



Kansas Native Plant Society

Spring Newsletter



Volume 31 Number 2

April 2009

Yea! Back to Southeast Kansas for AWW by Cindy Ford

Come on over for the native plant event of the fall, the Kansas Native Plant Society's Annual Wildflower Weekend (AWW). We are looking forward to hosting the society's annual meeting here in southeast Kansas, September 18-20, 2009. This end of the state offers the most diverse area of woodlands, prairies, and marshes in the state with four physiographic provinces represented within a 100-mile radius of Pittsburg.

Plans for the meeting include a field trip at the Ford Farm Friday afternoon following the board meeting at the Pittsburg State University Natural History Reserve. A natural dyeing and spinning workshop will be offered by Cindy Ford at the Ford Farm in the late afternoon before dinner. Dinner will be on your own in Pittsburg where you can explore at your leisure.



Southeast Kansas Prairie and Native Wildflowers

group will travel to an Ozark Plateau site where woodlands dominate, one group will be impressed by the diversity of a restored farm where marshes, prairies, and woodlands have returned, and another group will take a shorter field trip to a native prairie to discover various fall species. If you are staying for the rest of the weekend, you can enjoy a dinner in Pittsburg or nearby towns.

We will offer another field trip on Sunday for those staying over in southeast Kansas. We plan to visit a chert glade south of Joplin, MO, surrounding a new nature center called Wildcat Glades Nature Center. Chert glades are fairly rare and support some unusual wildflowers. Details will be coming on lodging choices, restaurant options, travel directions, and cost for the meeting. If you have questions concerning the logistics of the annual meeting, please contact Cindy Ford at cford@pittstate.edu.

Saturday will feature the annual KNPS meeting on the Pittsburg State University campus. A presentation during the meeting will focus on landscaping with native plants. After a catered lunch, members will choose among three field trips: one

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Have you renewed your membership in KNPS? Check the first line in your address for your membership expiration date. If the date is 12/31/2008, 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

“They’re back!” Yes, after several months of winter hibernation many of Kansas’ spring-blooming wildflowers are reappearing for our visual pleasure. So once again it is time to get ready for their glory by getting out your favorite wildflower field guides and brushing up on all their unique distinguishing characteristics.

Some of these “early risers” that we look forward to viewing include Dog-tooth Lily (*Erythronium albidum*), Johnny-Jump-Up, (*Viola rafinesqui*), Pussy-toes (*Antennaria neglecta*), Yellow and Violet Wood Sorrell (*Oxalis stricta* and *purpurea*), the Speedwells (*Veronica spp.*), and the Hop clovers (*Trifolium spp.*). Also blooming during the spring will be some of the woody plants such as Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), Western Buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*), and Chickasaw (or Sandhill) Plum (*Prunus angustifolia*). In the woodlands you might encounter such plants as Dutchman’s Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), May Apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), and/or Yellow Violets (*Viola pubescens*). Some of the prairie species you might look for are Ground Plum (*Astragalus crassicaarpus*), Fringed Puccoon (*Lithospermum incsum*), and/or Prairie Ragwort (*Packera plattensis*).

Of course, these are just some of the earlier Kansas native plants that you might come across during your spring wildflower journeys. There are many more spring native plants in Kansas. Which ones you will personally encounter will depend partially on the places that you choose to visit. So be kind to yourself when the weather permits and enthusiastically venture outside somewhere to enjoy these botanical beauties and learn as much as you can about them and their lives in the wild. Some of them might even become your best friends!

Also, please, remember that KNPS sponsors many wildflower tours and walks throughout the state of Kansas during the wildflower season. So please look at our schedule of KNPS sponsored tours and plan on joining other wildflower enthusiasts for an even more exciting wildflower experience. You really do not want to miss out on any of the fun and adventure experienced by KNPS members during our gatherings.

In closing, I sincerely hope that I will see you and your friends enjoying our floral friends on one of the many tours I plan on attending this year. It really is miraculous that after lying dormant for so many months that these botanical brave hearts can suddenly push through the soil and so brilliantly express their gorgeous grandeur above ground.



Landscaping with Spring Beauty text and photo by Jeff Hansen

I just love the early spring wildflowers– the ephemerals. They are the ones that flower before all the other plants leaf out. They produce



Spring Beauty
Claytonia virginica

their foliage, flower, go to seed, and then become dormant by the time other plants put on their growth spurt. Many are woodland species that do their growing early in order to get maximum sunlight before the trees put on their leaves, but there are prairie species as well. The **Spring Beauty** can be found in both habitats. It produces mounds of white flowers with purple stripes, giving it a pink hue. The leaves are grass-like and fleshy. It grows from a tuberous corm. The corm is actually edible, although I’ve never tried it. Spring Beauty is a member of the Purslane family. One notable feature of this plant family is the fleshy leaves. When growing where the vegetation is short, it tends to be only a few inches tall, but if it’s growing in the prairie, I’ve seen it six inches or more tall.

(Continued on page 4)

🌻 News Notes 🌻

2009 SYMPHONY IN THE FLINT HILLS. Kansas Native Plant Society has been invited again this year to play an important role in the education portion of the Symphony in the Flint Hills 2009. The event will be held this year on private ranch land in Chase County between Strong City and Florence. During the afternoon of June 13 (rain date June 14), KNPS guides will share information about the plants of the prairie with hundreds of Symphony visitors as they walk on the trail from the parking lot to the Symphony site. There will also be nature hikes (approximately 30-minutes in length) originating near the site and led by KNPS and Audubon guides. At the trailhead for the hikes, KNPS will have an educational display where we will share information about plants and the society with visitors. Of the over 5,000 guests who come for the concert by the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra, KNPS volunteers usually have contact with approximately 1,000.

Because of the popularity of KNPS events, the Symphony planners increased the number of KNPS volunteers this year to a total of 18. Each volunteer receives one free, highly coveted, ticket to the concert. KNPS volunteers who have experience from participating in Symphony events in prior years are given first priority to represent KNPS again this year. However, there are still a few open slots for new KNPS Symphony volunteers. If you are interested, contact Nancy Goulden at nag@ksu.edu.



June Kliesen identifies a forb for Symphony attendees
photo by Valerie Wright

NEW FIELD GUIDE FOR FLINT HILLS WILDFLOWERS. KNPS is being given an excellent opportunity to share our knowledge of native wildflowers with citizens and visitors to Kansas. Ed Miller from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks contacted KNPS representative Iralee Barnard about a partnership between KNPS and his agency to develop a limited field guide of the wildflowers of the Flint Hills. Cindy Ford, committee chair of the KNPS Natural Resources Committee, is coordinating KNPS participation related to writing plant descriptions and providing some of the photos.

INDEX OF KWS AND KNPS NEWSLETTERS. If you have ever spent a frustrating afternoon digging through old issues of the KNPS newsletter (formerly Kansas Wildflower Society Newsletter) looking for an article about a specific plant or event that you just know was printed three (or was it five ?) years ago, we have good news for you. KNPS member Guy Coffee, a retired professional librarian with a background in biology has volunteered to create an index of the content of our past newsletters. This project is still in the early stages, but we will let you know as it progresses.

KANSAS NATIVE PLANT APPRECIATION MONTH. KNPS is again this year requesting that the Governor proclaim June as Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month. Between the budget issues and probable change in the office of Governor, things are still somewhat unsettled in Topeka, but we anticipate that there will be a special month designated to celebrate and commemorate our beautiful native plants during prime blooming season.

DON'T FORGET "LITTLE BLUE." The KNPS campaign to persuade the Kansas Legislature to name Little Bluestem as Kansas State Grass continues. With the understandable distractions during the present legislative session, it has been difficult to get the attention and support from our representatives. However, a number of teachers from several schools continue to teach about the prairie and its grasses and give their students the opportunity to play a role in the legislative process by writing to their representatives about the proposal. The section on Little Bluestem on the KNPS website (www.ksnps.org) has been updated. Take a look at the new teaching and learning activities related to Little Bluestem. You will also find a new "State Grass Email List" where teachers and other interested parties can register and receive updates. Valerie Wright and Nancy Goulden will lead a session about Little Bluestem at the KATS (Kansas Association of Teachers of Science) meeting in April.

MEMBERS INVITED TO SPECIAL WILDFLOWER WALK. The membership at large is invited to join the KNPS Board Members on a wildflower walk on the morning of July 11, in conjunction with the Board's July meeting. The site is "Buffalo Hill," a private 160-acre native prairie bordering Maxwell Wildlife Refuge in McPherson County. For directions and information, contact Susan Reimer at 620-245-9055 (home phone) or susanr@mpks.net.

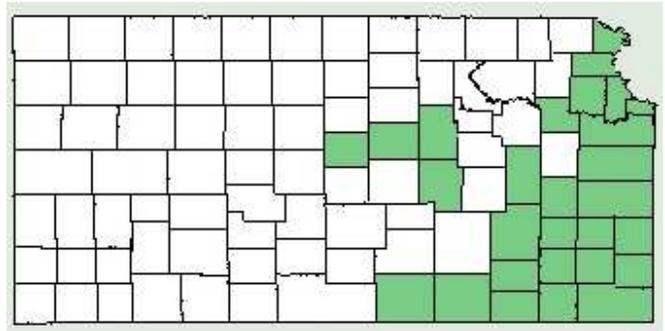


Landscaping with Spring Beauty

(Continued from page 2)

Spring Beauty's range in Kansas is roughly in the southeast third of the state. See range map. The abundance of it seems to increase greatly as you travel to southeast Kansas. Years ago when KNPS had a spring board meeting in Pittsburg, I remember seeing it in people's lawns. It grows like a weed in that part of the state. How lucky southeast Kansas residents are. I haven't had that problem in my yard in Topeka. Most of my plants I put in my rock garden because of their small size.

Its culture requires partial sun to full sun. Put it in full sun for maximum bloom. When it grows in the shade, it gets only a few flowers on each plant, but in full sun, it will be loaded. See the picture on page 2 of just one plant in full sun.



Spring Beauty Range Map
from USDA Plants Database

Remember that spring ephemerals become dormant in the heat of summer. Spring beauties will regrow in the fall and their leaves will remain green all winter. This is another trait of some ephemerals. They photosynthesize in the winter when there is no competition for sunlight.

Call for Events Reports: In the July issue of the KNPS Newsletter, we will feature reports and pictures of the early summer hikes and outings. Please compose a short write-up (about a half page) telling about the location, attendees, unique or unusual plants sighted, and other unusual features of the event. High resolution pictures focusing on plants, participants, and scenery are welcome. Send to Nancy Goulden, nag@ksu.edu.



People Who Make a Difference Robert McElroy, Shawnee and Osage Counties

Bob McElroy, a retired general surgeon from the Topeka area, created for himself the opportunities to preserve and start to restore land he owns in Osage County to its native condition. The roots of his active involvement in sound ecological management began in the early eighties when he bought a tract of land near the Shawnee/Osage County lines. At that time, a sixty-acre watershed lake that now fills the largest valley on the property was in the process of being constructed.



Dr. Robert McElroy - photo provided by Jeff Hansen

Over the years, as more adjacent farm land properties became available, Bob continued to add to his holdings until today the property he calls Teal Lake is 640 acres. Here is how Bob describes the land. "The topography is rolling hills with heavy timber in the ravines and creek bottom. It has an almost Ozark-like character, although some areas resemble the Flint Hills."

About fifteen years ago, McElroy actively initiated the transformation from agricultural production to more natural uses for the land by taking 50 acres of crop land out of production and placing it in CRP. Bob continues the story of that particular area of his holdings. "Recently, I took a portion of that land out of CRP, but plan to just hay it. Much of the pasture is leased, but I strictly limit stocking rates and length of the grazing season."

Perhaps the bigger challenge has been dealing with the intrusions of woody plants.

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People - Robert McElroy

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For areas where larger trees or bushes have taken over the grasslands, Bob works at one-by-one removal of trees. “I have a skid loader with a tree shear that can cut trunks up to 12 inches in size and stack the limbs. The trunks are treated with Tordon. This method is time-consuming and leads to huge house-sized piles of brush that will need to be burned. It can take an hour to deconstruct and stack a hedge tree. Nevertheless, I have cleared significant areas and will probably be working on the trees the rest of my life.”

In the pastures, the primary approach is use of fire. He likes to burn every three years, usually in March, but if there is a good stand of grass for fuel in areas of infestations of woody plants, he burns more frequently. Bob remarked, “I love fire; it is a very effective tool. It saddens me to see pastures around Topeka being lost to trees because the owners are not aware of advantages of burning, or apparently [they] enjoy red cedar.” Herbicide use at Teal Lake is very limited. McElroy sprays every fall for the invasive *Sericea lespedeza* and is also concerned about the Asian honeysuckle that he sees becoming dominant in the timbered sections.

So how does a surgeon and founding father of the Tallgrass Surgery Group become an advocate

for and practitioner in saving and restoring our native prairies? Robert McElroy grew up on a small farm, had the opportunity to live not only in Kansas, but also California, and to spend two years in a remote hospital in western Ethiopia. Much of the influence on his attitudes and practices probably came from his experiences in Audubon (he is the President of the State Audubon of Kansas). His concerns about preserving grassland habitats for birds and other issues Audubon has addressed, sharpened his perceptions about the interdependence of plant communities and birds.

Last fall McElroy asked Jeff Hansen to do an informal survey of the plant communities on the land. The history of areas on the property is quite varied: some areas have never been plowed; others were returned to grass 50, 75 or even 100 years ago, plus the CRP land change 15 years ago. Plant populations are influenced by the restoration-time intervals. Jeff located about 70 species in the fall and estimated that number represents a third of plant species on the land. Although Bob still appears to be at heart a “bird person” (he is thrilled with the eagles and water birds near the lake and the rare sightings of prairie chickens), he is rapidly learning about plants and is constantly observing the gradual successions of plants on his land as he works to make a difference at Teal Lake.

Comments from Jeff Hansen: *Bob is a recent member of KNPS and invited me to see his property last fall. I took my notebook along and started jotting down the plants I saw in his hay meadows. Some of the more interesting plants were: spring ladies tresses orchid, thickspike gayfeather, rough white lettuce, and downy gentian. Bob’s property also has some nice oak-hickory woodlands that are fenced to keep out grazers. This spring I noticed Virginia waterleaf coming up. In a degraded prairie, there was some mullein foxglove (*Dasistoma macrophylla*). Bob has invited KNPS to have some wildflower walks on his property. Look for email announcements for a spring and a summer walk.*



People Who Make a Difference

Meredith Fry, Topeka Kansas



Meredith Fry and her prairie patch - photo provided by Meredith Fry

Meredith Fry, a Washburn University undergraduate Biology Major, with a minor in Kansas Studies, found a unique way to use her passion for native plants to fulfill a class assignment. However, her project of designing and planting a prairie garden on the campus for her EcoVention class, became much more than just getting her homework done. Some of you may remember that Meredith’s work was the basis for her being named the 2009 recipient of the Rachel Synder Memorial Landscape Award at the annual KNPS meeting in Hays last fall.

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When Meredith talks about her experiences creating “Ichabod’s Prairie Patch” (named for the Washburn mascot, the lanky man running with his books and tipping his hat), her love of the native prairie ecosystem and doing whatever she can to preserve it comes across as an essential part of who she is. She explains why she chose this project. “I thought the garden would really enhance the area in front of the art building. I also wanted a project that I could kind of relate to and that would last.”

The garden, enclosed by limestone rocks, is an extension of an earlier garden. Meredith’s first decision was to use only native plants from the northeastern part of Kansas because of their hardiness, low water requirements, and beauty. An additional bonus for using native plants is that once the prairie garden is well established, it will need little weeding or maintenance. After selecting her plants, she made a map of where the more than 280 individual plants would be placed in the garden. It was clear this was a BIG project. Fortunately, Meredith was able to apply for and receive financial assistance from the Washburn Center for Kansas Studies to help with supplies and plantings.



Prairie Patch in Bloom - photo provided by Meredith Fry

During the process, she met and talked with the campus Facilities and Maintenance Crew. Meredith reported, “I think I kind of surprised the campus grounds keepers when I told them what I wanted to plant.” But she stuck with her plans to use natives. After the planning, the real work started– trying to get rid of what she calls “the everlasting fescue.” Fortunately, fellow students and family helped with preparing the bed and planting. Here are some of the plants Meredith used: Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Purple Poppy Mallow (*Callirhoe involucrata*), Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccafolium*), Purple Gayfeather (*Liatrix pycnostachya*), Mexican Hat (*Ratibida columnifera*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium*

scoparium), Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepsis*), Blue Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*), and Rose Verbena (*Verbena canadensis*).

Meredith will continue to tend the garden by weeding, mulching, and cutting the dead growth until she graduates in 2011. By that time, she hopes the plant community will be pretty much self-sustaining. She reports that when she went to the garden recently, she saw signs of new green growth.

The connection between Meredith and native plants does not start and stop with Ichabod’s Prairie Patch. She attended the KNPS Annual Meeting at Holton a few years ago and had the pleasure of visiting the Snyder Prairie. She also learned about the Landscaping Award at the meeting.

She states that she is “trying to convert my mom’s garden beds to native plants, and I’m also using native plants on our land to restore disturbed areas.” Not surprisingly, after graduation, she plans to “continue to graduate school, doing something related to plants and ecology.” One possible area of future research interest is the impact of grazing on prairie biodiversity.

Clearly, Meredith’s prairie patch is making a difference to the Washburn students, faculty, visitors, and grounds keepers who see this example of ecologically sound beautification. She reports that the periodic comments she receives demonstrate that the Washburn community has accepted Ichabod’s patch “very well.” She is also making a difference beyond the campus grounds. “I was trying to come up with something to do with all the seeds, (those left over from planting) and then I had the idea to make seed packets. I made them and placed them in the art office with a sign that said ‘Spread the Prairie.’ They were gone in no time, so hopefully there will be more ‘prairie patches’ popping up all over Topeka.”

Kansas Area Native Plant Wildflower Events

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

2009 Events - Mark your calendar now and plan to attend these fabulous happenings!

 **April 18:** Kansas Native Plant Society Spring Board Meeting and Outing at the Overland Park Arboretum. Our meeting will be in the classroom, 10am to 1pm. We plan to eat while we are wrapping up our business; bring your own lunch. We will tour the diverse grounds with KNPS Board Member Ken O'Dell and Lynda Ochs of the Arboretum, 1:30-4:30pm. We will hear about the prairie restoration project and other ongoing work. Address: 8909 W. 179th St., Overland Park, KS. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453.

April 18: 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 18th & 25th: Missouri Prairie Foundation Spring Plant Sales 7am - noon. Location: City Market, 5th & Walnut, Kansas City, MO. [http://www.moprairie.org] (888) 843-6739.

April 26: 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 2: Kansas City Wildlands Community Ecological Restoration Workday - Plant the prairie!!! We will be planting native flowers grown by KCWL Partner, Powell Gardens from locally collected seed, 9am-noon. As time allows, we will also remove invasive garlic mustard and woody plants. Come help our fragile prairies and glades thrive again! Sites include: Ernie Miller Park prairie in Olathe, KS, Rocky Point Glades in Swope Park, KC, MO, and Jerry Smith Park prairie in south KC, MO. This workday is for older youth (12 and up) and adults. [http://www.kcwildlands.org/] For more information, or to register, contact Linda Lehrbaum, KCWL Program Coordinator [linda@bridgingthegap.org] (816) 561-1061 ext. 116.

May 3: 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 3-4: Annual Powell Gardens Spring Plant Sale. Shop a unique selection of annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs – including great native plants and specialties grown only in the beautiful setting of Powell Gardens. Friday Member Preview, 5-7 pm. Becky Homan, retired garden editor of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, will sign her new book, "The Missouri Gardener's Companion, An Insider's Guide to Gardening in the Show-Me State." Directions: 30 miles east of Kansas City on Highway 50, Kingsville, Mo. Admission fee for non-members. [www.powellgardens.org] (816) 697-2600.

 **May 7-11:** 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. KNPS co-sponsors Dyck Arboretum events. Members only sale dates May 8-9; 10% members discount on all days. Admission charge is by donation. [arboretum@Hesston.edu] (620) 327-8127.

May 9: 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 9: Barber County Wildflower Tour. Meet at 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 KNPS 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.

Kansas Area Native Plant Wildflower Events - Continued

May 10 & 17: Wildflower Plant & Seed Sales at Prairie Park Nature Center, Lawrence, KS from 1-4pm. (785) 832-7980.

 **May 23:** Comanche County Nature Tour, Coldwater, KS. View native plants, wildflowers, and birds during the morning tour in the Coldwater area. Visit a couple of area ranches for even more beautiful Red (Gyp) Hills scenery in the afternoon. We will meet at the High School (601 N. Leavenworth) at 8:30am for coffee and rolls. Reservations are due May 20. Registration for the catered lunch and continental breakfast is \$10. Coldwater Chamber of Commerce and KNPS are co-sponsors. Coldwater is in south central KS on Hwy 160, 60 miles southeast of Dodge City and 135 miles southwest of Wichita. For more information please contact June Kliesen [jkliesen@havilandtelco.com] (620) 738-4340.

June 4: Prairie Seed Harvesting at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Strong City, Kansas. Help staff harvest prairie seeds from 9am - noon. The seeds will be used to restore bottomland prairie areas at the preserve. [tapr_interpretation@nps.gov] (620) 273-8494.

 **June 6:** Wilson County Wildflower Tour in southeast Kansas. Gather at Fredonia High School, 916 Robinson St, 8:30am. **Date is subject to change.** 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. KNPS 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 6: Spring Wildflower Tour at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge, McPherson County, KS. Board the tram for a tour of the prairie with wildflowers and buffalo, 10am. There is also a self guided walking tour with flowers flagged. The Refuge is located 6 miles north of Canton, KS. <http://www.cyberkraft.com/maxwell/> (620)-628-4455.

 **June 14:** Wildflower Class & Tour at Prairie Park Nature Center in Lawrence, KS. Learn about the wildflowers found in this tallgrass prairie, 1:30-3:30pm. Hear about prairie management and the treatment of invasive plants like honeysuckle. Try your hand at wildflower identification and find out about available wildflower guides. KNPS is working with Marty Birrell, Director of the Nature Center, for this event. Address: 2730 SW Harper St. in Lawrence. (785) 832-7980.

 **June 14:** Friends of Konza Prairie Annual Wildflower Walk, 7pm. The walk will be co-led by Valerie Wright, KNPS Board Member, 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 20: Visit the Konza Prairie with Topeka Audubon Society. Learn about native plants and grasses. Pack a snack and lunch/beverage. To car pool from Topeka, meet at 6:30am at the Zoo parking lot. Contact Dan Gish for additional information [gishbear@cox.net] (785) 232-3731.

 **June 21:** Evening Foray on Tallgrass Prairie in Leavenworth County, KS. Visit a privately owned high quality hay meadow. Bring dad and celebrate Father's Day. See showy plants like bread-root scurf-pea, New Jersey tea, pale-spike lobelia and prairie phlox. Other interesting plants growing on this prairie include: blunt-leaf milkweed, porcupine grass and prairie dropseed grass. KNPS Board Members Shirley Braunlich and Jeff Hansen, KNPS Past President, will co-lead the walk. We'll cross a small creek; be prepared for uneven ground. 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.

 **June 25:** Celebrate the Seventh Annual Grant-Bradbury Prairie Jaunt! Join KNPS 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.

July 2: Prairie Seed Harvesting at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Strong City, Kansas. Help staff harvest prairie seeds from 9am - noon. The seeds will be used to restore bottomland prairie areas at the preserve. [tapr_interpretation@nps.gov] (620) 273-8494.

Information provided by Kansas Native Plant Society. See more events on our website: www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org .



Reflections on the Symphony Experience

text by Phyllis Scherich, photo by Valerie Wright

I'm tired from today's activities– but a wonderful kind of tired it is! Today I had the opportunity to be a volunteer with KNPS at the 2008 Symphony in the Flint Hills near Council Grove leading wildflower walks. Now, as I settle in my chair, alongside 6000+ others, the first melodious notes emerge from the “hills,” and a sense of peace and relaxation exudes.

It is quiet except for the music blending naturally with the sounds of the prairie. The KC Symphony Orchestra enveloped in the acoustic enclosure blends into the natural setting as if it is endemic. The cattle and cowboys on horses on the grass-covered hills in the background capture my attention. I marvel at the artistic natural beauty as I listen. The setting sun glides below the horizon with the last notes of the concert.

No, this was not my first experience with this event. It was my third. Why do I plan to return as a volunteer for the fourth located near Florence, Kansas, in June? This event is much more than a Symphony. It is a learning experience. Many topics from local geology to Indian and ranching history in the area are presented during the afternoon. The KNPS "wildflower walk" at the Symphony affords me the opportunity to discover and share with concert-goers the wonders of the wildflowers growing in Kansas.



Symphony volunteers at the KNPS booth: (standing) Nancy Goulden, Dee Scherich, Phyllis Scherich

Other KNPS volunteers shared their reactions:

"I really enjoy volunteering at the Symphony. It is such a festive event and it makes me feel like I am an important part of it. Where else can KNPS come in contact with 5000 people and share our knowledge and love of our native plants? Since I have worked at all of the symphonies, I am getting to the point where some of the folks remember me (and more importantly, some of the plants). It is a real treat to see so many people sharing the beauty of the prairie." **June Kliesen**

"Being a non-musical person, I normally would not have volunteered to help at a symphony. But because of my love of prairie and especially the Flint Hills, volunteering with KNPS at Symphony in the Flint Hills seemed like a way I could help others enjoy the prairie. Last year was the first year that I participated and I enjoyed it so much that it has become a priority for this year." **Susan Reimer**

"As a volunteer at the Symphony in the Flint Hills, I enjoyed getting to know other KNPS members better and learning from them. The 360 degree view of the prairie was spectacular and one of my main reasons for going. Nothing beats a native prairie for loveliness in the middle of June. All prairies are a bit different, but all offer beauty and inspiration - and sometimes profound silence." **Lorraine Kaufman**



Propagating and Growing Native Violets

text and photos by Ken O'Dell

Native Violets are wonderful perennials growing in a variety of places. I have gathered native violets from our hayfields, prairies and wooded areas and transplanted them to small stock areas to make it easier for me to gather seed. Violets are fascinating little creatures and have beautiful flowers. They are one of our toughest and most wonderful natives. On our farm in Eastern Kansas, we have several species of *Viola*.



Native Violet

In addition to the flowers for my benefit, the foliage serves an additional wonderful purpose as it provides food for butterfly caterpillars. We have many violets growing naturally in our lawn grass, our hayfields and our prairie, and these violets provide food for some butterfly caterpillars that live under the foliage of violets. Can you imagine a tiny caterpillar just hatched trying to find food it has never seen. It searches for a violet leaf and will hide under the leaf and eat a tiny bit of each leaf. Certain butterfly caterpillars eat only certain Violets. Their bodies cannot digest other types of food. In Miami County, Kansas, we have Birdsfoot Violets, Prairie Birdsfoot Violets, Yellow Violets, Light Blue Violets, Dark Blue Butterfly Violets,

and a few that have crossed and are hybrids. We also have tons of butterflies.

If you want to gather Violet seed, you need to be alert and look for the seed head to be upright and of a light tan color. I pick these seed heads as soon as they stand upright. They are not ready to pick if they are still drooping. If you wait a few days they will spring open and throw the seed so you cannot find it. Frequently the seed will be thrown 18 inches away from the mother plants. I pick the seed heads before they open and put them in small 8-ounce jars with lids to finish opening. The seed is then cleaned, put in a paper envelope and into the fridge.

Some Violet seed is easy to germinate. However, if I have trouble getting the seed to germinate, I get a tiny container of Gibberellic Acid (GA3) for around \$25.00. Get the powder, not the liquid, as powder GA3 will last for a couple of years if not used, but the liquid must be used immediately. I put a tiny bit of GA3, an amount equal to 8 or 10 grains of salt, into a tiny glass container, add about three tablespoons of water, then put the hard-to-germinate violet seeds into this solution, leave it over night and pour it into the seed tray the next morning. I cover most of the violet seed with a web flat to give it some shade and this seems to work better than not covering. For violets that are difficult to grow from seed, you can also take a division from a large clump of violets in the field by slicing gently through the clump and then putting the soil back in place.



Viola seed and seedlings



Website Photo Gallery - by Jeff Hansen, KNPS Webmaster

If you haven't been on our website lately, you should go just for the wildflower photo gallery. Various KNPS members have been contributing photos from around the state. It's an easy way to get a taste of the many species of plants found in Kansas. As webmaster, its been an educational

experience seeing plants I've never seen before.

Our website is ksnps.org and in the left side navigation you will find "wildflower gallery". There are multiple pages of pictures with ten pictures on each page. In the gallery you will see thumbnail images. When you mouse over each image it is enlarged on the screen.

Under the enlarged image is a caption

(Continued on page 11)



Website Photo Gallery - (Continued from Page 10)

displaying the photographer's name, along with the county where the photo was taken. This style of image gallery is fast and fun to navigate. Your time isn't wasted by clicking on each image to view it.

The gallery currently has 53 pictures in it, but I would like to see that number grow. Take a look at the gallery and if you have a picture to contribute, use the link: "Submit image".

Any image that is put on the gallery becomes available for public use. They may be used for

educational purposes but may not be downloaded for commercial use without permission. We ask, if a photo is used, to give credit to KNPS and the photographer.

The KNPS gallery has drawn attention from the publisher of a wildflower book by the National Wildlife Federation. They plan to use some of our photos in their *2010 Field Guide to Wildflowers*. They've chosen to include Chelsea Juricek's Dakota verbena!

Please help to educate people about our wealth of plants by sending your images to KNPS. And get out there and take pictures this coming growing season.



Rare Species of Leatherwood Tree Found text and photo by Ken O'Dell

An article on a new species of Leatherwood tree in Kansas is to be published in the *Journal of Botanical Research Institute of Texas* in late 2009, describing *Dirca decipiens* growing at the Overland Park Arboretum in the Kansas City area. For years, we at the Arboretum have called this Leatherwood tree *Dirca palustris*, and we assumed it was a rare occurrence at the time for the state of Kansas, and it was. If this new identification proves true over the years, the Overland Park Arboretum and the State of Kansas will indeed have a very rare species. As of this time, only two other locations of *Dirca decipiens* are known. Both are reported in Carroll County in Northwest Arkansas.

The patch of Leatherwood at the Overland Park Arboretum covers two or three acres and is as thick as a patch of wild blackberry briars. However, Leatherwood is not thorny, or sticky, and it is not a tree. It is actually a shrub that grows to about 5 or 6 feet in height and spreads by slowly suckering or by dropping seed.

The foliage is soft and of a light green color, and the stems are equally soft and of a light tan to gray coloring with no thorns or briars. If you start at the top of a Leatherwood and try to pull a small branch off, it is easy to pull the bark to the bottom of the shrub, but it will not pull apart; hence, the name "Leatherwood." Native Americans would use the bark for rope and would tie or braid the bark to use to hold things together as we would use wire or rope today.

If you are making a trip to the Kansas City area and want to see the rare Leatherwood, send an email to me at [ken@springvalleynursery.com], and I will, if time permits, meet you at the Arboretum which is on the SW side of the metro area.



Rare Leatherwood Trees
Dirca decipiens



Book Review by Guy Coffee

Field Guide to the Common Weeds

by T. M. Barkley. Lawrence, KS : U. Press of Kansas, 1983. (Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station contribution 82-547-B)

When one reviews the author's background, there's no doubt that he's eminently qualified to write this book. His purpose in writing this book "is to enable the user to identify the common weeds of Kansas." As a field guide, the book is organized to help either the neophyte or the expert. For the neophyte there's a helpful glossary defining the basic parts of a plant. Each entry on a plant provides its scientific and common names, a state map indicating which counties that the plant

inhabits, a detailed description of the plants' parts, whether it's an annual or perennial, sometimes a description of its habitat, and a final remark or two. The book has a section providing selected references.

Although publishing expenses dictated the use of black line drawings for each plant, all drawings are expertly done with some done by the author's wife, Eileen S. Barkley, as well as many copied from other published sources.

The Reviewer recommends this book to all age groups for inclusion to their personal library. The book is one of the selections on the KNPS Recommended Books list.

Note: To purchase this book and others on the KNPS list at a discount, go to www.ksnps.org, click on sub-topic "Resources;" then "Plant Identification;" finally "KNPS recommended books."



KNPS Financial Report by Krista Dahlinger

During the first quarter of 2009, paid memberships and donations came to \$3,400.00. We plan to spend about \$15,000.00 in 2009 for newsletters, the KNPS website, KNPS scholarship fund, and donations the society makes to help support native plant activities and education. If you haven't renewed your KNPS membership for 2009, now is a very good time to do so. You can also make a donation at any time of the year for specific expenses such as color photographs in the newsletter, website maintenance, scholarship

fund or for educational purposes. Just note on your donation your preferred use for your gift.

Opening the KNPS Legacy Fund is still a "go." This fund will rely on income from "other than" membership dues and will be invested in a long term fund for future projects. Interest paid on this fund can be transferred over to our general fund to pay for member benefits. We need a minimum of \$2,500.00 to open the Legacy Fund account, and are short about \$1,000.00 at this time. If you would like more information, please send an email to Krista at Email@KSNPS.org. If you would like to make a donation for the Legacy Fund, make a note on your check (payable to KNPS) so that we know your desire.



Featured Plant - Sweet-william phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) Text by Lorraine J. Kaufman, photos by Mike Haddock



Sweet-william phlox closeup
divaricata ssp. *laphamii*

When the warmth of April sunshine filters through still-barren woodland branches in east central Kansas or nestles in the grasses beside meandering streams it calls forth the fragrant lavender-blue blossoms of the Sweet-william phlox. Atop an 8 - 12 inch stem and at the end of a slender tube these simple flowers bloom in loose clusters of 9 to 25.

There are 4 native species of Phlox in Kansas, but I am concentrating on *P. divaricata* subspecies *laphamii* (Wood) Wherry as described by Janet E. Bare in her *Wildflowers and Weeds of Kansas*. These have round petals without the notch at the apex which characterizes the species.

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Featured Plant - Sweet-william phlox

(Continued from page 12)

They grow near our small creek that runs through our prairie in Osage County. I have picked many of these for pressing, admiring their form and ease of pressing only to be disappointed to find their color fades dramatically, as is the case of most blue flowers.

While Sweet-william phlox choose a moist and shady environment in the wild, they have adapted very well after being transplanted in my flower garden years ago. Although they self-sow their seed, they aren't aggressive as they set up a small colony only where soil and sun conditions are to their liking. As the season progresses the plants die off and disappear until next growing season.

These early wildflowers hold special warm and cherished memories for me. In my childhood my Dad would often stop his team of horses on his way home from the field to gather a big bouquet of "Bluebells" (as he called them) for Mom, the only flowers that I remember her receiving in those Depression days. It was an inexpensive gift but one of delicate beauty that spoke eloquently of his thoughtfulness and love. I am delighted that Sweet-william phlox still grow near that small creek where I first made their acquaintance 75 years ago. Better than a spring tonic, they provide food for my soul.



Wood Phlox
Divaricata

Membership News

New Members 12/3/08 to 3/15/2009

Allie Archer - McPherson
Dolores Baker - Fredonia
Sheri Beisner - Alton
Mary Sue Carlson - Chanute
Cimarron National Grassland - Elkhart
Cade Cohorst - Marysville
Casey Cohorst - Marysville
Paula Darby - Washington
Glenda Hall - Leavenworth
Dvonne Hansen - Letcher, SD
Hays Public Library - Hays
Millie Irwig - Stilwell
Cheri Karns - Holton
Carolyn Kerstetter - Independence
Jackie Kohl - Ellis
Mary L. Korte-Johnson - Hartford
Elaine Murray - Garden City
Newton USD 373 - Newton
Dr. Larry Pacey - Wellington
Mrs. J. William Paddock - Lawrence
Gordon & Mary Reist - Salina
Jack Richard - Olpe

Steve Roels - Lawrence
Jennifer & William Sims - Lawrence
Malcolm Strom - Dwight
Laura Turnbull & Dale Crawford - Olathe
Regis Vialle - Topeka
Carole Ann Wedman - Ottawa
Richard C. Young - Topeka

Members Returning After a Hiatus

Cathy Beverage - Mulvane
Lynn Buczynski - Lawrence
Friends of Sunset Zoo - Manhattan
Charles Givens - Wamego
Susan & George Gurley - Baldwin City
Catherine Johnson - Wichita
Larry & Mary Limpus - Amsterdam, MO
PJ Quell - Merriam
Bill & Donna Schenck-Hamlin - Manhattan
John & Maureen Sutherland - Mound City
Sherry Thomas - Buena Vista, CO
Dot Wingerd - Overland Park

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



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LEARN MORE ABOUT KNPS

Check us out online at www.ksnps.org
 Contact us by email at email@ksnps.org
 Contact us by phone at 785-864-3453



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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