydrates; the major byproduct of photosynthesis is oxygen.) The fungal partner receives sugars and sometimes some nitrogen. In exchange, the photosynthetic partner— which is usually a green alga, but sometimes a photosynthetic bacterium (the so-called “blue-green algae”)— receives assistance obtaining water and carbon dioxide, and protection from the sun and elements.

Though a lichen may be described as a complex symbiotic relationship between two organisms, most of what you see is the fungus. (Indeed, many taxonomists refer to them as “lichenized fungi.”) But they are mostly NOT mushrooms. Of the 13,500 lichen species known around the world, the great majority belong to the cup fungi, the same fungus group that gives us morels.

When you're looking for lichens, the fruiting body, where the lichen produces its spores, usually looks like a little cup— sometimes drabs, sometimes brightly colored— but not like a mushroom.

**A little on lichen identification.** For a number of reasons— the most important one being that we usually cannot identify the photosynthesizers to species— taxonomists name lichen species by their fungal partner. Probably the most useful way to classify lichens, however, is by their growth form. Most people are familiar with the fruticose (“shrub-like”) lichens, which account for the tiny trees in so many model train layouts and dioramas. Fruticose lichens are notably 3-dimensional. Foliose lichens have distinct upper and lower surfaces (like leaves); sometimes the lower surface also has root-like structures (rhizines) that the lichen uses to hold on to its substrate. Crustose lichens lack a distinct lower surface and adhere tightly to their substrate. Sometimes, the greater part of a crustose lichen is actually found within its substrate. In that case, all you may see of the lichen are its cup-like fruiting structures.

While many lichens are really, really small, most of the fruticose and foliose species in Kansas are pretty easy to spot on trees. Some of our common foliose species give the trunks of older trees amazing hues of yellow and orange, sea



*Psora Pseudorussellii*

green or blue-grey. These lichens can be identified with a good magnifying lens and a few easily obtained chemicals (dilute solutions of bleach and lye, for instance, which aid in detecting the presence of chemicals important for identification). For most of the crustose species, one usually needs a microscope to look at spores and other features of the fruiting bodies, which are only micrometers in size. Lichens have received less study than, for instance, plants.

(Continued on Page 6)



## Lichens in Kansas (Cont. from p. 5)

As a consequence, we know comparatively little about North American lichen distributions and taxonomists are still finding many new species. We've documented about 430 species occurring in Kansas, at least ten of which are described as new to science within the past 5 years.

Lichens are remarkably faithful to a particular substrate. Different species colonize bark, weathered wood, soil, or rocks. Some bark-loving lichens may be found only on trees with neutral bark, others prefer slightly acidic bark. Similarly, in Kansas some rock-loving species are found only on sandstone, others only on limestone. Lichens are affected by other environmental conditions, as well. We're discovering that lichen communities show distribution patterns similar to those demonstrated by plant communities, and, as you might expect, lichens in the western part of the state are different from those in the east. Our most diverse lichen flora is probably found in the Chautauqua Hills, where you find both abundant trees and sandstone.

You never need to travel very far to see a lichen, because they are pretty much everywhere. Several of our species are fond of bricks and concrete, and may cover sidewalks and old walls. One species of fire-dot lichen (so named because its tiny fruiting bodies are bright orange) gives sidewalks a greenish cast after rain. Another species of fire-dot lichen forms a bright yellow wash on vertical walls. The common name for Osage orange comes from its fruit, but a third species of fire-dot lichen gives fence posts of this wood their bright orange color. Maybe the best place to see a diversity of lichen species in Kansas is on our state tree. We've found thirty-four different species on cottonwood bark.

**Importance and use of lichens.** Lichens are ecologically important and useful to all sorts of organisms. Because they are extremely efficient users of water, able even to extract it directly from the air, lichens can live in environments and on substrates that would kill many other plant-like organisms. As lichens thrive, they may lower soil temperature and limit water loss from the soil, break down rocks, accumulate wind-blown detritus, and act as nurseries to seedling plants colonizing new habitats. Some lichens even snatch nitrogen out of the air and make it available to plants in the soil. Lichens serve as important winter food for caribou and reindeer, camouflage for Eastern peewees and rubythroated hummingbirds, and as an important source for anti-biotics. Because they are highly sensitive to air pollution, lichen abundance and species diversity have been used to estimate air quality around cities and other sources of air pollution.

## Burning Prairie Land (Cont. from p. 1)

Ours no longer can do that, but we always inform them of the time and date of the proposed event in compliance with state and county regulations. We also try to talk to everyone about the fire danger in the summer and early fall if one doesn't burn. Our nearby roads are popular due to the location of a nearby lake park. One stray cigarette and a stiff Flint Hills breeze is all it takes to produce an unplanned inferno.

There are good print and web sources to help with the education process. One of the best is KSU Extension bulletin, *Prescribed Burning: Planning and Conducting*. Download it from KNPS website [www.knps.org/resources.htm](http://www.knps.org/resources.htm). A web search under "Prairie Burning" lists even more material. Cottonwood Falls has initiated a week long festival in April, celebrating prairie burning. See [prairiefirefestival.com](http://prairiefirefestival.com).

Setting the date is **Number Four**. We remind the burners to come with rakes, shovels, flappers, whatever their favorite weapon is for controlling flames on the fire boundaries. Volunteers are best served by wearing thick-soled boots in case they run into hot spots. Hats help, too, for falling grass ash. Homes need to have plenty of hose line and nozzles at the ready. Bill and I always back-burn around our house before the big burn and encourage others to do the same. Experienced prairie burners often help those new to the procedure.

**Number Five** is to plan the burn strategy and agenda using expertise from the experienced burners, the latest weather forecast, county burn advice and availability of help. A central location is established with someone manning a cell phone. Walkie-Talkies are another useful tool. Key people are identified to move from house to house as the burn progresses, each with a good stock of wooden matches. Sometimes operations cease due to a change in weather. The best burn time is usually early evening when the winds have died down to moderate or less. Keeping track of the wind direction is paramount to safe burning. The object is to burn into the wind to ensure a slow, manageable fire. Sometimes it takes several sunsets to back-burn around one's home. Rain in the not too distant past is another insurance against fires that get away. However, too much dampness may cause a smoke problem, as will very tall grass or woody vegetation.

**Lastly**, plans are laid for the usual beer and hotdogs, once the flames are out. Stories abound, and there are lots of laughs. Those who at first were petrified of such an operation, discover they had a great time. Spring burns are hard work, but they draw the neighborhood together. Meanwhile, the Kansas prairie flourishes with good management.

## Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events - 2008

Information provided by Kansas Native Plant Society, Email: (email@KSNPS.org) Website: www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org Visit our website for more events. Please share this information and contact us about additional events to note. Thank you!

**Sturdy shoes, long pants, insect repellent, sunscreen, a hat and water are recommended for outdoor events.**

Volunteers are needed for prairie maintenance and preservation projects. The Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs meet on the third Saturday of every month except December. (www.grasslandheritage.org). Wear appropriate clothing. No special skills or tools needed. For details, please contact Frank Norman, Kansas Native Plant Society Board Member (fjnorman@sunflower.com) (785) 887-6775 (home) or (785) 691-9748 (cell).

**April 19:** Papermaking Workshop at Karlyle Woods in Topeka, KS. Jeff Hansen, Kansas Native Plant Society Past President, will teach us how to make paper using native plant fibers. In this class we will learn the different types of plant fiber, the process of extracting the fiber from the plant, and the process of forming sheets of paper from the resulting fiber. We will work in teams of two with each team processing a different plant fiber into paper. The resulting paper will be shared equally among class members. Class runs from noon to 4pm. Karlyle Woods is located at 3440 NW Button Rd in Topeka. The cost of the workshop is \$25 and is limited to 12 people (Ages 12 and up). All materials and equipment are provided. Food will also be provided. Please sign up by contacting Jeff Hansen (email@KSNPS.org) (785) 806-6917.

**April 19th & 26th:** Missouri Prairie Foundation Plant Sales 7am - noon. Location: City Market, 5th & Walnut, Kansas City, MO. (<http://www.moprairie.org>) (888) 843-6739

**April 27:** Gardening for Wildlife Class at Prairie Park Nature Center in Lawrence, KS, 2-3pm. Create a mini-wildlife sanctuary in your own yard using plants designed to provide food and cover for wildlife. Learn about including the right food plants, nesting structures and hiding places. Class is open to ages: 18 and older, fee: \$3. Registration is limited to 40 attendees. (785) 832-7980

**May 3:** Wildflower Hike at Prairie State Park near Lamar, MO. Experience the beauty of springtime on the tallgrass prairie. Join park staff for a leisurely walk among new grasses and colorful wildflowers. Identification, uses, gardening tips and more will be shared. (417) 843-6711

**May 4:** Gardening for Kids: Attracting Butterflies and Little Pollinators Class at Prairie Park Nature Center in Lawrence, KS, 2-3pm. Kids can enjoy getting their hands in the dirt and creating a wildlife garden. Class includes instruction on preparing the soil, garden plans and an assortment of seeds and live plants to start a butterfly garden. Class is open to ages: 7 to 14, fee: \$10. Registration is limited to 25 attendees. (785) 832-7980

**May 8-12:** Flora Kansas: Great Plains Plant Bazaar at Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, KS. This plant sale features hard-to-find native perennials plus classes and tours. Kansas Native Plant Society co-sponsors Dyck Arboretum events. 10% members discount at the sale on all days. Admission charge is by donation. (arboretum@Hesston.edu) (620) 327-8127

**May 10:** Barber County Wildflower Tour. Meet at the Medicine Lodge High School, 8:30am. Enjoy continental breakfast and slides of flowers we expect to see. Buses will provide transportation. Morning participants will return to the school at noon. Full-day participants will enjoy a delicious lunch and entertainment at a tree-shaded country park. Ride through the beautiful gyp hills to a second site. Refreshments will be served before we return to the school around 3:30pm. Barber Co. Conservation District and Kansas Native Plant Society are co-sponsors. Pre-paid reservations should be sent before May 5th, \$8 half-day, \$15 full-day. Barber Co Conservation, 800 W. 3rd Ave. Medicine Lodge, KS 67104-8002, phone (620) 886-3721, ext. 3.

**May 10:** Monarch Watch Spring Open House & Plant Fundraiser in Lawrence, KS. Buy native milkweeds and other plants to attract butterflies to your landscape. We are located in Foley Hall (2021 Constant Ave) near the greenhouse on West Campus at KU. (monarch@ku.edu) (785) 864-4441

**May 11 & 18:** Wildflower Plant & Seed Sales at Prairie Park Nature Center in Lawrence, KS. Sponsored by the Prairie Park Partners, 1-4pm. (785) 832-7980

**May 14:** Evening Foray on Tallgrass Prairie in Leavenworth County, KS. Visit a privately owned high quality hay meadow. Kansas Native Plant Society Board Members Shirley Braunlich and Jeff Hansen, KNPS Past President, will co-lead the walk. We will meet in McLouth at Casey's General Store (310 E. Lake St.) on 16 Hwy at 6pm and caravan to the prairie. (email@KSNPS.org) (785) 864-3453

**May 17:** Dr. Woody Holland's Wildflower Tour of Neosho County, KS. Kansas Native Plant Society Board Member Carl Paulie will lead the tour. We will be looking for Shootingstar, Indian Paintbrush, Wild

Hyacinth, Pale-spike Lobelia and many others. Meet in front of the courthouse on Main St. in Erie, KS at 1pm. The tour will begin at 1:30pm sharp. (email@KSNPS.org) (620) 449-2028

**May 17:** Native Plant Sale at Downtown Farmer's Market, Des Moines Iowa. (ingerlamb3@mchsi.com) (515) 963-7681

**May 31:** Coffey County Wildflower Tour, 9:30-11:30am. Join the Coffey County Conservation District and Kansas Native Plant Society for a walking wildflower tour near Coffey County Lake. Enjoy refreshments before the tour and a cookout after the tour. We will meet at the Black Bear Bosin Shelter house, south of the Eisenhower Educational Building. Directions: One mile east of Hwy 75 on 17th Road, then south to the shelter. On Hwy 75, 17th Road is 10 miles south of I-35 or 5 miles north of Burlington. There is no charge but you must RSVP by May 23rd. Also contact us for information on camping, hotels, dining and shopping in the area. Please call Kristi Vogts or Mary Lou Ponder during business hours (620) 364-2182 ext. 3 or Krista Dahlinger on evenings or weekends (316) 258-6341.

**June 1:** Join the Third Biennial Coblentz Prairie Foray, 1pm. This glaciated tallgrass prairie offers diverse native plants as well as uncommon birds such as Henslow's Sparrow, notable insects such as Golden Byssus skippers, and interesting rocks like Sioux Quartzite. Kansas Native Plant Society and Grassland Heritage Foundation co-sponsor this event. Co-leaders: Jeff Hansen, KNPS Past President and GHF Board Member and Shirley Braunlich, KNPS Board Member. Coblentz Prairie is 40-minutes west of Lawrence, KS in west-central Douglas County at the intersection of E 1 Road and North 1150th Road; it is part of the Clinton Wildlife area. Meet a half-mile east of the intersection on the south side of North 1150 Rd. (email@KSNPS.org) (785) 864-3453

**June 7:** Wilson County Wildflower Tour in southeast Kansas. Gather at Fredonia High School, 916 Robinson St, 8:30am. Enjoy home baked pastries and booths of education and interest. Buses will provide transportation. Join small group tours with professional leaders or opt for self guided experiences. Kansas Native Plant Society members will be playing active roles in this event. Lunch is included with the registration price of \$8, payable by June 2 to Wilson Co Conservation, 930 N 2nd Street, Fredonia, KS 66736. Contact Gina Thompson (620) 378-2866 with questions.

**June 7:** Wildflower Tour at Lake Wilson in Russell County, KS. This tour will combine rangeland and wildflowers, 8:30am to approximately noon. Kansas Native Plant Society members will be playing active roles in this event. A lunch will be provided. Reservations are recommended. Contact Andy Phelps at the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Russell (andy.phelps@ks.usda.gov) (785) 483-2826.

**June 7-8:** Maxwell Wildlife Refuge Prairie Days 9am-4pm. Celebrate the prairie, buffalo tours, stagecoach rides, mountain man camps, traders, demonstrations, wildflower and bird walks, cowboys, crafts, and music. Admission is \$2; prairie tours every hour are \$5 per person. The Refuge is located 6 miles north of Canton, KS. (maxwell@kitusa.com) (620)-628-4455

**June 8:** Friends of Konza Prairie Annual Wildflower Walk, 7pm. The walk will be co-led by Valerie Wright, Kansas Native Plant Society Past President, and Konza Docents. There is a charge of \$5 for those who are not Friends of Konza Prairie members. Telephone reservations are due June 3, (785) 587-0441.

**June 14:** Cowley County Wildflower Tour in Winfield, KS. Join the Cowley County NRCS and Kansas Native Plant Society for a wildflower tour of Winfield Lake. Meet at the Winfield High School at 8am for refreshments and a presentation, and then travel by bus to Winfield Lake at 9am to view the wildflowers until noon. Last year we saw entirely different wildflower populations on the north and south sides of the lake. There is no charge but you must RSVP by June 6th. Also contact us for information on camping, hotels, dining and shopping in the area. Please call (620) 221-1850 ext. 3 during business hours or Krista Dahlinger on evenings or weekends (316) 258-6341.

**June 14:** Dr. Woody Holland's Wildflower Tour of Neosho County, KS. Kansas Native Plant Society Board Member Carl Paulie will lead the tour. We will be looking for Showy Beardtongue (*Penstemon cobaea*), Tube Beardtongue (*Penstemon tubaeflorus*), Pale Purple-coneflower, Prairie Phlox and many others. Meet Carl in front of the courthouse on Main St. in Erie, KS at 1pm. The tour will begin at 1:30pm sharp. (email@KSNPS.org) (620) 449-2028

**June 25:** Celebrate the Sixth Annual Grant-Bradbury Prairie Jaunt! Join Kansas Native Plant Society and Grassland Heritage Foundation on Topeka's premiere prairie park. This 80-acre tallgrass prairie includes over 296 plant species. Jeff Hansen, KNPS Past President and GHF Board Member will lead the tour at 7pm. Directions: Take Topeka Blvd south to the University Blvd intersection (stoplight), take a right. Take University west about half a mile - when the road curves south, you are at the driveway to the park gate. There is a small brick building at the driveway. (email@KSNPS.org) (785) 806-6917.

**Information provided by Kansas Native Plant Society. See more events on our website: [www.ksnps.org](http://www.ksnps.org)**



## WESTWARD HO! On To Hays For Annual Meeting

KNPS continues its practice of selecting sites for the Annual Wildflower Weekend (AWW) that give members the opportunity to explore the astounding variety of Kansas native plants and their varied habitats. We all enjoyed our stays in the eastern third of the state at Sedan, Holton, and Hutchinson and our visit to Coldwater in south central Kansas. Now it's time to head out for Hays in north western Kansas and see what plants are found there. Outings are scheduled at three locations: a private ranch, Ft. Hays University Field Station, and Wilson Reservoir.

The dates are: October 3-5. There are a number of other activities in Hays that weekend; so it might be wise to make your plans in the very near future. The KNPS website [www.ksnps.org](http://www.ksnps.org) has information about housing and accommodations.

Our theme this year is "Ethnobotany-cultural uses of native plants." The speaker for our Friday evening dinner (at the Sternberg Museum of Natural History) will be Kelly Kindscher. Many of you are familiar with Kelly's popular books about medicinal and edible prairie plants that richly



Sternberg Museum

illustrate the ethnobotanical intersection between human and wild plants.

Begin thinking about uses you make of native plants that would be good items for the silent auction. Wild plum jelly? Creative uses of hand made paper? Products treated with natural dyes? Decorative objects using dried or pressed plants? You have the idea. Take it from there. Go to the website for more details at this point and then look in the July issue of the newsletter for final plans. See you in Hays.



## Members Show and Tell

by KNPS Contributors

*Our members have a "universe" of experience and knowledge about the native plants of Kansas. The Newsletter Committee is taking advantage of this unique resource by initiating this new feature. "Members Show and Tell" is made up of short articles written by members based on their experience and knowledge.*

*Some topics members might consider writing about are: specific plants or plant group, rare or unique sighting of plants, favorite locations throughout the state, with public access, where native plant "treasures" can be seen, advice about growing native plants, dealing with invasive plants, preservation and restoration techniques and issues.*

*If you would like to submit a manuscript, contact Nancy Goulden at [nag@ksu.edu](mailto:nag@ksu.edu) with your idea and questions about policies and preferences.*

## Go To The KNPS Website—RIGHT NOW!

If you haven't visited the KNPS website in a while, you definitely want to. It has a friendlier, cleaner well-organized layout. The entire site uses a "liquid" layout – meaning that it can be sized to any size window and the content flows to fill the window.

The home page now introduces people to KNPS and lists Society news and announcements. There is a new site map to help you find what you're looking for on our website. Another nice feature of the site is the ability to print a web page and have it only print the content of the page, and not the header and side panels.

The resources page probably is the page most people will use. It has been organized into five main sections: identification, landscaping with native plants, restoration and maintenance, rangeland management, and educational materials. There are many links to resources such as establishing buffalograss lawns, establishing native grasses, prairie and wetland restoration, native haymeadow management, conservation trees, rangeland brush management, rangeland weed management, and a list of championship trees.

All of these new resources are written by external organizations such as Kansas State University. Take a look at YOUR website at [www.ksnps.org](http://www.ksnps.org). I think you will find lots of new useful information.

KNPS also has a blog. A blog is simply a web log, and we use it to post announcements about anything plant related in the state. The address is [knps.blogspot.com](http://knps.blogspot.com). If you would like something posted to the blog, send an email to [email@ksnps.org](mailto:email@ksnps.org).

**Note: Per Jeff Hansen (our new webmaster), "If you google 'kansas wildflowers,' our website is now in position #4. Before the redesign of the site, we were in position #35. This is fantastic, considering our site isn't totally devoted to wildflowers, and there are many sites to compete with."**

(Continued on Page 10)



## Members Show and Tell - Cont.

### Plants on Tallgrass Trails

By Iralee Barnard

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is **THE** place to go if you want to see Kansas native plants in person and up close. With miles of hiking trails, the hard part is deciding which route to take first. Be sure to pick up a plant checklist before heading out. There are 500 species of plants at Tallgrass Preserve (contrary to the NPS website which claims 400).

On an early spring walk you might see the tiny

wedgeleaf draba (*Draba cuneifolia*) with white flowers on wiry stems or field pussytoes (*Antennaria neglecta*). Not only does the pussytoes inflorescence look like the soft pads of a cat foot, but part of the flower reminds people of insect antenna, thus the scientific name. Pincushion cactus (*Coryphantha*



PincushionCactus  
*Coryphantha missouriensis*

*missouriensis*) is found on rocky hilltops, and their glossy, dazzling red fruits will persist until early spring. The pincushion yellow flowers are produced in May.

As the season progresses, tufts of lotus milk-

vetch (*Astragalus lotiflorus*) come into flower with mounds of violet-blue blossoms. The waving heads of silktop prairie clover (*Dalea aurea*) have a silvery inflorescence with a ring of yellow flowers. Standing 2 to 5 feet tall with large, parallel-veined, smooth and ovate basal leaves, Indian plantain



Lotus Milk-vetch  
*Astragalus lotiflorus*

(*Arnoglossum plantagineum*) has white tubular

florets in broad, flat-topped clusters. The glowing pink-violet flowers of the fineleaf foxglove (*Tomanthera densiflora*) are a contrast to its bristly leaves. and red sprangletop (*Leptochloa filiformis*). All of these might be found along or near the trails.

Take the Lowland Trail and you may see anise root (*Osmorhiza longistylis*), Maryland figwort (*Scrophularia marilandica*), American bellflower (*Campanula americana*), or hairy sunflower (*Helianthus hirsutus*) at the woodlands edge.

If you would like the opportunity to explore for native plants on the park trails with a KNPS guide to help with plant identification, then mark your Calender to attend the Park Service Second Annual Wildflower Weekend, September 13-14. For more information, see p. 4.

### Pussytoes in Kansas

By Ken O'Dell

The very name "Pussytoes" brings thoughts of something soft and silky. The leaves of most pussytoes are of a silvery-grey-green color in spring and summer and change to more

silvery in the winter months. These leaves are just about semi-evergreen or at least silvery-green well into the cold winter months and then turn a dry, silver-grey color, and you can usually see them all winter. Growing only 2 or 3 inches tall and with



Field Pussytoes  
*Antennaria Neglecta*

flowers standing just above the foliage, these native Kansas plants are ideal for low growing covers, or hot, dry areas in well drained soil, forming silvery-grey mats with the close-held leaves.

A few years ago I built what I call my hot, dry (scree) bed for just such plants. I mixed up poor red sub soil and river sand half and half and moved it into this bed so it is about 10 to 12 inches above the rather flat ground in this area.

(Continued on Page 11)



## Members Show and Tell - Continued

**Pussytoes - Continued.** We live on a farm, and I often move native plants from the hay fields, or the edge of the hay fields, to an area closer to our house. We have an area that is grown up in brush and cedar trees, and we are going to leave that area as it is for wildlife. In this area are thousands of Field Pussytoes (*Antennaria neglecta*) also called Silver Pussy Toes because of their silvery-grey leaf coloring and their silvery-cream to silvery-pink flowers. I have moved a couple of these to the dry bed area. I also grow a few of these in pots, but they are not good pot plants. They like hot, sunny, well drained areas. I also have Penstemon, *Geranium maculatum*, and a couple of low growing Sedum in this dry bed.

Another species of pussytoes we should have in the Eastern counties of Kansas is *A. plantaginifolia*. The USDA does not show this species in Kansas, however, Steyermark in *Flora of Missouri* shows *A. plantaginifolia* more heavily populated in all of the Missouri counties touching Kansas than the species *A. neglecta*. Steyermark states the main difference is *A. neglecta* has one main rib and *A. plantaginifolia* has 3 main ribs all easily seen on the

underside of the leaves. Easy for him to say as they are not that easy to see except on well developed foliage. We have plenty of *A. plantaginifolia* in Eastern Kansas. *Flora of the Great Plains* suggests *Antennaria parlinii* (plainleaf pussytoes) is also known as *A. plantaginifolia*.

Parlin's pussytoes or Plainleaf pussytoes (*Antennaria parlinii*) grows in most of the



Field Pussytoes  
*Antennaria neglecta*

counties of Eastern Kansas. It is stoloniferous, as are the other pussytoes and spreads with stolons at ground surface, rooting at nodes and putting down small roots usually not over 2 or 3 inches into the ground. The grey-green leaves are slightly wooly underneath and smoother on the upper side.

This species grows to 3 inches or so tall with greenish-white flowers. Native range is from Canada south into Texas. As far as I know,

there are male and female flowers on all Pussytoes. I have never gathered the seed, but to gather seed I would pick several dried flower/seed heads from different parts of a field and that would assure me of having some flowers with seed. I grow Pussytoes from divisions. I cut them apart or gently pull them apart and put them in a pot with well drained soil and mist them each sunny day until well rooted. If we have a few cloudy days, I usually do not mist on those days as I have the Pussytoes in a



Male  
pussytoes

greenhouse and this keeps the wind from blowing on the divisions. When rooted, I plant them outside in my flower beds.

### Establishing a Native Plant Garden

By Glen Snell

I have been establishing a small NATIVE plant garden for the last 28 years. Here are some things I found out.

1. The best seedbed is the result of almost no seedbed preparation. Slightly scratch the soil surface and broadcast the seed. Fall or early winter is the best time to scatter the seed. Consider how native plants reproduce naturally by seed.

2. Be patient. Many perennials' seeds will lie dormant for three to five years before germinating.

3. Native plants will not grow thick like the plants in your "TAME" garden. They naturally spread out (like on the prairie).

4. Native plants are generally taller than your "tame" plants.

5. The best "weed control" is to wade in and hand pull what you don't want (preferably at least once a month).

6. Watering isn't absolutely necessary. But some watering during really dry times will maintain plants that might thin out or die completely, if you don't water.

(Continued on Page 12)





## Members Show and Tell - Continued

### Spring Woodland Plants at Overland Park Arboretum

by Ken O'Dell

Walking through the Overland Park Arboretum in the south part of Johnson County, Kansas, one would think they were in the Missouri Ozarks. This nearly 300 acre arboretum (600 acres if you want to count the acreage adjoining that the Kemper family gave the arboretum) has prairie, wetlands, creeks, and bluffs that are home to many native plants. Along the bluffs are huge boulders, which were broken away from the cliffs thousands of years ago. Near these boulders are wild geraniums (*Geranium maculatum*), Golden Yellow Wood Poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*), and many more species of woodland wildflowers.

At the bottom of the bluff area is Wolf Creek. Immediately east of Wolf Creek a dirt path scattered with mulch carries foot traffic between the bluff and the creek. The trees are tall and produce thick shade on the east side of the path where the bluff is. Filtered shade from the open skies on the west side of the creek affords Dwarf Larkspur (*Delphinium tricorne*) enough sun to thrive in this area, and you will see this Dwarf Larkspur scattered a few feet apart throughout this area.



Dwarf Larkspur  
*Delphinium Tricorne*



Dwarf Larkspur  
*Blue Delphinium Tricorne*  
(with red *Aquilegia canadensis*)

The leaves of Dwarf Larkspur can be described as laceleaf, similar to a green leaf Japanese laceleaf maple. The leaves are attractive enough to make you bend over and look closely at the foliage. A new leaf on Dwarf Larkspur is similar to a mature leaf on our Bird's-foot Violet (*Viola pedata*). The foliage looks like it grows more in a thin clump than up the stems of the taller growing Delphinium. When I see this Dwarf Larkspur, it is always growing in dappled shade.

The flowers on this spring ephemeral are mostly purplish-blue and on occasion a creamy white, and I have read about a few pinkish-purple flowers. The ones in Johnson County that I have seen are always purplish-blue. Flower stems growing to about 10 inches tall with several flowers opening first from

the bottom of the stem up. The first two weeks in May are the best time to see the flowers, and in this area where the Dwarf Delphinium are growing, you will also see a huge colony of Trout Lily (*Erythronium albidum*), stretching over an area of thousands of square feet. This spring botanical wonder will intoxicate your mind. Blooming side by side are several thousand *Claytonia virginica* or Spring Beauty with tiny dime size pink flowers on 4 inch tall stems and thin grass-like foliage. Trout Lily and Spring Beauty are usually just about finished blooming before the Dwarf Delphinium start blooming. Bloom time on the Dwarf Delphinium is about the same as Wild Blue Phlox, *Phlox divaricata*. Flowers on the Dwarf Delphinium are five petaled with a long spur in the back. This spur is similar to the spur on Columbine.

I propagate these Delphinium from seed gathered in late spring. The seed is in a three-part capsule that looks like a three-part court jester's cap that cannot make up its mind to open. Pick these seed when the capsule turns brown. They will quickly scatter when the capsule springs open, and the seed will be thrown a few inches away from the plant. The seed is usually dark brown or shiny black. I plant the seed immediately in an out door seed bed and it sometimes tries to come up the same year and some seed will come up the second year. The root is called a tuberous root, and it looks more like some pieces of creamy-white crumbly substance. I also pull these root particles apart and spread them out in bed areas to grow. They separate very easy.

*Ken O'Dell is a KNPS member in Miami County, Kansas and works in the greenhouse at the Overland Park Arboretum in Johnson County, KS.*



## Featured Plant

### Prairie Dog Tooth Violet, White Dog Tooth Violet (*Erythronium mesochoreum Knerr.*)

Text by Dr. Steve Timme, Drawing by Dr. Cindy Ford



Trout Lily  
*Erythronium spp.*

The Prairie or White Dog Tooth Violet is a member of the lily family and not the violet family. It is a common species of prairies and open woods blooming in mid- to late March into April and produces two lanceolate to somewhat linear leaves when in flower. The leaves are green and not mottled as in the other two species found in Kansas, (*Erythronium albidum*, white fawn lily, and *Erythronium rostratum*, yellow trout-lily).

The flowers are white, sometimes light purplish tinged, and with a yellowish spot at the base of the six perianth segments (the sepals that resemble petals and petals collectively). The segments are spreading to somewhat reflexed in full bloom. This species is found in the eastern quarter of the state. There is no known medicinal value for these plants.

### New Process for Membership Renewal

*At the 2007 fall membership meeting, the issue of a significant number of members failing to renew their memberships was raised. Those present were asked to generate recommendations to improve membership retention. Based upon those recommendations, the following new procedures and policies were adapted to address special problem areas.*

**Problem:** Some members have complained that when they join midyear, they get charged for the whole year.

**Solution:** For NEW members, the first year of annual membership is effective from the date of joining through December 31 of the following calendar year. So, no matter when they join during the year, their membership will run thru the following year.

**Problem:** Our renewal process is passive and depends on the member noting in the newsletter that their membership is expiring.

**Solution:** We have instituted multiple direct reminders by mail, email, newsletter, plus in-person renewal at the annual meeting.

**Problem:** The rules for membership are not stated on all of our materials and leads to confusion.

**Solution:** State rules for membership on the website, in the newsletter, and on our brochure.

*These changes were put into effect in January and have had an astounding effect. As of March 15, 2008, KNPS had 360 memberships that are paid through 2008 There are an additional 50 that still need to be renewed. A second letter has gone out reminding them to renew. Compare this to October 1, 2007, when we had 330 memberships that were paid through 2007, and 89 who still hadn't paid dues for 2007. It should be interesting to see what our membership numbers are on October 1, 2008. The trends look very good.*

*Another advantage that came from the renewal letter is that we now have email addresses for 250 memberships. In October, 2007 we only had 180 email addresses. It's much easier to notify members of new events that might not be in the newsletter. Furthermore, we have captured membership's county of residence so we can notify members of events in their immediate area.*

*Thanks to everyone for their suggestions.*

## Membership News

### NEW MEMBERS 12/17/07 TO 2/24/08

Jack Franks - Lawrence  
Kathy Johnson - Winfield  
Mike & Gwyn Johnson - Abilene  
Carole Jontra - Rossville  
Sarah Langenwaller - Winfield  
Michael K. Ramsey - Garden City  
John Wright - Paola

### MEMBERS WELCOMED BACK AFTER A HIATUS

Jim, Claudia & Jamie Ausemus  
Andrew Kratz  
NPK Nursery

**Kansas Native Plant Society**

R. L. McGregor Herbarium  
University of Kansas  
2045 Constant Ave.  
Lawrence, KS 66047-3729



**Kansas  
Native  
Plant  
Society**

Address Service Requested

**LEARN MORE ABOUT KNPS**

Check us out online at [www.ksnps.org](http://www.ksnps.org)  
Contact us by email at [email@ksnps.org](mailto:email@ksnps.org)  
Contact us by phone at (785)864-3453



**Kansas  
Native  
Plant  
Society**

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL GUIDELINES**

Annual dues are for a 12-month period from January 1 through December 31. Dues paid after December 1 are applied to the next year. Note to new members: the first year of annual membership is effective from the date of joining through December 31 of the following calendar year.

Please complete this form or a photocopy. Send the completed form and a check payable to the Kansas Native Plant Society to:

**Kansas Native Plant Society**  
**R. L. McGregor Herbarium**  
**2045 Constant Avenue**  
**Lawrence KS 66047-3729**

A membership in the Kansas Native Plant Society makes a great gift for friends and family members. Recipients of gift memberships will receive notification of your gift membership within two weeks of receipt of your check. The Kansas Native Plant Society is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Gifts to KNPS are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

**Membership application/renewal form**

Member Information:

Name:	
Address	
City/State:	
Zipcode:	
Phone:	
Email:	
County (if Kansas):	

Membership Category:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	\$5.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organization	\$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contributing	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifetime	\$500.00