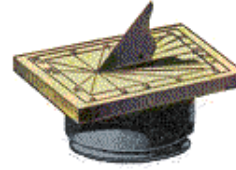




Kansas Native Plant Society



Winter Newsletter

Volume 32

Number 1

January 2010

Turning Back Time: Returning Roadsides to Native Prairies text by Fred Coombs, photo by Ron Klataske

Have you ever driven down a Kansas highway and suddenly been struck by a breathtaking array of native wildflowers and grasses lining either side of the road? The stars may be aligning to make that a more common occurrence. As budget woes force state and county agencies to cut back on roadside mowing, scientists point out that the un-mowed roadsides give native prairie plants a chance to reestablish. Business interests are bullish about getting more attractive roadways to link our state's tourist hotspots. Wildlife enthusiasts know that natural prairie roadsides reclaim lost habitat for a diverse assortment of birds and critters. And highway engineers see markedly improved drainage and erosion control when deep-rooted native plants replace alien brome and fescue.



Reclaimed roadside on K 177 north of Manhattan, KS

In 2008, Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller commissioned a Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) task force to consider ways to make our roadsides more attractive. The executive report recommended a host of ecologically sound measures to guide the planting, spraying, and mowing of Kansas highways. The report also noted that the **average annual cost of mowing** Kansas roadsides over the last three fiscal years has been **\$6,608,868**. In the short term, millions of dollars in fuel and labor costs can be saved just by mowing most rights-of-way no more than once every three years. In the longer term, establishment of quality native roadsides on all new construction will benefit the state for decades to come.

Knowing what to do is one thing; getting it done is quite another.

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The Kansas Native Plant Society Newsletter is printed four times a year: Winter (January), Spring (April), Summer (July), Fall (October). Readers tell us how much they enjoy the newsletter in color and in the paper format. Contributions help us continue to produce a publication of this length in this form. You may send your gift to KNPS at Kansas Native Plant Society, R.L. McGregor Herbarium, 2045 Constant Avenue, Lawrence, KS 66047-3729.



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 Craig Freeman

At the 2009 Annual Wildflower Weekend in Pittsburg, Kansas, you, the members of the Kansas Native Plant Society, elected me as your new President. I'm appreciative of your confidence in me. I'm enthusiastic about the opportunity to lead such a wonderful organization, and excited about our future.

I'm certainly no neophyte in KNPS— I joined the organization in 1987 when my wife, Jane, and I moved back to Kansas from Connecticut. For more than 20 years, the Society has been a major part of our lives. We've witnessed firsthand its transformation in membership and mission; we've delighted in its accomplishments, and we've made many lifelong friends.

For the first time since the 1980s, our paid memberships exceed 500, but the strength of KNPS comes not from sheer numbers. It comes from members actively supporting and promoting our mission, volunteering their time and resources, and participating in KNPS-sponsored events. I can't remember a time in the past 20 years when we've had so many committed and generous members give so munificently of their time and talents. To accomplish all that we would like to do, we'll need to involve even more members in events, activities, and in the governance and operation of the organization. Look at our web site or talk to a Board member, and please consider the ways that KNPS might benefit from your skills.

Education has always been at the core of our mission. We now are using new methods of outreach, exploring new areas of emphasis, and

expanding educational opportunities for our members and for the public. Proof of our successes can be seen: in the demand for our expertise at the Symphony in the Flint Hills, the Tallgrass Prairie Wildflower Weekend, and dozens of other KNPS-sponsored outings each year; in the public's use of the ever-expanding resources available on our web site, and in many other ways. Again, dedicated members make these things happen, and we hope you'll share in the reward that comes from helping others understand and treasure the rich natural heritage of Kansas and the Great Plains. (For specific participation opportunities, look at the following articles in this issue: "Turning Back Time" p. 1 and p. 11 ; "News Notes" p. 5; "Boy Scouts" p. 9; "Rangeland Education" p. 10.)

With an active and dedicated Board of Directors, and an engaged membership, KNPS is in a marvelous position to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives and landscapes of Kansas. We've become a trusted and respected source of information about the state's flora, earned through years of hard work by hundreds of members. With your help, we can continue to build on that foundation and excel at our mission "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."

I look forward to working with the Board and all members to make KNPS even stronger, more successful, and more fun. I hope to see you at one of our events this year. Best wishes for a productive and rewarding 2010.



Landscaping with Asters by Jeff Hansen

When I use the term "aster," I'm referring to any plant in the *Aster* genus. Don't confuse the term with plants in the *Aster* family, which includes many similar looking species such as fleabanes (*Erigeron* genus). It's easy to remember the scientific name and the common name for these plants because it's the same— "Aster." Well, they were the same, until recently. The New World asters have been separated out into their own genus: *Symphyotrichum*. I'm sticking with the previous name for this article. You will want to note the new name when consulting newer literature and the old name for older literature. Also its very important to note scientific names when speaking of asters because the common names are often interchanged.

The *Aster* genus is one of the larger genera in Kansas and definitely one of showier ones. Most

species are loaded with blooms, making them perfect in the landscape. Ray petal color ranges from white to lavender to purple with the disk being yellow. We have one annual and the rest are perennials. Some prefer moist soil, some medium or dry. Most are prairie species. A few prefer open woodlands and edges. We have 16 common species native to Kansas. Another 5 are rare.



Silky Aster (*A. sericeus*): photo by Nancy Goulden

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Landscaping with Asters

Continued from page 2

When landscaping with them, it's best to note the characteristics of the proposed planting site. If you want to plant species native to your part of the state, I suggest using the "plants.usda.gov website" and query by county. For a broader overview, I've grouped them by sun and moisture preferences.

Moist Soil, Full Sun (these tend to be 3 feet tall or more)

- Lance-leaf (*A. lanceolatus*)– white, eastern two-thirds of KS; also found in woodland edges.
- Willow-leaf (*A. praealtus*)– lavender to white, eastern third of KS; spreads by rhizomes.
- New England (*A. novae-angliea*)– purple, mostly northeast quarter of KS; largest blooms.
- Salt marsh (*A. subulatus* or *S. divaricatum*)– lavender, central two-thirds of KS; an annual.

Medium to Dry Soil, Full Sun (these tend to be two feet tall or more)

- Hairy (*A. pilosus*)– white, eastern quarter of KS; relatively weedy but very showy.



Smooth Aster (*A. laevis*): photo by Jeff Hansen

- Smooth (*A. laevis*)– lavender, eastern third of KS; relatively large blooms.
- Small-head (*A. parviceps*)– white, southeast third of KS.
- Azure (*A. oolentangiensis*)– blue-lavender, eastern third of KS.

Dry Soil, Full Sun (shorter plants: about 1 ft. tall)

- Heath (*A. ericoides*)– white, throughout KS.

- Heath (cont). Spread by rhizomes.
- Western heath (*A. falcatus*)– white, western half of KS; very similar to heath aster but no rhizomes.
- Fendler's (*A. fendleri*)– white, western half of KS.
- Silky (*A. sericeus*)– purple, roughly the eastern half of KS; very showy with silky foliage.
- Aromatic (*A. oblongifolius*)– purple, eastern two-thirds and northwestern quarter of KS; spreads by rhizomes.



Heath Aster (*A. ericoides*): photo by Nancy Goulden

Medium Soil, Part sun

- Drummond's (*A. drummondii*)– lavender, eastern two-fifths of KS.
- Sky-drop (*A. patens*)– purple, southeast quarter of KS.
- Ontario (*A. ontarionis*)– white, eastern fifth of KS.



Drummond's Aster (*A. drummondii*): by Nancy Goulden

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Landscaping with Asters

Continued from page 3

When it comes to the asters, I really can't say there are any that I don't like. They are all showy. One of the best things about them is that they are fall bloomers. Generally you will see them blooming in September and October and even into November. Blooming in the fall makes them great nectar flowers for butterflies and other insects. Migrating monarchs depend on asters to feed them on their journey to Mexico.

To collect seed, mark the plants from which

you want to collect seed when they are blooming; go back about a month later to collect the seed. All of the asters are easy to propagate from seed. If growing from seed, be sure to plant them in the fall/winter. They need winter's freezing and thawing temperatures to break the seed dormancy. The species that spread by rhizomes are easy to take cuttings from for plants.

I do sell seed of a number of asters from my website: "ksplants.com." You can also try nurseries for many species. Don't forget to visit the KNPS website ("ksnps.org") and click on resources to see other sources for seeds and plants.



Meet the Board

Interview with Mickey Delfelder



Mickey (or Mick) Delfelder

1. Where are you from, where do you live, what do you do for a living? I am a Topeka native. I have always had a strong interest in the natural sciences, particularly the earth sciences, and I received a BS in Atmospheric Science from KU in 1995. However, I do not work in that field, and I'm currently employed as the Director of Programming for a sports media company based in Fayetteville, NC.

2. How did you become interested in wildflowers and other native plants? It kind of snuck up on me. I have always enjoyed the outdoors and several years ago I noticed there was a KNPS prairie walk in the neighborhood where I grew up north of Topeka. I attended and was surprised to learn that a privately owned, 80-plus acre virgin prairie was just miles from where I used to live. I thoroughly enjoyed the presentation and from that point forward, I just wanted to learn more.

3. What are some of your favorite native plants and why? I'm a sucker for the showy plants and the ones that look unique. My favorites are compass plant, rattlesnake master, lead plant and butterfly milkweed.

4. What is your favorite natural area in the state and why? For me, it's tough to beat the Konza Prairie. It's accessible, well maintained and has a wide variety of species. Also, it's probably the largest remaining area that is the closest representation of the prairie that my ancestors would have seen when they first settled in Kansas. I have always wanted to visit the Arikaree Breaks in Cheyenne County, but I haven't made it yet.

5. What do you like best about the organization? I enjoy the educational aspect of the society— not only my education in learning about plants, but also the efforts to educate the public. I would like to see more people (and cities and KDOT) using native plants in their landscaping, especially when it comes to planting grasses.

Interview with David Welfelt

1. Where are you from, where do you live, what do you do for a living? I was born in Winfield and lived there through my junior high years. I finished high school at Shawnee Mission West in Overland Park. I majored in Horticulture at K-State and moved to Newton in January of 1975 to become Harvey County's first Horticulture Extension Agent. I've been in the equipment business since 1978. For the past nine years, I've

worked for TYMCO, Inc. of Waco, Texas, managing the Pacific coast region. TYMCO manufactures parking lot and municipal street sweepers. My work takes me to California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska forty weeks out of the year. Although I make my living selling equipment, I've never lost my love for plants.

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Meet the Board

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2. How did you become interested in wildflowers and other native plants? I have had a love for nature and all things living for as long as I can remember. When I started at K-State, I was a wildlife biology major. During my sophomore year, I started taking a few classes in the College of Agriculture just to broaden my experiences. One semester, I took Plant Science (Department of Agronomy) and I was hooked on plants from that time forward. I started taking a few horticulture classes and changed my major to horticulture in the middle of my junior year. My emphasis was in fruit and vegetable production, but my work as an extension agent required me to learn more about ornamental horticulture, which then led to my work for Excel Industries marketing commercial turf equipment.

About eight years ago, I started walking and hiking for exercise and was introduced to a series of trails at Harvey County East Lake called Osage Trail. Hiking there, I would bring my point-and-shoot digital camera along to record some of the wildflowers, mushrooms and various creatures I encountered. That led to wanting to identify and know more about the flowers and grasses I was seeing. That led me to the bookstore at Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita and Mike Haddock's book and website. And that led me to the KNPS website. I joined KNPS in August of 2008.

3. What are some of your favorite native plants and why? As for wildflowers, anything in the genus *Liatris*. I can remember the first time I noticed them (Dotted Gayfeather, *Liatris punctata*) years ago along Old 81 Highway between Hesston and Newton. I knew nothing about them then, but all the gayfeathers have become my favorites.

As for grasses, that's an easy one— Indian Grass, *Sorghastrum nutans*. Its inflorescence is the best of all the tall grasses. Its fall color, with the morning or evening sun shining through the leaves and inflorescence is my favorite fall scene.

As for woody plants, I love Golden Currant, *Ribes aureum*. Its one of the earliest to bloom in the spring and the fragrance is the best of all our wild plants. Bur Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, is my favorite native tree.



Dave Welfelt

4. What is your favorite natural area in the state and why? That's also an easy one. With Winfield as my hometown and having studied at K-State, the Flint Hills are my favorite area. There is something unique about the southern end of the Flint Hills...the way the limestone outcrops line the upper edges of the hills gives them a special look.

Having said that, I love exploring every region of Kansas. I love the wide open spaces, trees, hills, grasses and wildflowers of each area. I spent a week in October exploring Comanche, Clark, Meade, Seward, Stevens and Morton counties... spending two days in the Cimarron National Grasslands.

5. What do you like best about the organization? I have a passion for learning more about the native plants of Kansas, and it has been great to rub shoulders with many people that share that passion. I've made so many new friends and always look forward to the next field day or outing. Combining my love for plants and my interest in photography goes hand-in-hand with all that KNPS is about. Thanks to everyone for making me feel welcome! I look forward to serving on the board.

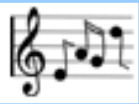


News Notes

KNPS LEGACY FUND: The KNPS Finance Committee is pleased to announce that enough money has been donated to the KNPS Legacy Fund to make our initial investment. We have

invested \$2,820.00 in the American Century One Choice Portfolio: Moderate Fund. This fund is structured to provide some current income that may be used annually for special projects and scholarships by KNPS, as well as provide long-term growth opportunities. Jeff Hansen, Craig

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Freeman, and Krista Dahlinger, have spent a lot of time getting the final paper work done, and we thank them for the time spent in getting our investment in place. We now call on the KNPS members to support this fund by making future contributions to secure financial support of our programs.

If you have not renewed your KNPS membership yet for 2010, please consider adding an extra amount specifically for the Legacy Fund. (Please include a note to help us account for your payment correctly). You may take the tax benefit of contributing to a 501(c)3 entity while helping KNPS further its goals. To all who donated to open the Legacy Fund account, Thank You. We believe your generous donations will provide long lasting value to KNPS and it's mission.

SYMPHONY IN THE FLINT HILLS 2010.

KNPS has been invited again this year to lead the wildflower hikes and other native plant events the afternoon of the Symphony, June 12, 2010. The site for the 5th Anniversary event will be the Bass Ranch near Bazaar, Chase County. We have been given about the same number of volunteer slots as last year. Not only do volunteers have the fun of sharing their knowledge with eager visitors in a gorgeous setting, each volunteer receives a free, highly-coveted ticket, to the Kansas City Symphony performance. It is our policy to fill the slots first with experienced volunteers and although not all the responses are in yet, it does not appear that there will be many vacant positions. However, we want, if possible, to introduce new wildflower leaders to the team; so if you are interested in being a KNPS volunteer, e-mail Nancy Goulden (nag@ksu.edu), and we will at least add your name to our waiting list.



KNPS volunteers assisted several hundred of these symphony guests at the 2009 event

UPDATE ON LITTLE BLUESTEM

CAMPAIGN. Fortunately, the KNPS committee promoting Little Bluestem for State Grass is made up of optimists who just keep going and trying to find new strategies to persuade the Kansas State Legislature to pass a bill to make “Little Blue” a state icon. They continue to promote teaching Kansas school children about the prairie ecosystem and its grasses, especially Little Bluestem, through educational materials on the KNPS website (www.ksnps.org), personal contact with educators and guest appearances at schools. In addition, the committee is also working hard on the political aspects with state representatives. Representative Kay Wolf is now taking a leadership role in the campaign and has “reactivated” the original bill, which had expired. The next step is for the bill to receive a hearing in committee. Kay, KNPS members, and other representatives are making personal contact with as many legislators as possible to educate them about the value to the state and to our children of naming a state grass. With over 500 members, KNPS should be able to make an impact. If you would like more information about what role you can play, go the website or e-mail us at: email@ksnps.org.

KNPS EDUCATIONAL VOLUNTEERS.

Would you like to have a knowledgeable KNPS volunteer present an entertaining and beautiful lecture for an organization in your community? Are you interested in sponsoring a wildflower walk, but need more guides? Are you someone who would love to share your photos and passion for native plants by giving a presentation or a workshop for children? Or have you always thought you'd like to lead groups around the prairie and introduce them to all the special plants?

KNPS has set up a program to try to make all of the above possible. We have collected the names of about a dozen members who are interested in giving presentations or leading hikes, especially in their own part of the state. We want at this time to open up the volunteer list to any member who would like to participate. Send your name, location, preferred volunteer activities, and topic areas to: email@ksnps.org. If you wish to request a volunteer, go to www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/educationvolunteers.php and KNPS will connect you to an appropriate volunteer.

HELP CHOOSE KANSAS WILDFLOWER OF THE YEAR.

The Kansas Wildflower Society and later the Kansas Native Plant Society have been have been one of the parties instrumental in choosing and promoting a Kansas native wildflower each year since 1998. The original list


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2010 Kansas Area Native Plant and 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. Thank you!


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


Mark your calendar now and plan to attend some fabulous happenings!

 **January 16:** Kansas Native Plant Society Winter Board Meeting in Emporia, KS. The meeting will be held in the Science Hall, Room 159, at Emporia State University. The meeting begins at noon. Our snow date is January 23. Please contact KNPS for more information. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453.

 **January 16:** 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).

January 24: Kaw Valley Eagles Day in Lawrence, KS. Celebrate the return of the eagles and learn about the environment, 11am-4pm. Programs on area Bald eagles and other wildlife. Exhibitors will offer educational resources related to nature, sponsored by the Jayhawk Audubon Society. Location: Free State High School, 1 block north of 6th & Wakarusa. [eishaw@ku.edu] (785) 842-0475.

 **February 20:** Volunteers are needed for prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan. 16 info.

 **March 20:** Volunteers are needed for prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan. 16 info.


April 17-25: Celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day! Contact us about special events you're planning and we may share them with fellow native plant enthusiasts.


 **April 17:** Kansas Native Plant Society Spring Board Meeting and Outing. The location and time have not been finalized. Please contact KNPS for more information. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453.


 **April 17:** Volunteers are needed for prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan. 16 info.

April 17th & 24th: Missouri Prairie Foundation Spring Plant Sales 7am - noon. Location: City Market, 5th & Walnut, Kansas City, MO. [http://www.moprairie.org] (888) 843-6739.


April 25: Gardening for Kids: Attracting Butterflies and Little Pollinators Class at Prairie Park Nature Center, Lawrence, KS, 2-3pm. Kids 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:** 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 4th, \$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 7-10:** FloraKansas: 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. Ask about member's only sale dates; 10% members discount on all days. Admission charge is by donation. [arboretum@Hesston.edu] (620) 327-8127.

 **May 15:** Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan. 16 info.

May 16: Wildflower Plant & Seed Sale at Prairie Park Nature Center, Lawrence, KS, 1-4pm. (785) 832-7980.

 **June is Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month!** Each year Kansas Native Plant Society makes contact with the Kansas Governor to request that June be proclaimed as Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month. This is a great opportunity to promote greater appreciation for the diversity, value, and beauty of Kansas native plants and their habitats. [www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org]

Kansas Area Native Plant Wildflower Events - Continued

June 5: 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 6: Friends of Konza Prairie Annual Wildflower Walk, 6:30pm. Join us for a 2-mile guided hike of Butterfly Hill Trail, an area generally not open to the public. At the peak of wildflower season, visitors often view more than 50 species of native tallgrass prairie plants blooming along the trail. The walk will be co-led by Dr. Valerie Wright, Kansas Native Plant Society Board Member, and Konza Docents. There is a charge of \$7 for those who are not Friends of Konza Prairie members. RSVP required; telephone reservations will be taken beginning May 1, (785) 587-0441.

June 12: 5th Annual Symphony in the Flint Hills will be held deep in the heart of the Flint Hills. Get ready for one of the most beautiful sites on the planet and the adventure of getting there. Enjoy this unique pairing of music and prairie! The vision of this concert is to heighten appreciation and knowledge of the Flint Hills as the last major intact tallgrass prairie on the North American continent and will help focus attention on the Flint Hills of Kansas as a national treasure belonging to all Kansans and as a destination for people beyond our borders. Wildflower tours will be led by Kansas Native Plant Society volunteers. Featured is an outdoor concert performed by the Kansas City Symphony. [www.symphonyintheflinthills.org] (620) 273-8955.

June 19: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan. 16 info.

July 10: Kansas Native Plant Society Summer Board Meeting and Outing. The location and time have not been finalized. Please contact KNPS for more information. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453.

July 17, August 21: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan. 16 info.

September 4: Fall 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.

September 9-12: FloraKansas: 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. Ask about member's only sale dates; 10% members discount on all days. Admission charge is by donation. (620) 327-8127.

September 17-19: Kansas Native Plant Society's 32nd Annual Wildflower Weekend. The location and time have not been finalized. The weekend is filled with outings, programs, a silent auction, photo contest, dinner, and socializing. Please contact KNPS for more information. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453.

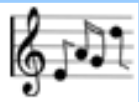
September 18: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan. 16 info.

September 25: Konza Prairie Biennial Visitors' Day, 8am - 5pm. Featuring guided hikes, wagon rides, homestead tours, driving tours, and youth activities, near Manhattan, KS. Presented by K-State Division of Biology, The Nature Conservancy and Friends of Konza Prairie. From I-70, take exit 307 and go northeast on McDowell Creek Road for 4.2 miles to the entrance. [www.ksu.edu/konza/keep] [konzaed@ksu.edu] (785) 587-0381.

September 25: Prairie Jubilee at Prairie State Park near Lamar, Missouri. Visit Missouri's largest remaining tallgrass prairie, at nearly 4,000 acres. Learn about life on the prairie during a day filled with activities and entertainment. Guided wagon rides to view the bison herd will be available, prairie restoration activities, and wildflower gardening plants will be for sale, with advice offered on care. Storytelling and traditional music will fill the air. A bison burger lunch will be available for a small fee. This fun event for young and old is sponsored by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. [prairie.state.park@dnr.mo.gov] call (417) 843-6711 or (800) 334-6946.

October 16: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan. 16 info.

November 20: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs prairie maintenance and preservation projects. See Jan. 16 info.



WILDFLOWER OF THE YEAR (Continued): of selections extends through 2012. KNPS has decided to continue the tradition and has accepted the task of naming future Wildflowers of the Year for the state. In preparation for 2013 and beyond, we're asking KNPS members to suggest some of their favorite native wildflowers for this honor. You need to make sure that your candidate has not already been one of the Wildflowers of the Year. So before you make your choice, go to the KNPS website (www.ksnps.org/woty.htm) to see the list of previous WOY species so you don't duplicate an earlier selection.

Recommendations will be accepted throughout the entire year of 2010.

The following criteria may be used as our guidelines:

1. Must be a plant native to Kansas.
2. May be common or rare.
3. Need not be of horticultural interest and this may be a plus.
4. May be selected for emphasis on habitat.
5. Should increase public awareness of our native Kansas plants.

Send your suggestion for the Kansas Wildflower of the Year to: ken@springvalleynursery.com or by U. S. mail to Ken O'Dell, 11485 W. 303rd. St., Paola, Kansas 66071 or fax your suggestion to (913) 837-5111.

Boy Scouts Learn About Prairie Plants

text by Iralee Barnard, photos by Ken Barnard

The Coronado Area Boy Scouts held a two day EcoCamp in Salina last July. One of the events was a prairie walk to observe and learn about plants. On the second day scouts (ages 9-13), their families, and the general public took part in an array of environmental and nature-oriented displays and demonstrations at the city park.

KNPS had two tables at the park where families enjoyed a variety of hands on experiences – the feel of great mullein leaves, the smell of beebalm, and Velcro-like licorice pods.



Boy Scout examines seed pods.

The younger kids were impressed with cattails and compass plant leaves. Adults seemed mystified that such a beautiful flower, sensitive briar, could

be so well armored. Information featuring our Prairie Patch Program was available explaining that by completing the KNPS application, individuals may earn a colorful free badge. Even the local TV crew was at the park filming, and quite a bit of time was spent filming displays and plants on our wildflower tables with commentary.



Iralee coaches an aspiring botanist

Working with children is a lot of fun. They are open to new things and learning. It is a pleasure to share the beauty and wonder of our native plants with school kids and see their eyes light up and hear “oohs” and “ahhs” over each new discovery. Perhaps someday a few of these young people will be leaders in KNPS.

If YOU haven't gotten your Prairie Patch yet, it is easy. Look on the KNPS website for details and an application. Choose your plants and be ready for spring. Also, consider sharing this educational activity with young people in your area. Grandkids, church groups, or 4-Hers are ready and waiting for a fun, new experience.



KNPS Supports Rangeland Education by Iralee Barnard, photo by Ken Barnard

Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition (KGLC) was organized to regenerate Kansas grazing land resources using education and technical assistance programs. A broad range of organizations participate in the activities of KGLC. KNPS is on the KGLC Advisory Committee.

Special KGLC educational events are east- and west-range schools held annually in August. The three-day schools are attended by ranchers, land managers, agency staff, college students, and others interested in topics related to managing for and maintaining high quality native prairie.

A major focus at the range schools is plant identification. Plant ID is part of each day activities, and a plant quiz is held on the last day. In addition, one whole morning is spent in the field learning techniques for measuring and monitoring rangeland plants and determining prairie condition. Two KNPS board members participated in both of the 2009 range schools. Jeff Hansen gave a presentation on plant characteristics used in identification, and Iralee Barnard spoke on invasive plant species.



Range School participants study field techniques

In 2009, KNPS also supported the range schools by providing a scholarship of \$150 at each of the schools. This scholarship makes it possible for private individuals to participate, such as the two people KNPS sponsored, Lowell Anderson a ranch employee from Franklin County and Amber Johnson landowner from Scott County. I had time to visit with many of the attendees (31 east, 20 west), and they all appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to learn about prairie ecology and rangeland economics. I heard good things about all of the presentations.



Native Plants Meet Art

Most people automatically recognize the close connection between native plants and science, but increasingly in KNPS, we're seeing an intriguing meeting between the visual arts and Kansas plants. You may have noticed a number of craft and art related articles in the Silent Auction at the AWW last fall that incorporated native plant parts.

KNPS member Cynthia Pederson, an artist from Topeka, provided a print made from actual leaves to the Silent Auction. Her native-plant print-making is also at the heart of her piece "Prairie Prayer Flags," which was accepted for a juried art



Prairie Prayer Flags
by Cynthia Pederson

show, Visions of the Flint Hills in Kansas City this fall. The exhibit benefitted Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. It was a real honor for Cynthia's work to be shown with that of other well-known artists. Cynthia describes "Prairie Prayer Flags: Four flags of handmade cottonwood seed paper hang from a 'rope' of braided Indian hemp. The flags are decorated with nature prints of cottonwood leaves and an original poem."

Pederson learned to make paper at Jeff Hansen's workshops. She says, "I took his class three times— great fun!"



Monarda Bud and Monarda Bloom
by Cynthia Pederson



Turning Back Time:

Roadside Management

Continued from Page 1

To date, implementation of task force recommendations has been spotty, at best. Cheryl Schmidt Dunn, a former KDOT environmental scientist who contributed much to the report, has since left for a job in Nebraska and has not been replaced. KDOT has targeted rights-of-way of several highway interchanges for improvement, but the broader recommendations of the task force have yet to be applied throughout most of the state.

Furthermore, KDOT is just one piece of the management puzzle. Four out of every five miles of roads in Kansas are maintained by counties. In far too many cases, counties persist in their traditional broadcast spraying with broad-spectrum herbicides and their annual road-to-fencerow mowing. And neither KDOT nor counties have authority over the Kansas turnpike right-of-way, maintained by the Kansas Turnpike Authority.

The good news is that many organizations in Kansas are anxious to improve roadside maintenance. Audubon of Kansas has been a leader in pushing for environmentally sound roadsides. The Flint Hills Tourism Coalition, Grassland Heritage Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Kansas Scenic Byways, and Kansas Wildlife Federation are just a few of many groups poised to help bring native vegetation back to Kansas roadsides.

Working with these groups is crucial if we are to make progress on this front. Here are ways you can help:

- Talk to friends, neighbors and acquaintances about your vision of Kansas roadsides becoming prairie once again. Not everyone understands that roadsides were never meant to be suburban lawns. Even some of your very best friends may need to be persuaded that the dream of stunningly attractive native roadsides throughout Kansas is within our reach.

- Familiarize yourself with the KNPS position on roadside management, including advantages of native roadside plants, desirable and undesirable maintenance practices. (Go to <http://www.ksnps.org>, “Resources”, “KNPS Roadside Management Position.”)
- Phone KDOT to encourage expeditious implementation of the recommendations of their Aesthetic Roadside Management Task Force and hiring an environmental scientist with experience in Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management to monitor that implementation. (Telephone KDOT at 785-296-3566 or 877-550-KDOT. Email <mailto:publicinfo@ksdot.org>.)
- Phone or email your congratulations to KDOT, KTA, or your County Commission when you see an attractive stretch of roadway or notice environmentally sound roadside maintenance (e.g., leaving right-of-way un-mowed except for 10 feet on either side of the road or spot spraying of invasive plants). Roadside agencies receive citizen complaints about “weeds” or “lack of upkeep.” So we need to send positive messages to KDOT, the KTA, and our County Commissions when we see evidence of good roadside management. (KDOT telephone 785-296-3566, email <mailto:publicinfo@ksdot.org>, KTA telephone 316-682-4537, email <mailto:kta-pr@ksturnpike.com>.)
- Contact a County Commissioner or your county Road and Bridge Department when you see unnecessary mowing, broadcast spraying, or planting of brome or other non-native roadsides. County boards need to be made aware of the new “best practices” in roadside management and encouraged to make the beautification of county roads a priority. Stress the fact that reduced mowing saves money. If you locate other interested citizens in your county, consider jointly attending a meeting of the County Commission to express your interest and offer support in developing native plant roadsides.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

KNPS GRANTS FOR NON-PROFITS. KNPS attempts to commit at least \$1000 each year to fund one or more projects carried out by Kansas non-profit organizations to advance education about, stewardship of, or research on native plants of Kansas. Availability of funds is dependent on the organization's budget and is announced by each spring (around April 15) in the KNPS newsletter and on the website. Completed applications are due by August 1. Announcement of successful applications is in the fall (around September 30).

GROWING PLANTS FROM SEED: Blazing Stars and Gay Feathers text and photos by Ken O'Dell

A wonderful group of tall, stately native prairie plants are found in the genus *Liatris* and have the common names of Blazing Star and/or Gay Feather. Some species are native in most Kansas counties and in many other states. These sun-loving, easy-to-care-for perennials have colorful flowers that are quite noticeable. Growing from a corm-like root structure and sending up single stems that are rarely branched, these hardy natives produce lovely light lavender flowers in July, August and into September. Their flowers are borne in tall four- to five-inch-spikes and are about one-to-one-and-a-half inches wide with the flowers “exploding” at the top first, mimicking a “blazing star.” These natives look their best when planted in ones or twos since a large group of them might have too much color unless you have a large area to plant them in, such as a flower bed with a pasture or open area behind them.

The earliest of the *Liatris* group to bloom on our farm in Miami County, Kansas, is *Liatris pycnostachya* (common names Prairie Blazing Star and Thickspike Gayfeather). This is a tall perennial up to three-feet tall, with perhaps the finest flower



Prairie Blazing Star
Liatris pycnostachya

of the group. We have thousands of these growing wild in much of Eastern Kansas. They are noticeable. About the time the *Liatris pycnostachya* reaches its peak flowering with most flowers fully open, the *Liatris aspera* or Button Blazing Star starts to show some strong bloom buds, and eventually a bit of the lavender colors start to come through. These flower buds are farther apart and separated on the flowering head. This space is what shows the button that gives it the common name. These will be in full flower about the time the Prairie Blazing Star/Thickspike Gayfeather finishes flowering. In the prairie, there is some hybridizing among the *Liatris* species,

with the colors being mostly light lavender, and the bloom time changing slightly. The Scaly Blazing Star has the botanical name of *Liatris squarrosa* and will be blooming at about the same time as the others. Scaly Blazing Star is a shorter grower, usually reaching only 28 to 24 inches in height. It will produce many lovely flowers in July, August and September.

All of the *Liatris* prefer full sun or thin dappled shade. Consequently, you will find some of them growing along road sides with thin brush or limited trees. On our farm, some of the finest colonies of this wonderful native are in the terraces of our fields. This is probably because the rains wash the seed into these areas, and the fields are generally of thin soils that dry out quickly after a heavy rain. So the seeds wash to one area and then come up and thrive because the soil does not hold a lot of moisture. *Liatris* will grow in regular-to-rich garden soil as long as they do not stand in water in the winter time.



Liatris Seed

Propagation is from seed, gathered in early autumn, stored in a paper envelop in the fridge until March or April when I either plant the seed where I want it to grow or I start the seed in a flat in the greenhouse. When it grows to about 2 inches tall, I transplant it to a 4 inch pot and grow until mid summer and then transplant it to a flower bed.

You can also divide the corms as each corm is about quarter-size and growing on top of the ground or at ground level. Pull the corms apart in winter time when the tops are dormant and transplant them to your flower beds.



Liatris Corm



Featured Plant- Button blazing star (*Liatris aspera* Michx.)

Text by Lorraine J. Kaufman, photo by Dennis A. Kaufman

Exploring jaunts for wildflowers is always exciting, and sometimes one is rewarded by a never to be forgotten experience. So it was one October day many years ago when I wandered onto a long abandoned country “mud” road, by then not much more than two furrowed tracks that struggled up and down the hills. It seemed to come from nowhere of importance and likewise led to no place of significance. But there on the trail’s rocky embankment bloomed one lone exquisitely beautiful, rose-purple wildflower. Defying the desolation of the area, it seemed incongruous that such beauty should be blooming, yet hidden, in this forsaken place. But there it was— my introduction to Button blazing star, *Liatris aspera* Michx. And so began my friendship with and my knowledge of this lovely flower that grows in the rocky prairie soil in the east one-third of Kansas.

The plant that had so intrigued me was about 24 inches tall, erect, with alternate simple leaves. Clinging to the stem in orderly fashion were a number of flower heads covered by fluffy disk flowers in a delicate rose-purple hue! I was immediately struck by the beauty and charm of this unusual plant which seemed to be sporting little “thimbles” along its stem to the very top. With that first glimpse firmly embedded in my memory, the Button blazing star remains one of my very favorite Kansas wildflowers.

All types of livestock relish all species of *Liatris* and these special plants will decline and even disappear under heavy grazing. To my delight, I notice some have escaped to more protected roadsides where they only have to elude the over-zealous mowers!



Button Blazing Star
Liatris aspera Michx.

Of all the species of the genus *Liatris*, button blazing star blooms latest— but is well worth waiting for. When cut and hung up-side-down until dry, one to a few stems will make a stunning bouquet that will remind you all winter of an invigorating day on the prairie.

Membership News

NEW MEMBERS

9/28/09 TO 12/6/09

Mike Beam - Topeka
Jim & Cindi Culver - Wichita
Sarah Duncan - Haysville
David Farmer - Tonganoxie
Frances Hewitt - Washington DC
Deanna King - Iola
Sandy Mosshart - Protection
Belinda K. Smith - Wichita
Judith Stanton - Prairie Village
Gary Tegtmeier - Shawnee Mission
Lynn Wray - Spring Hill

LIFETIME MEMBERS

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Robert G. Jr. & Martha Barnhardt
Susan Blackford
Barbara Davis
Phillip Eastep
Sally Haines
R. Clay Harvey
W. Glen & Marjorie F. Neely
Ray Woods

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Shirley Braunlich
Sheldon & Virginia Cohen
Fred & Nancy Coombs
Craig & Jane Freeman
Dale & Jackie Goetz
Nancy Goulden
Edna Hamera
Tom & Shelly Hammer
Susan Reimer
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Ronald Weedon

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



Address Service Requested

Newsletter Staff
 Copy and Assignment Editor: Nancy Goulden--
 nag@ksu.edu
 Layout Editor: Karen Hummel
 Proof-reader: June Kliesen

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



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	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	\$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organization	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contributing	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifetime	\$500.00