



Kansas Native Plant Society

Winter Newsletter

Volume 37 Number 1
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KNPS 2015 Wildflower of the Year Green Antelopehorn - *Asclepias viridis*

Text by Brad Guhr, Photo by Brian Martin

Green antelopehorn (*Asclepias viridis*), also known as spider milkweed, is the Kansas Native Plant Society (KNPS) 2015 Wildflower of the Year (WOY). Green antelopehorn is 18 inches to 24 inches tall with green flowers showing May through July. It is found on dry prairies in the eastern 2/3 of the state with a substrate ranging from sand to limestone. An especially common species in prairie pastures, cattle do not find it palatable due to its production of toxic cardiac glycosides. The common names are given for the small antelope horn-like appearance of the seed pods and the common presence of crab spiders hunting for insect prey around the flowers. Previously belonging to the milkweed family (Asclepiadaceae,) the genus *Asclepias* is now classified in the subfamily Asclepiadoideae of the dogbane family (Apocynaceae.)



Green Antelopehorn (*Asclepias viridis*)

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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.

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President's Message

By Mike Haddock

I recently gave a presentation on Kansas wildflowers and grasses at the annual meeting of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts. At the end of my talk, I was asked what my favorite wildflower was. I often receive this question and my usual response is that in some way, I find every plant that I encounter to be interesting. As I drove home from Wichita, I gave this more thought and there are certain wildflowers that continue to excite me when I encounter them, even though I have seen them on numerous occasions. Here are my top ten favorites (at least at this point in time).

Sanguinaria canadensis, bloodroot, is among our first woodland wildflowers to bloom in the spring. It is found in the east third of Kansas and has a rhizome with bright red sap. Native Americans used this sap as face paint and to decorate baskets and mats and dyed articles by boiling them in water together with the rhizomes. They also used the plant medicinally to treat fevers, diarrhea, ulcers, sores, burns, coughs, and poison ivy. *Spiranthes cernua*, nodding ladies' tresses, flowers in the fall in the east 2/3 of the state. It is a member of the orchid family and has flowers with a lilac or vanilla fragrance. Because it is only four to twenty inches tall, it is easily overlooked in tallgrass areas.

I am fond of a pair of plants whose appearance seems almost science-fiction-like, *Eryngium leavenworthii*, Leavenworth eryngo, a purple member of the parsley family and *Passiflora incarnata*, which goes by the common names maypop and passionflower. Both are found primarily in the southeast quarter of Kansas. Passionflower is one of our most exotic-looking species. The fleshy fruits are edible and were cultivated by Native Americans. In the late 1800s, an extract of the plant was used to treat insomnia, epilepsy, and to "soothe nerves." The dried flowers were used in preparations to treat burns, skin disorders, and hemorrhoids. *Primula meadia*, prairie shooting star, is another species found in the southeast quarter of Kansas. The flowers may be magenta, lavender, pink, or white and are truly spectacular. Members of this ge-

nus release pollen when visiting bees vibrate their thoracic flight muscles at a particular frequency, which in turn causes the anthers to vibrate.

Oenothera suffrutescens, scarlet butterfly weed, is a native which has flowers that change color as they mature. They start out white but fade pinkish or red. The Lakota Sioux are said to have rubbed this plant on their hands to make them sticky as an aid in catching horses, and the Navajo used a cold tea made from scarlet butterfly weed to settle children's upset stomachs. *Stanleya pinnata*, prince's plume, is toxic to livestock due to its tendency to accumulate selenium, but I still find it attractive. Native Americans applied a poultice of mashed root for rheumatic pain, toothaches, and earaches. Prince's plume occurs in the west 2/5 of Kansas and is sometimes called the "sentinel of the plains" because from a distance it can resemble a person on the horizon.

Mentzelia decapetala, which goes by the common names ten-petal mentzelia, candleflower, chalk lily, and evening starflower, would be near the top of my list of favorites. It has showy flowers three to six inches in diameter that open late in the afternoon and close during the night. It occurs in the west 3/5 of Kansas on dry, rocky hillsides, steep banks and slopes. *Coryphantha vivipara*, pincushion cactus, is another western and central Kansas plant, which is often overlooked because it is less than three inches tall. If encountered when in flower, the blooms are stunning.

Personally, I find compass plant, *Silphium laciniatum*, to be one of our most interesting native plants. It has basal leaves that tend to align their edges north and south. This plant is observed in the east 2/3 of Kansas and resembles a sunflower, but differs because the ray florets produce the fruit rather than the disk florets, as occurs in our *Helianthus* species. Some Native American tribes burned the dried roots to ward off lightning during storms, in the belief that lightning occurred more frequently where compass plant grew.

There are many other plants that probably should be on my top ten list, but these will do for now. Be on the lookout for them when you are out botanizing.

AWW 2015 PLANS

Please add the dates for our 2015 Annual Wildflower Weekend to your calendars. It will take place September 25-27 in Manhattan. The last time the Kansas Native Plant Society met in Manhattan was 1994; so it has been twenty years since we have been in this area. Plans are still under development, so stay tuned for additional information in the next few months. We will be arranging a variety of sites to visit; however, botanizing at the Konza Prairie Biological Station will definitely occur.

Landscaping with Black Walnut

Text and photo by Jeff Hansen

I think we all like plants that offer us an edible product. Of all the edible plants I've tried, I have found a new favorite. It is the black walnut.

The black walnut, *Juglans nigra*, is a member of the Walnut family, *Juglandaceae*. Our many hickory species are also members of this family. It can be found growing naturally in the eastern 3/4 of the state. It prefers moist soils like those found in flood plains but grows in drier uplands as well.

There is another native walnut species that is found in Barber, Comanche, Clark, and Meade counties of Kansas. It is the Texas or little walnut, *Juglans microcarpa*. I'm wondering if we drove by some of them while exploring the Red Hills at the 2014 Annual Wildflower Weekend.

Walnut trees have compound leaves with 9 to 21 toothed leaflets. The flowers are monoecious; so individual trees have both male and female flowers. The trees are one of the last to leaf out in the spring and the first to lose their leaves in the fall. A handsome shade tree, it has strong limbs that resist storm damage.

Both species produce edible nuts. But they aren't just edible; they are delicious. In my opinion, they aren't that tasty eaten alone. But put them in cookies, pancakes, or ice cream, and you will probably turn your nose up at conventional English walnuts that are the common walnuts sold in grocery stores.

If you are thinking of adding a black walnut to your landscape, I'd recommend finding a local tree from which you can harvest nuts. The trees have deep tap roots, making them difficult to transplant. Another reason to get a local tree's fruit is that it will be adapted to your area. If you purchase a tree, you don't really know the source of the seeds, and they may not be adapted to local conditions. Trees from a few hundred miles south will not grow well if grown further north.

For years I always ignored the black walnuts that fell from my neighbor's tree, not knowing how to harvest them. This past fall I decided to do some research and learn the proper method to harvest black walnuts. Beware: the tannins in the husks will stain your hands. Wear rubber gloves when handling black walnut husks.

The nuts should be harvested as soon as they fall from the tree. The outer husk of the walnut must be removed and the nuts dried. I removed the husk by placing a nut on a hard surface, stepping on it and roll-

ing it back and forth under my foot. Once the husks are removed, wash the nuts using a spray nozzle attached to a garden hose. Placing them in a wire basket is useful when washing them so that the husk bits are washed away leaving the nuts in the basket. After washing, the nuts should be dried for about 8 weeks before using them. I put mine in beer flats to dry.

For most people the most difficult part of eating a walnut is cracking it. Black walnuts cannot be cracked with conventional nutcrackers. A hammer can be used but nut meat is usually crushed. In my opinion the best nutcracker to use is the Potter cast iron nutcracker. They are no longer manufactured but are often available on Ebay, which is where I purchased mine. The cracker has a shield that is placed over the nut when it is cracked. This prevents pieces of nut from catapulting 20 feet from the cracker.



Potter cast iron nutcracker

Since I started eating black walnuts, I've discovered some delicious uses for them. Every morning I crack four black walnuts and add them to my oatmeal. I've also added the nuts to pancakes. But my favorite use for them is in ice cream. Over the Thanksgiving holiday I took my walnut cracker along with some walnuts to my mom's. She also had walnuts from some trees my dad had planted from seed (harvested from local trees). The resulting ice cream was beyond good. I couldn't stop eating it. It put all other ice cream to shame, and I love most kinds of ice cream.

There are many other uses for black walnuts. The wood is prized for furniture. Natural dye can be produced from the husks. It is the preferred host for the luna moth and countless other insects. Birds are attracted to the trees to dine on the many insects dining on the leaves. Squirrels relish the nuts.

Some warn that walnuts retard the growth of all plants. This is simply not true. There are some species that can't tolerate the juglones chemical, which is found in all parts of the walnut tree. Juglones does inhibit the growth of tomatoes, potatoes, and eggplant. But there are many plants that are not impacted. I've never noticed any ill effects on plants in my garden which has a black walnut growing 40 feet away.

If you have a favorite use for black walnuts, I'd love to hear from you. Contact me at hanjd@cox.net.

New Website Calendar for Outdoor Activities

By Mickey Delfelder

Have you ever said "I wish there was a single website where I could find everything to do outside?" The new year will see a new website for outdoor enthusiasts that does exactly that. The Kansas Trails Council has partnered with the Kansas Wildscape Foundation to create GetOutdoorsKansas (www.getoutdoorskansas.org), which strives to be the comprehensive calendar for all outdoor activities in Kansas.

The new venture has a 3-year funding commitment with supporting funds from Westar's Green Team and the Sunflower Foundation: Health Care for Kansans, a Topeka-based philanthropic organization. The GetOutdoorsKansas website model is based on a grassroots contribution of content by organizations that sponsor or promote outdoor activities and trail managers who build and maintain trails in the State.

The website continues to look for active partners to post activities. The Colorado version of the website has over 400 contributing partner organizations. KNPS, for one, will share all of our sponsored activities and expects to list 25 to 30 events throughout 2015. Any outdoor activity that promotes a healthy, active lifestyle is welcome and any organization hosting such events is encouraged to become a partner. Listing activities is free and easy.

Activities will be as varied as Kansas River float trips to 5Ks and long distance bike rides to wildflower tours. The activities will be interesting to gardeners, cyclists, runners, equestrians, kayakers, hikers, hunters, bird watchers, nature lovers, outdoor photographers and us wildflower enthusiasts. If you enjoy being outside, you will find events to enjoy.

Also included is a trail-mapping feature that displays GPS tracks and other information about each trail. "We're really excited to have a comprehensive on-line resource showing thousands of miles of trails throughout Kansas" reports Michael Goodwin, Kansas Trails Council treasurer and board member.



KNPS 2015 Wildflower of the Year Green Antelopehorn - *Asclepias viridis*

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The plant resources committee chose this species primarily for its importance as a host plant for the monarch butterfly, which has had a perilous decline in numbers in recent years. According to Chip Taylor from Monarch Watch, *Asclepias viridis* is the next most desired host plant for monarchs after common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*). With importance to monarchs, showy flowers, exquisite seed pods, and a shorter stature and less weedy growth habit than common milkweed (perhaps making it more suitable for native landscaping), *Asclepias viridis* emerged as the best choice for this year's KNPS WOY selection.

For more photos and a detailed description of *Asclepias viridis*, visit kswildflower.org.

Past KNPS WOY Selections

- 1998 *Echinacea angustifolia* (Purple coneflower)
- 1999 *Asclepias tuberosa* (Butterfly milkweed)

- 2000 *Helianthus maximiliani* (Maximilian sunflower)
- 2001 *Liatris pycnostachya* (Prairie blazing star)
- 2002 *Clematis fremontii* (Fremont's leather plant or Fremont's clematis)
- 2003 *Penstemon grandifloras* (Large-flower beard-tongue)
- 2004 *Oenothera macrocarpa* (Missouri evening primrose)
- 2005 *Verbena Canadensis* (Rose verbena)
- 2006 *Salvia azurea* (Blue sage or Pitcher sage)
- 2007 *Callirhoe involucrate* (Purple poppy mallow or Wine cup)
- 2008 *Lithospermum incisum* (Fringed puccoon or Narrowleaf gromwell)
- 2009 *Delphinium virescens* (Prairie larkspur)
- 2010 *Schrankia nuttallii* (Catclaw sensitive briar)
- 2011 *Ratibida columnifera* (Upright prairie cone-flower or Mexican hat)
- 2012 *Amorpha canescens* (Leadplant or Pursh)
- 2013 *Schizachyrium scoparium* (Little Bluestem)
- 2014 *Sisyrinchium* species (Blue-eyed grass)

Kansas Champion Bur Oak Tree

Text and photos by Ken O'Dell

The past few years I have looked at as many of our State Champion trees as possible. Some of these champions are gone. In order to be champions, they are, of course, old trees, and have been burned by the glare of life, if not by taking a direct lightning hit. The champion bur oak has been hit by lightning, and now has a lightning rod and the scars to prove it.

I saw the bur oak champion last January in St. George, just east of Manhattan. This giant has a circumference of 19 feet and 11 inches; a height of 88 feet and a spread of 82 feet. Our state champion bur oak has been awarded 348 points. That is one BIG tree. This year, 2015, it is 272 years old and still full of pep and energy. More information on “champion trees in Kansas” is found at www.kansasforests.org

Last January our champion had some growth buds waiting for warm weather and longer days. Male and female flowers appear on the same trees in April. Acorns mature the same year. Bur oak is in the white oak group along with white, post and chinquapin oaks. The scientific name for bur oak is *Quercus macrocarpa*. “Macrocarpa” refers to the large fruit. “Quercus” is the classical name for oaks. Acorns are true nuts, as are our native walnuts, hickories, pecans and hazelnuts.



Council Oak Jr. in Council Grove, KS
Note the shelter in the background,
shielding the original Council Oak stump



Champion Bur Oak near St. George, KS

Another famous bur oak in Kansas is the Council Oak in Council Grove. Under that famous tree in 1825, a treaty between the U. S. Commissioners and the Osage Indians was signed giving the right of way through Indian land to establish the Santa Fe Trail. The original bur oak has died and a new “COUNCIL OAK JR.” was planted in 1975. Today Junior is just over 40 feet tall and just about as wide. Bur oak is native in most of the eastern half of Kansas and has been growing here for about 11,000 years; so we should have some big ones.

If you are aware of any large native trees in Kansas and want to notify me, send an email to Ken@springvalleynursery.com.



2015 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events



Information provided by Kansas Native Plant Society, 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 17: 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 24:  Kansas Native Plant Society Winter Board Meeting and Outing, Wichita, KS. The meeting begins at noon at the Great Plains Nature Center. After the meeting (approximately 3pm) consider exploring the surrounding trails. Bring your lunch. Address: 6232 E. 29th Street North in Wichita. Backup date: January 31. [haddock@ksu.edu] (785) 776-0680.

January 24: Kaw Valley Eagles Day in Lawrence, KS 9am-4pm. Celebrate the return of the eagles and learn about the environment. 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. [rjewolf@sunflower.com] (785) 887-6019.

February 15: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan 17 info.

February 21:  Winter Tree ID Walk at Dornwood Park in Topeka, 1-3pm. Learn to identify trees with only buds, twigs, and bark as clues. We will walk the many trails through Oak-Hickory woods. Learn to identify multiple oak and hickory species as well as elm, ash, cherry, sycamore, paw paw, bladdernut, and others. Children are welcome and enjoy "scavenger hunting" in the woods. Last year we had great looks at a barred owl. Dornwood Park is located off of SE 25th & California in Topeka. Take the California exit off of I-70 and go south to SE 25th. Take a left onto 25th and follow it until it dead ends at the parking lot. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact Jeff Hansen if you plan to attend. [hanjd@cox.net] (785) 806-6917 .

March 21: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan 17 info.

April 8:  Leavenworth County Master Gardeners meeting, 10:30am. A PowerPoint presentation on propagation will be given by Ken O'Dell to the Leavenworth Master Gardeners. Visitors, guests, members of the KNPS and all organizations are welcome. Ken is the KC Regional Leader of the KNPS, a retired nurseryman who has propagated millions of plants by cuttings, divisions and seed. This class will be mostly on propagating by cuttings. It is free to all. We should have plenty of room for everyone wanting to attend. This location is in the former train station in downtown Leavenworth. This beautiful old building has been remodeled into a wonderful community center, Riverfront Community Building 123 S. Esplanade St. in Leavenworth, KS. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact: Ken O'Dell [ken@springvalleynursery.com] (913) 837-5112.

April 18:  Old Military Trail Wildflower Walk at Perry Lake, 1pm. Meet at the parking area of the Old Military Trailhead on the west side of Ferguson Road 1 1/2 miles south of the Ferguson Road/KS92 junction for the 4th Annual OMT Wildflower Walk, Saturday, April 18, 2015. In the past we have seen Trout Lilies, Dutchman's Breeches, Mayapples, Jack in the Pulpit, Bladdernut Shrubs and more. Sponsor: KNPS-Atchison Region. For more information, please contact Fred or Nancy Coombs [coombs@rainbowtel.net] (785) 872-3463.

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



2015 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events, continued



April 24-27: FloraKansas Great Plains Plant Bazaar in Hesston, KS. Sponsored by Dyck Arboretum of the Plains. [www.dyckarboretum.org] [arboretum@Hesston.edu] (620) 327-8127.

May 9: Barber County Spring Wildflower Tour in the beautiful gyp hills. Meet at the Medicine Lodge High School at 8:30am for registration. Barber Co. Conservation District and Kansas Native Plant Society are co-sponsors. The full day tour (8:30am-3:30pm) includes breakfast and transportation, two identification stops, lunch, and afternoon refreshments, \$15. Pre-paid reservations should be sent by May 2. Order your Barber County Wildflower Tour t-shirt (\$10) now! Barber Co Conservation Office, 800 W. 3rd Ave. Medicine Lodge, KS 67104-8002, phone (620) 886-3721, ext. 3.

May 16: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan 17 info.

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

June 13: 10th Anniversary Symphony in the Flint Hills will be held at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Chase County. Contact: [info@symphonyintheflinthills.org] (620) 273-8955.

June 20:  Coombs Prairie Restoration Tour in Holton, KS, 1-4pm. Tour Fred and Nancy Coombs' ongoing restoration of native grasses and forbs on their 158-year-old family farm. Highlights include reseeding of old fields, pollinator gardens around the house, patch burning, and timber stand improvement. Sponsor: **KNPS-Atchison Region**. Directions: 6 miles east of Holton on K-116, right on X Rd, right on 222nd Road, 3/8ths mile to driveway on the right, 18160 222nd Road. Contact: Fred or Nancy Coombs [coombs@rainbowtel.net] (785) 872-3463.

June 20: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan 17 info.

June 25:  13th Annual Grant-Bradbury Prairie Walk in Topeka, 6:30pm-dark. Join KNPS at Grant-Bradbury Prairie Park. This 80-acre tallgrass prairie contains over 300 plant species. On this tour, you will learn and see the plants and animals of the prairie. Bring a camera because the spring wildflowers will be at their peak. Children are encouraged to come. Jeff Hansen, wildflower expert, will lead the tour. Sponsor: **Kansas Native Plant Society**. 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 building at the driveway. Contact Jeff Hansen if you plan to attend. [hanjd@cox.net] (785) 806-6917.

July 18 & Aug 15: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan 17 info.

September 11-13: FloraKansas Great Plains Plant Bazaar in Hesston, KS. Sponsored by Dyck Arboretum of the Plains. [www.dyckarboretum.org] [arboretum@Hesston.edu] (620) 327-8127.

September 19: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan 17 info.

September 25-27:  **Kansas Native Plant Society's** 37th Annual Wildflower Weekend will be in Manhattan, KS. We will visit natural areas in and near Riley County. Come enjoy native plants with us in the beautiful northern Flint Hills! The weekend is filled with outings, programs, a silent auction, photo contest, dinner, and socializing. For more information please contact KNPS President Mike Haddock [haddock@ksu.edu] (785) 776-0680.

October 17 & Nov 21: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Jan 17 info.

Join the KNPS email list to receive the latest event announcements: www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/email_list.php.

Leaves of Three, Let It Be: Not Necessarily

Text and photos by Jim Bresnahan

In the Fall of my sixth grade year, a monster walked into my classroom. Two eye slits squinted through a swollen face, half of which was covered with brown, scaly scabs, the other half with weeping pustules. It was soon apparent that this was a friend who had missed a week of school as a result of his scout troop collecting firewood containing poison ivy to burn in a campfire. The sap of poison ivy contains an oily compound, urushiol, which reacts with human skin proteins to induce an immune reaction producing blisters and an extremely itchy rash that may last about two weeks. Most animals are not similarly affected, and poison ivy berries are relished by many birds. Since, once initiated, there is little effective treatment that will shorten the course of the reaction except immunosuppressive steroids, it is best to attempt to avoid contact with the plant. The cautionary rhyme, “leaves of three, let it be,” is generally accepted as good advice. However, this expression is very indiscriminate and may dampen the desire of many to hike in forest and woodland as there are many plants with three leaves that are harmless and very common. Therefore, a review of poison ivy and plants that have a superficial resemblance to it may be helpful:

Poison ivy (fig.1), *Toxicodendron radicans*, is in the cashew family, Anacardiaceae. Poison oak and poison sumac are in the same genera but are not distributed in Kansas. Poison ivy is generally seen as a woody vine that climbs trees or trails along the ground but also appears as a small shrub up to six feet tall. It is usually found in sunny areas of forests and fields. I notice it often in disturbed areas close to

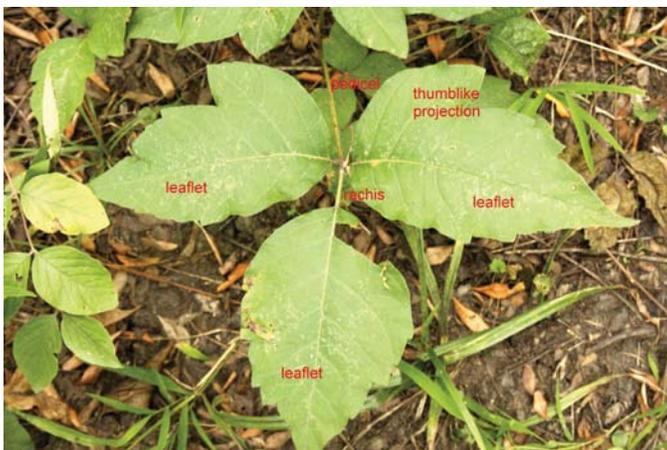


Figure 1: Poison Ivy

trails but uncommonly five yards away from the trail. As a vine, its stem is covered with small roots, that allow it to climb trees. All parts of the plant are poisonous. Poison ivy has a compound leaf with three pointed leaflets. The leaves are arranged alternately on the stem. The middle, or upper leaflet, is separated from the lower leaflets by a long stalk, the rachis. It is symmetrical on each side of the mid-vein. The lower, or side leaflets, are mirror images of each other, but they are not symmetrical on each side of the mid-vein. They are directly attached to the rachis. There is usually a notch on the lower surface such that some people envision a pair of pointed mittens with a thumb-like projection on the lower leaflets. Poison ivy leaves turn orange or red early in the Fall.

Key features are provided for distinguishing the following plants that are often mistaken for poison ivy:

Hog peanut, *Amphicarpaea bracteata* and Virginia creeper, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* (fig.2).

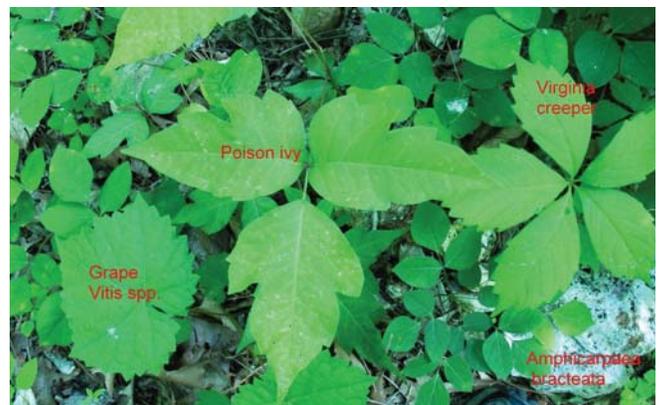


Figure 2: Hog peanut (*Amphicarpaea bracteata*), grape, poison ivy and Virginia creeper

Hog peanut completely surrounds the poison ivy plant in the center of the photo. Its resemblance is obvious. It is a vine with alternate, compound leaves with three leaflets. Distinguishing features are the much smaller leaves with smooth, un-notched leaflets. Distinguishing features of Virginia creeper are obvious, and there should be no confusion. Although, it is vine that climbs trees or rambles on the ground and turns reddish in the Fall, the leaves are palmately compound with 5 serrate leaflets (although occasionally 3). Leaflets do not resemble poison ivy.

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Leaves of Three, Let it Be: Not Necessarily

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Beggar's lice or tick trefoil, *Hylodesmum glutinosum* (fig. 3), is very common in the herbaceous



Figure 3: Tick trefoil

layer in Kansas, and like many legumes, has compound leaves with three leaflets. Features distinguishing it from poison ivy include leaves radiating in a whorled pattern from a central stem. Leaflets are entire and smooth.

Box elder, *Acer negundo* (fig. 4), is a tree that has three-part compound leaves that very closely resembles those of poison ivy, and it is easy to confuse young saplings and the shrub form of poison ivy. However, five-part leaves are found on the same tree and, being a maple, the leaves alternate on the twig.



Figure 4: Boxelder

Aromatic sumac, *Rhus aromatica* (fig.5), is a shrub with alternate, three-part, compound leaves like poison ivy. Unlike poison ivy, all leaflets directly attach to the pedicel via a short rachis. The last leaflet does not have a long stalk as in poison ivy. Also, the leaves have a distinct odor.



Figure 5: Aromatic sumac leaves

Blackberries and raspberries, *Rubus spp.* (fig. 6), has alternate, compound leaves along the canes. Some may have three-part leaves. These, however, are un-notched, and all plants have prickles or bristles. There are many forest plants that



Figure 6: Raspberry leaves

have three leaves or leaflets, such as trilliums, Jack-in-the-pulpit and others that are not usually confused with poison ivy,

and these as well as the species named above are very interesting plants.

It is a pity that we have to be concerned about that one plant. But as one who is very familiar with, and susceptible to poison ivy encounters, I hope this review is helpful.



TECH NOTES

By Mickey Delfelder

To promote events a little closer to home, KNPS has divided the state into 21 four-county to six-county membership regions. Each region has a volunteer leader coordinating events within their area and being a local resource for native plant information.

To find out more information about your region, visit the KNPS website and click on "Membership Regions" in the left menu. Scroll down to see the clickable map and locate activities in your area of the state.

Hoarfrost on Native Plants

Text by Nancy Goulden and Brian Martin, Winter hoarfrost photos by Brian Martin



Purple prairie clover

It is sometimes difficult for plant lovers to decide which is their favorite season to enjoy the beauty of our Kansas wildflowers and grasses. I'm always so thrilled when the first spring plants pop up and then soon after show off their flowers. But then again the abundance and variety of summer and fall plants with their long blooming periods and brilliant flowers also win me over. Even though our forbs and grasses are dormant during the winter, if you are very lucky and time it just right, you may see an equally exquisite show— native plants decorated with hoarfrost.

Frost crystals are different from snowflakes although both grow directly from water vapor and skip the liquid water stage. Obviously snowflakes come from water vapor in the air and fall to the ground. The frost crystals form from vapor near the ground and grow on solid surfaces. Frost is made up of small ice grains. Sometimes the frost grains, especially those that have fallen on dried plant structures, grown larger and form elaborate

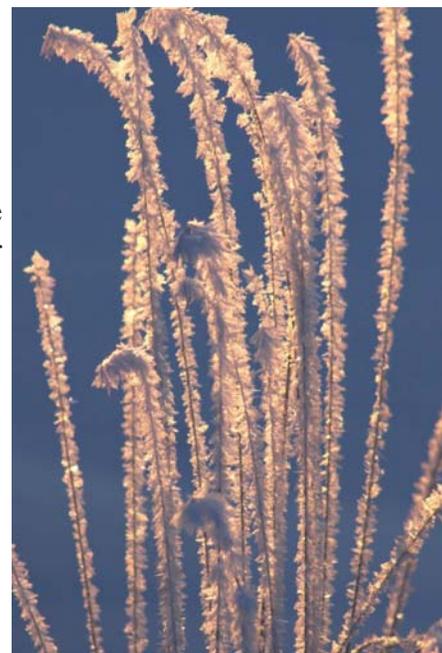
hoarfrost crystals. A good place to find hoarfrost is on exposed plants near unfrozen streams or lakes where there may be vapor near the ground.

In the pictures, you see the hoarfrost on skeletons of plants that bloomed during summer and early fall. When you find “hoarfrost plants” this winter, if you are having difficulty identifying the plant, note the location and come back in the growing season.

Brian describes the experience of photographing hoarfrost, “It was minus 3 degrees with 11" of snow on the ground when I shot the photos just after sunrise. Fortunately, no wind! Even a slight breeze can knock the crystals off of vegetation. That morning, a slight breeze came up shortly thereafter, and all of the hoarfrost was gone within about 45 minutes. I guess the early bird got the hoarfrost.”



Common sunflower



Big bluestem



Black-eyed susan



Indian grass

Featured Plant: Dakota Verbena (*Verbena bipinnatifida*)

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

A summer walk in my central Kansas prairie inevitably leads me to one of my favorite wildflowers—the Dakota verbena, *Verbena bipinnatifida*. It has grown there since I was a child. Clusters of these attractive bluish-purple flowers with tubular petals bloom in full sun in the drier upper slopes of our northern-most prairie, overlooking the small creek some distance below. Their dark green, deeply dissected bipinnate leaves line 4-6 inch-long stems and scatter among the shorter prairie grasses in this field.

The Dakota verbena dries beautifully when pressed. I have found that if I carefully remove each flower from its cluster with a forceps and press it flat, then its five lobes will flair into a flower nearly a half-inch across. They can be arranged nicely with other dried, pressed flowers and foliage to make attractive note or greeting cards.

The Dakota verbena is truly a favorite of mine. A native that blooms throughout the summer, it isn't bothered by insects. It can be easily made into a simple, yet colorful bouquet for your dining table. It is a reliable perennial that I can expect to see year after year. And best of all, I love its bluish-purple shade. I couldn't ask for more!



Dakota Verbena
(*Verbena bipinnatifida*)

Membership News

NEW MEMBERS FROM 9/26/14 TO 12/13/14

Ted & Brian Alexander - Sun City

Angela Babbitt - Lawrence

William Binter - Wichita

Ed & Manda Bricker - Sun City

Faye Graff - Pratt

John & Tacey Hamm - Pratt

Kayla Hess - Wichita

Bill Hunter - Pratt

Lowell Isaacs - Staten Island, NY

Ed, Kay, Jarod & Amanda Koger - Wilmore

Louis Copt Fine Art - Lecompton

Mary Nielsen - Wichita

Song Song Ohen - Wichita

Abbi Richards - Wichita

Victor & Gwen Rose - Wichita

John Row - Manhattan

Robert R. Saathoff - Topeka

Pat Thibault - Hays

Vanessa Tullis - Wichita

Lee & Renee Wilson - Pratt

John Wyatt - Wichita

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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

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 akes 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 ta deductible to the extent provided by law.

Membership application/renewal form

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Membership Catrgory

Student	\$10.00
Individual	\$20.00
Family	\$30.00
Organization	\$100.00
Lifetime	\$500.00