



Kansas Native Plant Society

Winter Newsletter



Volume 36 Number 1
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Kansas Native Plant Symbols Brochure

By Nancy Goulden

Kansas Native Plant Society has developed a new teaching/learning aid for students, teachers, and anyone who is interested in Kansas' three native plant symbols. This three-panel-brochure includes information about our state flower (Sunflower), tree (Cottonwood), and grass (Little Bluestem). Readers will learn the brief history of the Kansas Legislature's selection of each plant, the origin of the Latin names, each plant's habitat and characteristics, the specific insects and animals that rely on each of the plants, and the plants' connections to humans. There are also excellent close-up and distance pictures of each of the three icons. The brochure is ideal to use for outings, talks, and classes. This publication will be especially helpful when planning or celebrating Kansas Day (January 29) when many classrooms focus on the state symbols.



Sunflower



Kansas State Icons
Cottonwood



Little Bluestem

KNPS members Ken O'Dell and Jocelyn Baker are responsible for coming up with the idea of a native-plant-symbols handout and developing the content and layout. The outstanding and helpful pictures were provided by members Mike Haddock and Valerie Wright.

On the KNPS website www.ksnps.org, you can find additional information and will be able to download a copy of the brochure. From the KNPS website menu on the left, click on Resources, then scroll down to Educational Resources. You will find the Plant Icons brochure and many other resources. You will also find information about ordering paper copies. Note this does not apply to single copies. The order must be for at least 25 copies. We recommend that you think about class or audience size and number of people you expect on the future hikes you will be leading. You may want to talk with other KNPS members in your area and combine your estimated needs into one order.

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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 past, 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). 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.



President's Message

By Mike Haddock

Happy New Year-- 2014! I hope you were able to spend time enjoying friends and family over the holidays. At the Annual Wildflower Weekend held in Salina this past September, I had the privilege of being elected as your Kansas Native Plant Society (KNPS) president. I am truly excited by the opportunity to lead this important organization and look forward to meeting many of you at upcoming events. I would like to use my first newsletter message to remind everyone about the Society's mission and touch on just a few of our activities.

The Kansas Native Plant Society mission 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 was organized in 1978 as the Kansas Wildflower Society to create awareness of the beauty and value of our state's native wildflowers. In 2004, we made the decision to change our name from "Wildflower" to "Native Plant" to more accurately reflect the wide range of flora that we explore and promote.

As of mid-December, KNPS had 952 members, a record number that speaks to the growing interest that people have in the flora of our state. Five years ago, KNPS had 500 members, so our recent growth has been truly remarkable! We currently have 875 members from Kansas, representing 74 of the state's 105 counties, and 77 members who reside outside of the state, some of whom actually make an effort to attend our outings! A majority of our members come from urban areas and fifty-nine of our paid memberships are maintained by organizations.

Our KNPS board of directors is presently composed of 24 highly energetic individuals who are passionate about native plants and are truly fun to be around. The board maintains an active goal to try and increase the number of members in our less populated counties, particularly in the west third of the state. If you have friends or acquaintances in that part of Kansas, please encourage them to consider membership in KNPS. Our twenty-one membership regions, implemented in 2011, were created to encourage more local events and have proven highly successful due in no small part to the very dedicated members who volunteer to serve as region leaders.

A significant portion of our budget goes toward education and outreach and includes newsletter and website costs. If you have not had an opportunity to view our terrific website, which is packed with infor-

mation, please do so. The site would not be possible without the great work of our webmaster Jeff Hansen. Likewise, we hope that you enjoy our high quality quarterly newsletter filled with informative articles and beautiful color images. If you have an opportunity, please thank the members of our newsletter committee and its chair Nancy Goulden for their excellent work.

KNPS annually awards \$1,000 in scholarship monies to support graduate student research that enhances our understanding of native plant species or their ecosystems and conservation. This scholarship was established in 1998 to honor Mary A. Bancroft, a long-time KNPS member and supporter from Ottawa. The scholarship is open to graduate students regularly enrolled in a Kansas college or university. As well, KNPS endeavors 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.

The Society also undertakes important initiatives. In 2010, KNPS members were instrumental in the effort to have Kansas name little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, as our official state grass. KNPS members have worked closely with the Kansas Department of Transportation and others to establish an integrated roadside management plan that recommends the use of native wildflowers and grasses rather than non-native species along our major roadways.

Finally, just a brief word about upcoming activities. KNPS board members Dee and Phyllis Scherich have generously volunteered to help coordinate our 2014 Annual Wildflower Weekend in the Pratt area. The date has not yet been set and our planning committee has much work to do, but more details will be available by summer. The board has tentatively discussed holding the 2015 AWW in Manhattan, so stay tuned to see what develops.

KNPS would not be able to accomplish what it does without the passion and dedication of you, our members. You willingly volunteer your time, come to KNPS-sponsored events, and do a wonderful job promoting our mission, which makes you the strength of our organization. For me personally, the best parts of being a KNPS member are the eager and often entertaining sharing of flora knowledge that occurs at every outing and the life-long friendships that I have been able to develop with folks from all over Kansas.

I'm looking forward to a great year and hope to see all of you at our 2014 events!



Special Volunteers' Contributions to KNPS

By Jeff Hansen

For the entire history of KWS/KNPS, volunteers have been the backbone of the organization. There are so many things that people do for KNPS in their free time. Obviously the Board of Directors volunteer their time to attend the four board meetings held each year. Our regional leaders (KNPS has 21 membership regions) help organizing activities in their areas. Activities include wildflower walks, speakers, work days, and special events. I'd like to bring attention to some of our regional leaders who are volunteers, as well as members who are volunteers.

Ken O'Dell of Miami County is the Leader of the Kansas City Region and is a board member. Ken has been very involved with organizing events in his region and incorporating the help of local master gardeners. His region has had wildflowers walks, presentations, and seeding workshops. Ken has also helped to promote the use of natives in landscaping and promoting the use of Little Bluestem in public gardens.

Krista Dahlinger of Mulvane serves as the KNPS treasurer and is also the Wichita Regional Leader. Krista has given presentations on native plants in

Wichita as well as put together a Native Plant Festival, complete with plants and seed vendors as well as informational booths from various organizations. Krista has also hosted wildflower walks in her region.

As Leader of the Fort Scott Region, Rondi Anderson jumped in head first to volunteering by leading woodland flower walks three consecutive Saturdays at the Gunn Park bike trails. She met with the Bourbon County commissioners to learn more about Elm Creek in regards to planning future walks. Summer-reading-program-children explored Mine Creek Battlefield under her guidance. Gunn Park was the site where she took 4-H kids for native plant exploring. She also gave prairie walks on the Prairie Reconstruction Project at Fort Scott NHS.

Glenn Fell of Emporia is the Emporia Regional Leader. Glenn has a true love for the prairie and loves to share his appreciation of it with others. Glen has been leading wildflower/prairie walks in the Flint Hills near Strong City, as well as in and around

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Volunteers help at a Shunga Park Cleanup day in Topeka.



Emporia. He doesn't do just one event a year but holds monthly walks in his region. Glenn has also been involved locally with stewardship issues, such as spraying herbicide on prairie park lands.

KNPS has members who volunteer but don't have titles in the organization. I can't list everyone but I want to give you some examples.

- Glenn Snell has given wildflower presentations to the residents of Shawnee Hills Senior Living center in Shawnee, KS
- Frank Norman of Lawrence has given presentations on edible & medicinal plants to Missouri Master Naturalists
- Lenora Larson has made presentations to Overland Park Gardeners of America and Topeka Audubon Society
- Elizabeth Petroske has led multiple walks in Wy-

andotte County, focusing on both wildflowers and trees of the area.

- Denise Brubaker, Julie Maxwell, Vivien Smith, George Dick, and Mickey Delfelder have attended most of the workdays in Topeka to cut and kill Amur honeysuckle along the Shunga Creek.
- Joc Baker, Dianne Barker, Nancy Calhoun, Karen Hummel, Nancy Goulden, and Doreen Towne, all of the Manhattan area, have helped with wildflower walks at Tuttle Creek and Rock Springs.

We've also had volunteers who have helped to get the word out to the public about Little Bluestem, the State Grass. If you would like to get more involved in KNPS by hosting wildflower walks or making presentations or putting together a workday/workshop, contact us at email@ksnps.org.



BLUE-EYED GRASS--*Kansas Native Plant Society Wildflower of the Year 2014*

Text by Ken O'Dell, photos by Mike Haddock

The Kansas Native Plant Society (KNPS) chooses one of our native Kansas plants each year as the Wildflower of the Year. The plant chosen must be a plant native to Kansas. It may be common or rare. It need not be of horticultural interest, and if it is not, this may actually be a plus. It may be selected for emphasis on habitat. The purpose of selecting a Wildflower of the Year is to increase public awareness of our native Kansas plants.

Blue-eyed Grass is the KNPS choice for 2014. Whether you see the Blue-eyed Grass or the White-



Blue-eyed Grass member of the Iris family. Walking through the prairies in the spring, you will notice the flowers in shades of blue and white, ranging from dark sky blue flowers to light blue, slightly blue, creamy white and pure white.

eyed version of this plant, the early flowers of the native Kansas Blue-eyed Grass will draw your attention. Long, thin, green leaves look very much like the leaves of grass.

These plants are not a grass but a member of the Iris family. Walking through the prairies in the spring,

Blue-eyed Grass is a prairie plant that will do very well in dappled shade, as the taller prairie forbs and grasses in summer provide some shade for the much shorter Blue-eyed Grass. The plant is easily grown from seed or divisions. Chances are the seed from Blue-eyed Grass will not produce the exact color of the parent. Dividing a small clump will assure you of the colors you saw on that clump. These beautiful native plants are at times available at retail nurseries and at native plant sales. Kansas has four species of Blue-eyed Grass. Each has a different common name and all four of them are the Kansas Wildflower of the Year for 2014.

Blue-eyed Grass, *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*, is native in several counties in the eastern half of the state. It has bright green foliage, may grow up to 12 inches tall and is usually found in slightly moist areas or edges of woodlands. The flowers of this species may be light blue, violet or occasionally white.

Prairie Blue-eyed Grass, *Sisyrinchium campestre*, is native in most counties in eastern Kansas. You will

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will see pale blue to white flowers in spring. Its bluish-green clumps of grass-like foliage are stunning, with the colorful flowers resting on top. This species is the most common in Eastern Kansas.

The foliage of Strict Blue-eyed Grass, *Sisyrinchium montanum*, frequently has a bluish overcast, especially in spring and early summer. Dark blue or violet colored flowers are very showy on 6 to 10 inch clumps.

Roadside Blue-eyed Grass, *Sisyrinchium langloisii*, aka *Sisyrinchium pruinosum*, has light green foliage and slender stems growing to 6



Blue-eyed grass Foliage

to 12 inches in length. The flowers are violet-blue to light purple. These plants are found mostly in open prairies, pastures and open roadside areas.

More information on this beautiful Blue-eyed Grass and other Kansas native plants is available at www.kswildflower.org

and from the Kansas Native Plant Society at www.kansasnativeplantsociety.com.



Meet KNPS Charter Members—Beth Wiechman

At the 2013 Annual Wildflower Weekend and also in the October newsletter, some information was shared about our Charter Members. In this issue we are introducing a new feature “Meet KNPS Charter Members.” For each issue, one of our original members will be asked to complete a set of questions related to their memories and experiences in Kansas Wildflower Society/Kansas Native Plant Society in the last 35 years. Our first “interviewee” is Beth Wiechman.

1. Briefly tell us about yourself (where you are from, what is/was your vocation, how you became interested in wildflowers/plants?)

I have lived in Kansas all but the first six years of my life. I am an artist and began studying drawing and painting (watercolor) as a very young child. I became interested in horticulture my senior year of high school, when I enrolled in the horticulture program they had just begun offering through the Wichita Area VoTech. There was at that time (early 70’s) a private greenhouse at 13th and Grove in Wichita, and that is where class was held. My husband Stan and I had the charter membership together. He was in the nursery business at that time. He passed away in June of 2013, still working as a self-employed horticulturist. He is the one who first heard that a group of people wanted to form a wildflower society, and he signed up.

2. What were some of your favorite activities (meetings, outings, etc.) that KWS sponsored in the first few years?

I always enjoyed the outings. Of course, it was always so interesting and entertaining going to the different locations around the state and seeing the wide variety of wildflowers and the landscapes they were a part of. The tour leaders were always very friendly and eager to answer any questions the participants had about the plants. It was always a lot of fun!

3. What are some of the changes in the organization you have observed as time has passed?

As time went on, we were not able to stay as involved as would have liked. Our son Anselm now holds the membership, and I always look forward to reading the newsletter. That is one thing that has changed. In the beginning, and for many years, it was in the form of a little booklet. Generally speaking, the organization has grown significantly.

4. Do you have a favorite memory or story related to KWS/KNPS you would like to share with readers?

Something I think would interest the readers is that a very dear friend of ours and her brother were the previous owners of the pasture that was toured just this past fall at the AWW, adjacent to Maxwell Game Reserve. It is now called “Buffalo Hill.” In past years, our little family spent many a Saturday night in the summertime there with previous owner Darcy and her husband Dennis, roasting hotdogs over a fire and gazing at the stars. They live in Michigan now, and I sent them a copy of the KNPS newsletter, telling about the outing there in September. They were excited to hear about it, and were so happy that so many attended.

2014 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events

Information provided by [Kansas Native Plant Society](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org), see more events on our website:
www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org

Please share this information and contact us about additional events to note. Thank you! [email@KSNPS.org]

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

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

January 18: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. Volunteer prairie maintenance and preservation projects, third Saturday each month except Dec. [www.grasslandheritage.org]. Wear appropriate clothing. No special skills or tools needed. For details, please contact Frank Norman <fjnorman@sunflower.com> (785) 887-6775 (home) or (785) 691-9748 (cell).

January 23: Citizen Science Presentation in Topeka, KS, 7-8pm. Learn more about Warren Nature Area in Topeka and what you could do as a citizen scientist. Jeff Hansen will share his wealth of experience in this program at Topeka / Shawnee County Public Library. Sponsor: Topeka Audubon Society. Contact Jeff for more info: <hanjd@cox.net> (785) 806-6917.

 **January 25: Kansas Native Plant Society** Winter Board Meeting and Outing, Manhattan, KS. The meeting begins at noon at the Hale Library on the Kansas State University campus, room 503 (the Deans Conference Room) on the 5th floor. After the meeting (approximately 3pm) consider exploring the Flint Hills Discovery Center indoors or go to Konza Prairie to explore the prairie in winter. Bring your lunch. Backup date: February 1. <email@KSNPS.org> (785) 864-3453.

January 25: Kaw Valley Eagles Day in Lawrence, KS. Celebrate the return of the eagles and learn about the environment, 10am-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. <bunnie.a.watkins@usace.army.mil> (785) 213-5053.

February 15: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan. 18 info.

February 25: Prescribed Burning-- Pasture Management Session Number 2 of 7-- Aurora, KS. Learn the fundamentals of when, why, and how to conduct a prescribed burn including evaluating the need to burn depending on your goals for your grassland, 10am-3pm. Also learn about burning cooperatives, how they form and operate to benefit the needs of multiple grassland managers. This class will highlight some of the latest equipment for conducting prescribed burns and have hands-on burn planning demonstrations using a sandbox. Sponsored by Cloud County Co-op & K-State Research and Extension. Lunch Sponsored by American AgCredit. Location: Knights of Columbus Hall, 180 E Main St., Aurora, KS. \$15/person for individual sessions. More Info: Pasture Management Series Brochure linked on KNPS events webpage. Contact: <robinreid@ksu.edu> (785) 325-2121.

March 15: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan. 18 info.

March 19: Growing Wildflowers from Seed Workshop at Overland Park Arboretum. • 8909 W. 179th. St. Ken O'Dell will show you how he gathers, cleans and stores some of his wildflower seeds, 1pm. Ken will provide seeds he gathered for you to use in this class. You will learn what kind of soil to use, how much to water the pots, and how much light the seedlings need during and after germination. You will plant different wildflower seeds with a label for each pot. You may then take the flat of pots home and watch your wildflowers

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2014 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events—Continued

March 19 Overland Park Arboretum Workshop, continued: grow! Each of you will get 15 to 18 pots. Ken O'Dell grows all of the native plants for the Friends of the Arboretum spring plant sale each year. He is a long-time volunteer at the Overland Park Arboretum and serves on the Board of the Kansas Native Plant Society. Class is limited to 12 people; so register early. We will take the first 12 that respond via email to Ken O'Dell and say they want the class. This is a free class to members of the **Kansas Native Plant Society** only. Contact Ken O'Dell to register. <ken@springvalleynursery.com> (913) 837-5112.

 **April 5:** Spring Cleanup at Chaplin Nature Center, Arkansas City, KS. Come celebrate spring at the nature center while lending a helping hand, 10am-3pm. The center needs your help to get the facility ready for visitors and school groups. Clearing trails of debris, raking, sprucing up the area around the building and small repair jobs will be on our to-do list. No matter what your age, you can contribute. A simple lunch will be provided for those staying the whole day. Be sure to wear old clothes and bring a pair of work gloves. Branch clippers and yard rakes are needed. Call the center for more information. Sponsor: Wichita Audubon Society. Leader: <cnc@wichitaudubon.org> (620) 442-4133.

April 19: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan. 18 info.

April 19th & 26th: Missouri Prairie Foundation Spring Plant Sales 8am - noon. Location: City Market, 5th & Walnut, Kansas City, MO. [<http://www.moprairie.org>] (888) 843-6739.

April 25-28: FloraKansas Great Plains Plant Bazaar, sponsored by Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, KS. [www.dyckarboretum.org] <arboretum@Hesston.edu> (620) 327-8127.

 **May 10:** Barber County Wildflower Tour. Meet at the Medicine Lodge High School, 8:30am. Enjoy continental breakfast and slides of flowers we expect to see. Buses will provide transportation. Morning participants will return to the school at noon. Full-day participants will enjoy a delicious lunch and entertainment at a tree-shaded country park. Ride through the beautiful gyp hills to a second site. Refreshments will be served before we return to the school around 3:30pm. Barber Co. Conservation District and **Kansas Native Plant Society** are co-sponsors. Pre-paid reservations should be sent before May 6th, \$8 half-day, \$15 full-day. Barber Co Conservation, 800 W. 3rd Ave. Medicine Lodge, KS 67104-8002, Courtney Pilkington <pilkington@ks.nacdnet.net>, phone (620) 886-3721, ext. 3.

May 17: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan. 18 info.

May 31: Rock Springs Annual Wildflower Walk, Junction City, KS. Come and see the colorful spring wildflowers at Rock Springs 4-H Center, 9am-2:20pm! Rock Springs is located just south and west of Junction City, KS (1168 K-157 Hwy) and consists of over 735 acres of land in the gorgeous Flint Hills. One of the most unique features of Rock Springs is the 2nd largest natural spring in Kansas that supplies 1,000 gallons of water a minute! The Wildflower Walk will include morning snacks, a hot lunch at the dining hall, and a guided wildflower ID and info walk, for a cost per participant of \$20. Registration form is available on KNPS events webpage or request from contact here. Sponsor: Rock Springs 4-H Center. Contact: <jwilson@rocksprings.net> (785) 257-3221.

 **June 1-30:** June is Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month! Each year **Kansas Native Plant Society** makes a formal appeal to the Governor for June to be proclaimed as Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month. This opportunity promotes greater appreciation for the diversity, value, and beauty of Kansas native plants and their habitats. [www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org] .

June 7: Birds, Butterflies and Breakfast at Chaplin Nature Center, Arkansas City, KS. There is nothing better than breakfast on a shady porch surrounded by the beauty of nature. After a hearty breakfast, we will hike the trails of CNC in search of birds, butterflies and wildflowers, 8:30-10am. Call to make a reservation by June 3. A donation of \$5 is suggested. Sponsor: Wichita Audubon Society. Leader: <cnc@wichitaudubon.org> (620) 442-4133.



KNPS TO FOCUS ON STEWARDSHIP

Text by Krista Dahlinger, photo by Glen Fell

What if you found a great location for a plant ID walk; sent out invites and posted notices, but just days before the event, you found the plants were dead and dying because they were sprayed with an herbicide? This was not a hypothetical, but a real, occurrence in June 2013.

KNPS held a board meeting in 2013 near one of the Kansas State Parks and while hiking the trails, found woody shrubs and cedar trees encroaching across the grassy areas.

How and why does this poisoning of our native plants and/or lack of ecologically sound practices that would support and encourage our Kansas native habitats happen? Those in charge of vegetation maintenance at parks and natural places may or may not be aware of the benefit of native plants for butterflies, bees, birds, wildlife and holding the soil in place. Perhaps natural areas have just always been sprayed and mowed down to ground level. Additionally, budgets for time and materials to manage vegetation could be limited or suffering cut backs.

Several board members of KNPS held a discussion to wonder "what if" some of our members and like-minded garden and nature groups could give time to "Stewardship" in taking care of native areas in our communities. This could mean contacting persons in charge of vegetation maintenance at a local park to find out how they plan to deal with native plants in the landscape and ask that some or all be left to grow.

Stewardship could also be in the form of organizing a work day, clearing honeysuckle, thistles, or other unwelcome invasive plants. Stewardship could start with a discussion of the value of native plants to wildlife and people. Stewardship can be an action plan to assist in the maintenance of natural areas, an offer to help do some of the work where resources are scarce. What a great way to learn to identify native and non-native plants-- by locating and observing them in the local habitat.

We would like to hear from our members about experiences and ideas concerning Stewardship of native plants and places in your local communities. Have you been involved in work days? Does your community encourage or discourage natural areas for plants, wildlife and people? In 2014, ask yourself if you are able to provide some Stewardship in preserving native plant areas in some way and share your ideas and actions with us. Work days could be scheduled through the KNPS event calendar. I will report your ideas and actions in upcoming newsletter articles.



Wilted sunflower



KNPS Members Enjoy Plants of Boston Mountains in Arkansas

Text and photos by James Bresnahan

In late April and again in late October 2013, a group of KNPS members, including Iralee Bernard, her husband Ken, Jim Mayhew and wife Pattie and I took a foray to the Boston Mountains of Northwest Arkansas. We embarked every morning into the misty mountains to search for the rare and beautiful in the moist, mesic riparian natural communities of the Buffalo National River and its tributaries.

The Spring foray was a time of rain, rushing streams plunging from every cliff into



Boston Mountain Vista in Spring

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fantastic waterfalls; bird songs filling the forest canopy and a forest floor that was covered with Spring ephemerals and other herbs. Typical spring blooms were yellow violet (*Viola pubescens*), an unusual white delphinium (*Delphinium carolinianum ssp virescens*), rue anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*), wood sorrel (*Oxalis violacea*), iris, and shooting stars.



Delphinium

Fall in the Boston Mountains was clear and dry with little water; however, tree colors made up for it. In the river valleys, maple, beech and other riparian trees replace oak and hickory as the dominant trees.

The maples and flowering dogwoods produce a flamboyant display of color.



Fall color in the Boston Mountains

Beech is a disjunct species in the Ozarks of Arkansas being predominantly found East of the Mississippi river. The smooth bark of this tree is beautiful but on heavily used paths, it is rare to find a tree that isn't marred by initials carved into it. It is also very cavity prone. However, besides adding character, this is very good for wildlife as the tree does provide cavity nests for a great variety of wildlife. Of more interest is the complex ecological relationship this tree has with a variety of other plants and organisms we discovered associated with it. One interesting plant, which appeared to be a dried,

dead weed on the forest floor beneath the beech trees, is beech drops (*Epifagus virginiana*), a non-photosynthetic plant, lacking chlorophyll, which is parasitic on the roots of the beech. This plant is in the *Scrophulariales* family. It has alternate, vestigial leaves as well as alternate inconspicuous flowers about 1/2 inch long. Another plant associated with the beech is *Monotropa uniflora*, or Indian Pipe. This plant also lacks chlorophyll and is a non-photosynthetic parasite on beech via a parasitic relationship with the mycelia of the mycorrhizal fungi of the tree roots. It is in the order *Ericales*, along with blueberries, azaleas and rhododendrons. A single flower is present on each stem that nods toward the ground early and later points straight up. This plant is an indicator plant for moist, rich woods.

We were fortunate to find the rare ovate-leaved catchfly or fringed campion (*Silene ovata*) that is threatened or endangered throughout its range in the lower Eastern states. This is a very stately plant with opposite leaves lacking a petiole and finely divided white fringed flowers.

The foray taught me a lot about the natural communities in this region. I thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie of the group and, in particular, the expertise of Ms. Barnard. I hope to participate in many more fun forays through other eco-regions close by.



Spring Waterfalls in the Boston Mountains of Arkansas



Indian Pipe



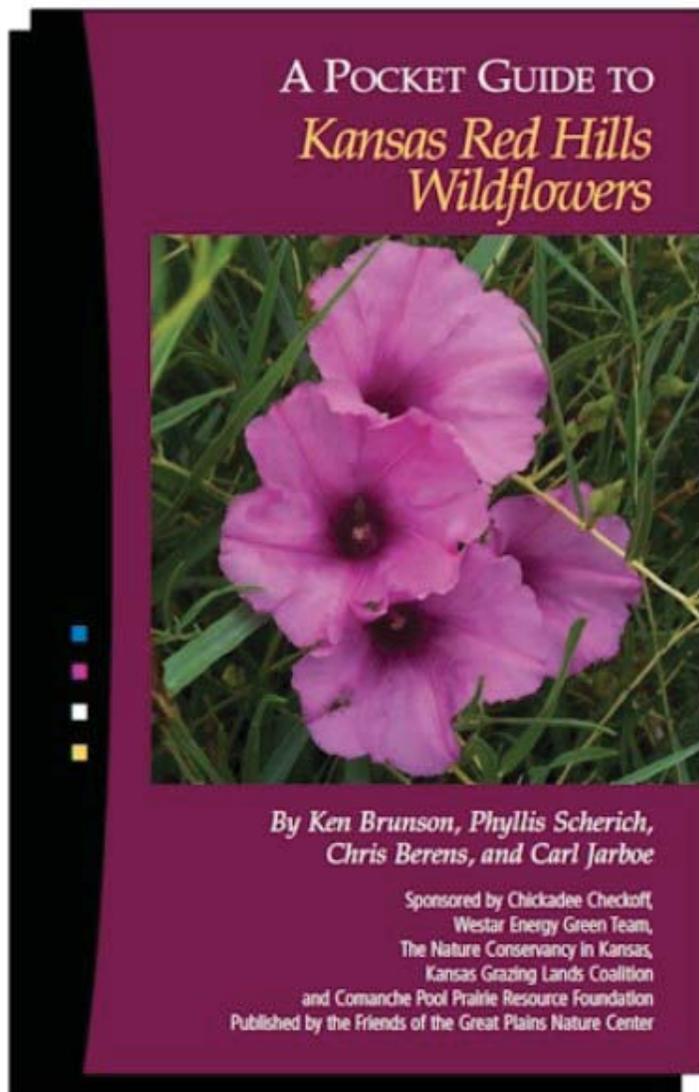
Fringed Campion



New Pocket Guide for Kansas Red Hills Wildflowers

Readers, who have carried and used the orange booklet A Pocket Guide to Kansas Flint Hills Wild-

flowers and Grasses by Iralee Barnard, will be thrilled to learn that Great Plains Nature Center has published a companion pocket guide for the flowering plants found in the Kansas Red Hills. A Pocket Guide to Kansas Red Hills Wildflowers uses basically the same format of colored photographs and descriptions to help fans identify the plants found in the south-central or western portions of Kansas. The purple-pink cover will help you instantly know which guide you are picking up.



KNPS board member, Phyllis Scherich, is a major contributor to the contents of the guide. Those who have walked with Phyllis on wildflower outings are well aware of her vast knowledge of Red Hills wildflowers and outstanding photographs.

The pocket guide gives our members, both those who live in the Red Hills and those who plan to visit and expand their knowledge of this special landscape, an opportunity to get to know a set of plants they may never have “met” before.

Free copies of the guide are now available and can be picked up at the front desk of the Great Plains Nature Center. You can request an individual copy be mailed to you for \$3.00 to cover postage. Make your check out to “Friends of the GPNC” and mail it to: Owl’s Nest Gift Shop; Grand Plains Nature Center; 6232 E. 29th Street N. Wichita, KS 672220. Go to www.gpnc.org/guide11.htm for more information.



Tech Notes

By Mickey Delfelter

Each and every newsletter includes a handful of upcoming events, but there are additional events listed on our website at <http://www.ksnps.org>. By clicking on the Events Calendar link in the left column, you can see all of the upcoming events or filter them by region.

If you have a wildflower- or nature-related event and would like additional (and free) publicity, submit the event to our calendar. The link is at the top of the Event Calendar. Approved event listings will be distributed weekly to our email list and posted on our Facebook page.



Featured Plant: Buttonbush (*Cephalantus occidentalis*)

Text by Lorraine J. Kaufman, Illustration by Lorna Habegger Harder

Back in the 1970s when our family was planting black walnut trees in creek bottom land at our farm near Topeka, we worked around a particularly low, wet area where stood a woody shrub about six feet in diameter and three feet high. Our zeal to plant as many trees as possible was limited in this spot because it always contained standing water in the spring and remained damp if not actually soggy through the summer. We paid little attention to the shrub itself.

Over time, though, this shrub grew to the point that it demanded our notice and a name -- buttonbush, *Cephalantus occidentalis*. It is now 8-10 feet high and nearly 15 feet in diameter. In early July, it blooms enthusiastically, becoming decorated with 1-1/2 inch diameter spiky white balls that dangle on 4-6 inch stalks from the ends of branches and bases of leaves.

Upon closer inspection, these remarkable spherical blooms prove to be clusters of many small white flowers each having a tall pistil that protrudes beyond a white four-lobed corolla. The blooms exude a pleasing fragrance that draws multitudes of butterflies and bees. The highly-branched stems provide excellent nesting sites for many bird species, particularly red-winged blackbirds. The globular fruiting heads contain numerous yellow-brown conical seeds that persist on the plant through the winter.

The buttonbush is a common native perennial throughout central and eastern Kansas and other southern and eastern states. It grows well in sunny, wet soil, is not afflicted by pests or diseases, and is available from nurseries. So if you have a low, sunny, wet-- and *large--* spot in your garden for which you've struggled to find the right plant, consider the buttonbush! It is certainly an interesting and unusual shrub that will provide a great focus for your space. And look for it when you're out in a field near a creek and you find your feet getting muddy. If you're there at the right time of year, you won't be able to miss it for the blooms and butterflies.



Buttonbush Detail



Membership News

NEW MEMBERS

FROM 9/23/13 TO 12/15/13

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Leticia Beltran - Wichita

Megan Beltz - Wichita

Botanical Research Institute of Texas - Fort Worth, TX

Daniel Bush - Manhattan

Fong Christenson - Lenexa

Megan Corrigan - Pittsburg

Brianna Eldridge - Wichita

Warkim Giles - Wichita

Natasha Hayden - Wichita

Sena Hermreck - Wichita

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Rebekah James - Wichita

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Dana Loper - Park City

Megan Miller - Andover

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Linda Nelson - Merriam

Kristen Nolte - Wichita

Kristy Perry - Andover

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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 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
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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©(3) organization. Gifts to KNPS are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Membership application/renewal form

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Membership Category

Student	\$10.00
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