KNPS 2016 WILDFLOWER OF THE YEAR

Golden Alexanders – BRAD GUHR

Golden alexanders (Zizia aurea) is the Kansas Native Plant Society (KNPS) 2016 Wildflower of the Year (WOY). Golden alexanders is 12” to 36” tall with yellow flowers in flat-topped umbels blooming in May and June. This species is found in moist prairies, wet thickets, open woodlands, ditches and along streams in the eastern 1/3 of the state. Even though it is commonly found in moist habitat, it still survives well through dry summers. Zizia aurea is in the Apiaceae or parsley/carrot family, but it may cause vomiting in humans if eaten and should be considered toxic.

The plant resources committee chose this species primarily for its uniqueness among past choices for WOY. It represents a new family on our list (Apiaceae), it is a host plant for black swallowtail butterflies, it is found in at least a 1/3 of Kansas counties, and it is shade-adaptable which makes it a good landscaping plant since so many yards have shade.

For more photos and a detailed description of Zizia aurea, visit kswildflower.org. – CONTINUED ON PAGE 9
As I pause to compose this, I am sitting on the sofa where I have good natural light on this overcast day. Our electricity has been off for several hours due to the heavy icing on the power lines following Thanksgiving Day. We have been assured that power will be restored soon. (After about 6 hours, our power was restored!)

This must be somewhat of how the plants must feel — if they could — when the hard frosts stop their growth until the “power” is restored in the spring as temperatures rise.

But, just as I don’t cease all activity during this “down” time, neither do many of the plants. Biennial flowering plants take two years to complete their cycle. During the first year they grow leaves, stems, and roots, then go into a period of dormancy, having formed a rosette. Many require a cold treatment, called vernalization, before they will flower. In the spring the stem elongates and new leaves appear. The plant then produces flowers, fruits, and seeds, then dies. Many perennial plants, also, begin life as a rosette, then progress to become more shrublike. Even some annuals begin their lives as winter rosettes.

These plants benefit from the rosette formation as it exposes as many leaves as possible to the sun, while maintaining a low profile to avoid winter damage and being eaten by browsing animals. During this time of dormancy, these plants are storing energy to be released to nurture the plant during the coming growing season.

Dee, my husband, and I enjoy discovering and trying to identify these plants by their rosettes which often appear much different than their leaves in the growing period. We often read descriptions of the rosettes in the manuals, but often do not see pictures of the rosettes.

I challenge you to locate some of these rosettes, identify them, photograph them, and share them.

**Velvet butterfly weed rosette** – (*Gaura parviflora*) This is a winter annual whose basal leaves appear much different than later leaves.

**Rosette of Texas scorpion weed** – (*Phacelia texana*) By the time this plant flowers the basal leaves have usually dried out and turned brown.
It took nearly four years and 1,400 pages of manuscript, but on November 13, 2015, Mike Haddock and Craig Freeman finally had the pleasure of formally meeting Janét Bare, the third co-author of their book “Kansas Wildflowers and Weeds.” The occasion was a book-signing event sponsored by the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, Kansas. It might seem strange that such a large, complex project could be completed without all of the authors meeting, but the ability to share hundreds of electronic text and image files, and several thousand emails to avert mayhem, made it all possible. Mike and Craig, both Kansas residents, met numerous times during the writing of the book. However, Janét, who lives in Colorado, contributed exclusively by electronic means.

Janét completed her Ph.D. at the University of Kansas in 1968 and later authored the tremendously popular book “Wildflowers and Weeds of Kansas.” Published by the Regents Press of Kansas in 1979, it was the foundation for “Kansas Wildflowers and Weeds.” Upon completing the manuscript for “Wildflowers and Weed of Kansas” in 1976, Janét applied her knowledge of botany and plant geography to research involving the use of radar and other remote sensing systems to map vegetation and monitor crops, and to help develop artificial intelligence and weather satellite systems. Work on the new book allowed Janét to return to her botanical roots.

The event, attended by about 100 people, included a talk by the authors about the writing process. Besides the actual meeting, highlights of the evening included Janét’s description of the history of “Wildflowers and Weeds of Kansas” and its 1948 precursor, “Kansas Wildflowers”, and seeing attendees arrive with copies of both of Janét’s books, which she proudly autographed.

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**Better Late Than Never**

— CRAIG FREEMAN

Mike Haddock, Janét Bare, and Craig Freeman signing copies at the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, KS.

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**TECH NOTES**

It’s that time of year when everyone will have received his or her membership renewal form. Visit our website [www.ksnps.org](http://www.ksnps.org) for a fast and convenient renewal method. Just click the Membership link at the top of the page and then click the link for Online Membership Form. Our website uses Paypal, which means you will need to use a credit or debit card. However, you do not need a Paypal account to join KNPS or renew your membership via our website.

— MICKEY DELFELDER
I was asked to write an article about urban landscaping with wildflowers and although I do not do a lot of urban landscaping... I could write on how landscaping has changed in general over the last 15 years that I have been a Landscape Designer. I currently incorporate native plants in most of my designs and talk to customers about why I choose them over traditional plants.

To start with, I will give you a very brief history of my background in landscaping. I went to college to study Horticulture in January of 1998. I was taught all the traditional landscape perennials and woody plants and studied plant diseases and pests. When I began as an intern in the summer of 2000 in Bellevue, Nebraska, just a few “new” plants were starting to show up on the market as breeders began to work on more hardy plants for colder and temperate climates. Hardier Crape Myrtles were popular and also the use of Miscanthus grasses and other ornamental grasses became available. Nearly Wild Roses were becoming popular because they survived the hard winters, unlike tender roses. Next, came the Carpet Roses and now Knockout Roses have taken over the shrub rose market. Why so much hype about roses? Because if you want to plant something that will continue to bloom from spring until late fall — plant a shrub rose! Most perennials and shrubs have a season of bloom that only lasts a week or just a few weeks. Some customers do not like the thorns but I remind them of the quote from Abraham Lincoln, “We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses.”

The Prairie Rose is a native plant in Kansas, a sprawling or trailing pink rose. The Nearly Wild Rose variety looks much like this native rose. But, the downfall of the Nearly Wild Rose was that it was not disease resistant and I do not see very many of these roses that have survived over time. The Knockout Rose is disease resistant, but not resistant to the Rose Rosette virus which is becoming a problem since the Knockout Rose has been overused.

One of the exciting aspects of my job (and there are many) is the fact that the market is now overflowing with new varieties of plants. All plants begin as a native plant and then are cross-bred to produce more flowers, better color, better hardness or disease resistance. Then, my job is to test them (usually in my yard) to see if they will survive our winters and tolerate the heat of the summer. I like plants to die in my yard and not in my customers’! My customers will see plants in a magazine or on HGTV and want to use them in Kansas. Unfortunately, our climate is
different than California or Florida! However, I can usually find a plant that is somewhat similar to use as an alternative.

The first thing a customer will tell me when I arrive for an appointment at their house is that they want a Low Maintenance Landscape. They do not have time to take care of a lot of landscaping. The trend is using fewer plants and spacing them further apart. Gone is layering of plants (taller in the back and short in front) or using groundcover that becomes weedy and impossible to control. I have classified plants as high or low maintenance depending on how often you have to prune them to keep them neat and tidy. For example, I do not use Euonymus much because it is a high maintenance plant. It grows so quickly you have to trim it 4 or 5 times during the summer to contain it. I use Boxwood as a low maintenance plant because it grows slowly and only needs trimming at least twice a summer to keep it in place.

The first plants that come to mind when a customer insists on a very low maintenance landscape are natives. We have come full circle with landscaping plants and now we are looking for the native plants that naturally grow in our area and thrive with neglect. Just finding time to water can be a problem for an active young family. I always suggest drip irrigation in the landscape and the use of an automatic timer or addition of a lawn sprinkler system. If they do not want any maintenance at all I offer Maintenance Services and can send a crew to come and trim spring, summer, and fall!

With a native planting the drip irrigation is seldom necessary since after the first year the plants become established and they do not need much more water than what Mother Nature provides. Their deep root systems help them tolerate drought. The only problem I have seen with native landscapes is providing too much water. For example, Plains Coreopsis will turn black and quickly die if it is watered much at all!

I tend to still use traditional landscape plants around the foundation planting of a home. I am experimenting with some native shrubs but availability is a problem. I work with Grimm’s Gardens for ordering plants and they are finding more sources for natives. They grow native perennials from plugs into gallon-sized containers. These established natives explode when planted in the ground and bloom and thrive the first year of planting! Customers love to see these first year results.

The loss of Monarch Butterfly habitat has raised awareness of the need for native plantings and the addition of milkweed varieties. I have added many butterfly gardens to landscapes, some requested by the customer and some I suggested. The flowers and butterflies provide so much enjoyment and the added satisfaction that one is doing something good to save this beautiful insect. By protecting the Monarch, we in turn are protecting many other beneficial insects and wildlife that bring balance to nature.

My best example of a successful native urban planting that I was involved with is the Topeka North McDonald’s location. At my suggestion, the owner allowed a garden to be placed in an area near the drive-thru. Since installing these plantings in the summer of 2014, it has been certified as a Monarch Waystation through the Monarch Watch Organization. In addition, I have worked on several walking trails, assisted with boy scouts projects, 4-H member projects, and school projects. Involving the community in native projects is important since the larger the project the more work there is to keep it maintained which can be fun as a group project.

I have been a KNPS member for about 7 years now and it has greatly expanded my knowledge of native plants and the understanding of correct placement and the need to preserve them. I would encourage anyone with an interest to attend a KNPS tour and experience walking through nature with members that can answer your questions and provide the additional insight of botanical names and uses of native plants. Never stop learning. I encourage people to protect the earth and remember that this is the only planet that has chocolate!
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!

**JAN 16**

**Kansas Native Plant Society Winter Board Meeting at Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, KS.**
We will plan to start the meeting promptly at 12:30 pm and finish by 2:30 pm. After the meeting we may explore native plants along the surrounding trails. Our snow date is January 23. Please contact KNPS for more information, www.ksnps.org email@KSNPS.org (785) 864-3453

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) 691-9748 (cell).

**JAN 23**

**Kaw Valley Eagles Day in Lawrence, KS.** Celebrate the return of the eagles and learn about the environment, 9am-4pm. Programs on area Bald eagles and other wildlife. Exhibitors will offer educational resources related to nature. Co-sponsors: Jayhawk Audubon Society, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Unified School District 497. Location: Free State High School, 1 block north of 6th & Wakarusa. www.kawvalleyeaglesday.com Contact Bunnie Watkins ranger_rabbit@sbcglobal.net or Chuck Herman (913) 301-3921

**FEB 13**

7th Annual Kaw Valley Seed Fair, Lawrence, KS. This seed exchange and informational fair includes seed saving workshops, educational exhibits, environmental info, and children’s activities. An exchange table will be available. Anyone may contribute seeds and other resources, but no one is obligated to make a contribution in order to obtain seeds or other materials from the exchange table. This free event will be held at Douglas County 4-H Fairgrounds building 21 from 9 am - 3 pm. Find more info: www.facebook.com/kawvalleyseeds Laura Green lauraanngreen17@gmail.com

**FEB 20**

Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See January 16 info.

**FEB 26-27**

Kansas Wildlife Federation 65th Annual Meeting at Hotel Old Town, 830 East First Street N, Wichita, KS. “Pollinators & Prairies, Prairies & Pollinators” are important to the Kansas landscape. Mark your calendar and come to this big celebration event featuring great speakers including special guest speaker, National Wildlife Federation CEO Collin O’Mar. This dynamic young leader has led many conservation efforts including his most recent NWF protection endeavor for the monarch butterfly. For more information, visit www.kswildlife.org or contact Angela Anderson (620) 481-9547.

**MAR 17**

Invasive Plants in Kansas with Ryan Armbrust Program at the Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita, KS. Starting at 7 pm Ryan will tell us about the negative impact that invasive Asian Bush Honeysuckle has had on our woodlands and urban wildlands and the native bird populations that depend on this habitat. In addition, he’ll go over control options, and some better plant alternatives to use. Ryan is the Forest Health & Conservation Forester for the Kansas Forest Service. Sponsor: Wichita Audubon Society. Find more info: www.wichitaaudubon.org Pete Janzen pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net (316) 519-1970

**MAR 19**

Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See January 16 info.
First Annual Audubon of Kansas Conference! The conference will focus on threats to birds, bees and other wildlife, and how people can make a difference in their yards and gardens, and on their farms. There will also be a Legislative Panel Discussion to keep everyone up to date with the news from Topeka. Sponsor: Audubon of Kansas. Find more info: www.audubonofkansas.org aok@audubonofkansas.org (785) 537-4385

Invasive Plant Removal in Oak Park, Wichita, KS. Help rid the park of invasive Asian bush honeysuckle, starting at 9 am. We’ll work in conjunction with the Wichita Parks Department to make this great bird habitat even better. Sponsor: Wichita Audubon Society. Find more info: www.wichitaaudubon.org Coordinator: Pete Janzen, pete.janzen@sbc.global.net (316) 519-1970

Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See January 16 info.

Go Native! Are you tired of constantly watering and weeding your landscape plants? If so, try replacing these with native flowers and grasses. Native plants can tolerate our tough Midwest weather much better than non-native varieties. Join us for a day of learning about the wide variety of native plants that can suit your landscaping needs, 10 am to 2:20 pm. Missouri Prairie Foundation Spring Plant Sale at the Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center in Kansas City, MO. Missouri Prairie Foundation will be on site offering a native plant sale and partnering with Missouri Wildflowers Nursery, wide variety of native flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees will be available to purchase. Sponsor: Missouri Prairie Foundation, www.moprairie.org Questions? Contact: Doris Sherrick, djsher@fairpoint.net (816) 716-9159

Landscaping for Birds with Brad Guhr, Public Program with Smoky Hills Audubon Society in Salina, KS. This meeting is open to the public. Dinner with speaker Brad Guhr at 5:30 pm. Social and refreshments begin at 7 pm, program starts at 7:30 PM. Find more info: smokyhillaudubon.com If you wish to join us for the pre-meeting dinner please RSVP to Dan Baa, danbaa1@yahoo.com or (620) 271-8891

Missouri Prairie Foundation Spring Plant Sales at the City Market, KCMO. The Missouri Prairie Foundation will hold its Annual Native Plant Sales, 8am to 1pm, at the City Market, 5th & Walnut, Kansas City, MO. A variety of native plants will be available. This is a great opportunity to buy native plants to provide habitat for native pollinators and birds. A generous portion of proceeds is donated by vendors to benefit MPF’s prairie conservation work. Sponsor: Missouri Prairie Foundation, www.moprairie.org, Questions? Contact: Doris Sherrick djsher@fairpoint.net (816) 716-9159

Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See April 16 info.

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

Prairie Pollinators: Wildflowers and Butterflies Celebration at Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, Cottonwood Falls, KS. The National Park Service will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary and the 20th Anniversary of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. The annual Marvin Schwilling butterfly count will be held on Saturday. Some excellent presentations on both plants and insects are planned. Kansas Native Plant Society volunteers will be helping with displays, presentations, and plant tours. Contact the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve (620) 273-8494 or (620) 273-6034.

Join the KNPS email list to receive the latest event announcements: www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/email_list.php
The American persimmon tree is one of Mother Nature’s wonderful native fruit trees. This interesting tree grows wild in the Eastern half of Kansas and is scattered throughout most of the Eastern USA. On our farm in Eastern Kansas we have three nice colonies of these wild persimmons. Planted by Mother Nature many years ago they are old enough to bear fruit.

Persimmon trees are either male or female. Male flowers are on one tree and female flowers on a separate tree. All of the flowers on persimmon trees mature to a beautiful yellow color. Only slightly larger than 1/2” in size the bell shaped male and female flowers are nearly identical except for the size of the sepals with female flowers having a noticeably larger sepal. The flowers appear in May with the fruit ripening in late autumn. Persimmon trees grow to about 40 feet in height. They prefer more sun than shade and do their best in full sun.

The scientific name for the American persimmon is Diospyros virginiana. The name Diospyros comes from two Greek words meaning divine food. The epithet Virginiana refers to the state of Virginia where the tree was likely first discovered or described. On our farm in the 1940’s and 1950’s my mother would pick the leaves of persimmon trees and dry them to make tea. Tea was certainly her drink of choice and she was quite good at making it. Dried wild strawberry leaves were her first choice of tea but she also perfected the art of picking persimmon leaves. Pick them when new and young, dry them and make one flavor of tea. Let the leaves age on the tree before picking, dry them and you have another flavor of tea.

Mother would lay a couple of large pieces of tin roofing in the back yard, and spread out persimmon and strawberry leaves on the tin. The first day since the leaves were still fresh and green she would lay another piece of tin roofing on top of the leaves that were on the first piece. The sun would warm the tin and quickly start the drying
The delicious fruit of the persimmon is the delicacy for which we yearn. A truly ripe American persimmon is sweet, sugary, and grainy. There is no comparison between the ripe American persimmon and the much larger fruit of the highly hybridized Japanese persimmons available in our super markets. The best way to describe the larger Japanese persimmon is to say it is not fit to eat. Many persimmon recipes can be found online for baking goodies and jams, jelly, and preserves. Raccoons, opossums, foxes, coyotes and other small mammals eat the fruit.

If you have photos of your favorite tree in Kansas I would like to see it. I am retired and have plenty of time to spend studying the trees and certainly enjoy learning about them. When you send the photo please tell me which county it is in. My email is ken@springvalleynursery.com.
One late summer day, I walked down the slope of one of our pastures in the midst of a large group of goldenrod plants. Most prominent were bright yellow stiff goldenrods with flat-topped inflorescences, but also present were the common or Missouri goldenrods with branching pyramid-shaped heads. The beginning of Helen Hunt Jackson’s poem “September” came to mind: “The goldenrod is yellow, the corn is turning brown.” These lines, favorites of mine since childhood, prompted a closer look at these much maligned yet beautiful wildflowers.

Although usually dismissed as a “weed” that causes hay fever, the 90 species of goldenrod in North America — 12 species in Kansas — actually are pollinated by insects and little of their pollen is wind-borne. In fact their Latin name “Solidago” comes from “solidare” which means to make whole, so named because of goldenrods’ reputed medicinal value. Rather than a cause of sniffles and sneezes, various species of goldenrod were used by the Indians as medicinals: roots were used in poultices on boils and burns or in teas to treat yellow jaundice. Early settlers used goldenrod extracts as carminatives, antispasmodics and astringents. Boiled leaf extract was used as an antiseptic lotion and dried leaves were used for a potherb or for tea.

There is much variation within the different species making identification difficult. Characteristics that they share are their yellowing heads with branches slightly recurved (shaped as a pyramid, a cylinder or flat-topped) on an erect stem one to three or more feet in height. They bloom from July to October throughout Kansas along roadsides, in pastures and prairies, some choosing moist soil, some a sandy habitat. Goldenrods are perennial herbs growing from rhizomes but also have roots that extend to a depth of several feet. This makes them very hardy during drought and helps them compete with taller grasses for moisture.

Only six species of Kansas goldenrod have common names. The Common or Missouri goldenrod, hardiest of all, is especially attractive to bees, butterflies, and bumblebees for its pollen and nectar. Honeybees also use the showy or noble goldenrod for making honey.

I hope you will think of the many attributes of this prairie flower when you meet, and please forget any derogatory remarks you may have heard about them.

— LORNA HARDER ILLUSTRATION

The 2016 ANNUAL WILDFLOWER WEEKEND (AWW) will be held in Ft. Scott September 16-18. A big thank you goes out to Rondi Anderson, regional leader for the Ft. Scott area, and her volunteers for extending an invitation to their area and volunteering to organize the event. Several botanizing opportunities are being organized with a visit to the Fort a priority. Even if you have never attended an AWW, put THIS ONE on your calendar. More information will be available in the next newsletter and on the KNPS website.
As my native planting enters its second winter, I cannot help but daydream about what plants will show themselves next season. I am looking forward to seeing the blazing star bloom for the first time and I really hope some of the larkspur seedlings pop back out in the spring. But while I wait for all of the showy perennials to establish, there are a lot of great annuals that have made my small planting exciting to watch throughout the growing season. There are a couple in particular that I plan on making permanent additions to the garden every year. In fact, I might not have a choice in the matter! Big-bract Fumewort (Corydalis curvisiliqua) and Spreading Bladderpod (Physaria gordonii) are two winter annuals that can be great additions to any garden in the state. Big-bract Fumewort appears to have a distribution mainly in the central counties of the state and some more southwestern counties. Surprisingly, the bladderpod has a pretty limited distribution in the state, primarily occurring in the southwest.

While both of these plants tend to occur in sandy areas, they appear to have no problem thriving in a garden established on highly disturbed, compacted soil. Both species germinate and begin growth in late winter and provide a welcome splash of color to the garden in early spring. These early blooms are not just eye-catching, but also serve as a food source for a variety of beneficial insects and pollinators early in the season with the fumewort flowers being particularly attractive to a variety of native bees, including bumble bees. Both plants are relatively small-statured and seem to play well with the other plants in the garden. Fumewort tends to have a more upright, tidy habit while the bladderpod creates more of a sprawling ground cover and both bloom quite densely for their size.

I suspect I will be seeing even more of these blooms in the garden next spring as both species produce quite a bit of seed. If one were introducing these plants into a new garden space, late fall would be the time to sow the seed. In my experience, noticeable growth is occurring by mid-February with blooms following soon after which continue easily to June. So if you are looking for some tough, early blooming annuals to fill in some garden space and usher in spring, Big-bract Fumewort and Spreading Bladderpod are excellent choices.
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
University of Kansas
2045 Constant Ave.
Lawrence, KS 66047-3729

A membership to 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 KS) _________________________________________________

Additional Donation: Legacy Fund $__________________ Scholarship Fund $__________________ General Fund $__________________

Membership Category

☐ Student $10.00

☐ Individual $20.00

☐ Family $30.00

☐ Organization $35.00

☐ Contributing $100.00

☐ Lifetime $500.00