



# Minnesota Plant Press

The Minnesota Native Plant Society Newsletter

Volume 26 Number 2

Winter 2007

## Monthly meetings

Thompson Park Center/Dakota Lodge  
Thompson County Park  
360 Butler Ave. E., West St. Paul, MN 55118  
651-552-7559 (kitchen)  
6:00 p.m. — Social period  
7 – 9 p.m — Program, society business

## Programs

The MN NPS meets the first Thursday in October, November, December, February, March, April, May, and June. Check the website for more program information.

**Feb. 1: “Recent Highlights in the Minn. County Biological Survey,”** by Carmen Converse, County Biological Survey supervisor, DNR. **Plant-of-the-Month:** Bog adder’s mouth orchid (*Malaxis paludosa*), Erika Rowe, DNR.

**Mar. 1: “Hot Topics Related to the Use of Native Plants for Landscaping and Restoration:** Endangered Species, Local Genetic Stock, and Restoring Plant Communities,” by Hannah Texler, DNR regional plant ecologist. Panel discussion with nursery owners/operators and Dept. of Agriculture representative. **POM:** Louisiana Broomrape (*Orobanche ludoviciana*).

**April 5: “Conservation Challenges in Minn. Forests:** Climate Change, Invasive Species and Deer,” by Dr. Lee Frelich, Dept. of Forestry Resources, Univ. of Minn. **Plant, Place of the Month:** Black Spruce and Seagull Lake, by Dr. Frelich.

**May 3: “Motorized Recreation:** Social, Ecological Consequences,” by Matt Norton, Minn. Center for Environmental Advocacy. **POM:** *Carex garberi* (a sedge), by Scott Milburn..

**June 7: “Decorative Tree Harvest from Minnesota Spruce Bogs,”** by Mike Phillips, DNR Division of Forestry. **Annual Plant Sale.**

## Updated Endangered Species List will affect availability of plants

by Hannah Texler, Rich Baker, and Nancy Sather, Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, Minnesota DNR

**MN NPS members are invited to submit comments on new list.**

Minnesota’s Endangered Species Statute (MS 84.0895) requires that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintain a list of the state’s endangered, threatened, and special concern species (hereafter referred to as the list). The list was created in 1984 and was last revised in 1996. The DNR’s goal is to maintain a list that reflects our scientific knowledge of the status and conservation needs of Minnesota’s plant and animal species.

During the past few years, staff within the DNR’s Division of Ecological Services have developed a set of several hundred draft changes to the list in light of new research and survey results. These draft changes are the subject of administrative rule-making during 2007.

In order to give the public an opportunity to comment on these draft changes early in the rule-making process, the DNR will accept comments between Jan. 2 and March 5, 2007. We

Continued on page 3

## Symposium is March 31

by Scott Milburn

**Our annual symposium will be March 31 at the Bell Museum of Natural History. Join us as we learn about the Minnesota portion of the Prairie Coteau while exploring the past, present, and future of this unique landform. The roster for the symposium is just about set, with talks on the Prairie Coteau that include its geology, human history, plant communities, insect pollinators, rare plant species and conservation issues. The symposium brochure will be available in early February, but please continue to check our website for updates and programming notes.**

## In this issue

President’s column.....	2
Plant press donation.....	4
Millennium Seed Bank.....	4
Flora ID problem fix.....	5
Growth pressures .....	6
Arden Hills restoration .....	6
Field trips.....	6
Regal Meadow donation.....	7
Plant Lore -Leadplant.....	7

# The Continuum of Conservation

by Scott A. Milburn, president

The Minnesota Native Plant Society begins 2007 marking an important milestone while heading into the year with great momentum. I first would like to remind our membership that Feb. 3 marks the 25th anniversary of the Society's first monthly meeting. While this is a great accomplishment, our mission is far from over.

In my past column, I brought up the issue of conservation, and I would like to continue with this message. Since the publication of the last newsletter, the Conservation Committee and the Education and Outreach Committee have both started to move forward under the direction and leadership of Beth Nixon and Sean Jergens. We are still looking for more volunteers from our membership to join these committees and add their ideas and energy.

As a society, we need to continually look for ways to not only engage ourselves but also a whole new generation. Conservation will continue to be a very important topic in Minnesota, and we have the opportunity to be major players. As the landscape continues to be developed, children will continue to be further and further removed from the natural world. We need to ensure that today's children are given the opportunity to experience the natural world. In doing so, we will be showing an entire generation the wonders of Minnesota's natural history.

The question is: how can we do this? One way is to support your local nature center either through volunteering efforts or by donation. A second and perhaps more intriguing opportunity is through the development of curriculum for all grade levels. This information could be available online for teachers throughout the state. This is an idea to think about this next year, and I hope you can share your thoughts. In closing, I hope everyone is as excited as I am about our great monthly programs, our great roster of speakers for the annual symposium, and the great lineup of field trips.

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## MN NPS website

www.mnnps.org

**e-mail:** contact@mnnps.org

## MN NPS Listserve

Send a message with "subscribe" or "unsubscribe" and your name to: mn-natpl-request@stolaf.edu

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**Program Coordinator:** Linda Huhn, 612-374-1435

**Listserv Coordinator:** Charles Umbanhowar, ceumb@stolaf.edu

**Field Trips:** fieldtrips@mnnps.org

**Memberships:** memberships@mnnps.org; 651-739-4323

**Historian/Archives:** president@mnnps.org

**Technical or membership inquiries:** contact@mnnps.org

**Minnesota Plant Press editor:** Gerry Drewry, phone, 651-463-8006; plantpress@mnnps.org

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## Deb Anderson, Jason Husveth receive state conservation awards

Deb Anderson (Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District) and Jason Husveth (Anoka SWCD) each received their district's 2006 Outstanding Conservationist's Award at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Convention Dec. 2. Deb is a former MN NPS board member; Jason is a current board member.

## Minnesota Native Plant Society's purpose

*(Abbreviated from the bylaws)*

This organization is exclusively organized and operated for educational and scientific purposes, including the following:

1. Conservation of all native plants.
2. Continuing education of all members in the plant sciences.
3. Education of the public regarding environmental protection of plant life.
4. Encouragement of research and publications on plants native to Minnesota.
5. Study of legislation on Minnesota flora, vegetation and ecosystems.
6. Preservation of special plants, plant communities and scientific and natural areas.
7. Cooperation in programs concerned with the ecology of natural resources and scenic features.
8. Fellowship with all persons interested in native plants through meetings, lectures, workshops and field trips.

## Endangered species

### Continued from page 1

are requesting scientific information that will help us determine whether or not a species should be designated as endangered, threatened, or of special concern in Minnesota.

You may review and comment on the DNR's Draft Revisions to Minnesota's List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species on the internet at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/ets/rulesrevision.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ets/rulesrevision.html)

Links to the current list, and to Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute and associated rules are also available at that site.

If you prefer to receive a paper copy of these materials, please request a copy from:

Richard J. Baker, Division of Ecological Services, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Rd., Box 25, St. Paul, MN 55155; phone: 651-259-5073; e-mail: [rich.baker@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:rich.baker@dnr.state.mn.us)

### How the law affects the sale and purchase of native plants

Out of the 2,024 vascular plant species that occur in the state, 123 (six percent) are currently legally listed as endangered or threatened, and 133 are listed as of special concern. It is illegal to take, import, transport, or sell any portion of an endangered or threatened species without a special permit from the Minnesota DNR. From a practical standpoint, this means that it is illegal to use endangered or threatened plants as horticultural materials or in restorations.

This is a controversial law, and some natural resource managers and plant vendors disagree with its basic premise. In fact, many plant vendors sell Minnesota endangered and threatened species illegally, in many cases because they don't know about the law. This issue was addressed in detail at the 2000 MNPS annual symposium, but with the new list

## List to be discussed at March 1 meeting

**The draft revisions and other current topics related to using native plants for landscaping and restoration will be further explored at the Society's March 1 meeting. These topics include current views about using local genetic stock for native plantings and the importance of restoring ecologically appropriate native plant communities. Be sure to attend this meeting; there will be a panel discussion to present various views and give audience members the opportunity to comment. It promises to be a lively evening.**

coming out soon, it seems like a good time to address the issues again.

Here is a brief overview of the ecological reasons for regulating the planting, transplanting and sale of rare plants:

1. Most listed species are rare primarily because of habitat loss. Introductions and reintroductions do not address this root cause of endangerment, and they may lead to a false assumption by the general public that biodiversity loss can be addressed simply by moving species around.

2. Many listed plant species have been reduced to a small number of fragile populations that could be damaged by the introduction of genes from plants from a different geographic area. Ideally, we would understand the genetics of each species and use that understanding to determine whether or not introductions could be helpful or harmful to native populations. However, there is almost no information available about the genetic makeup and reproductive behavior of most listed species, so the law is applied uniformly in order to avoid potential damage.

3. Since many rare plants have very specific habitat requirements, it is

likely that attempts to introduce or reintroduce rare plants will not be successful. There is little documentation about successful techniques for the introduction of most rare species. So again, the law is applied uniformly in order to make it more easily understood.

4. Moving species around can obscure natural biogeographic patterns. This can cloud our understanding about what the plants really need in their natural environments.

5. The use of plants or rootstocks bearing soil from another site may bring invasive weed seeds or invertebrates into a site.

6. Collecting seeds from wild populations of rare species may significantly reduce the seeds available for reproduction in naturally occurring populations.

## Society urges protection for Coldwater Spring site

At its Oct. 5, 2006, meeting, the MN NPS Board of Directors voted to urge protection of the Coldwater Spring site in Minneapolis. They signed a letter, "Comments on the Historic Coldwater Spring Site," which was sent to Acting Superintendent Steve Johnson, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

The letter begins:

"On behalf of The Minnesota Native Plant Society, the Board of Directors requests the above 27-acre property be designated a public outdoor museum under permanent protection of the National Park Service following the removal of buildings on the site. We also request this protection be accompanied by federal guarantees that this property will never be sold for private use, private development, or non-historic public use."

The letter then lists reasons why the site should be protected.



# Husveth makes plant presses for Hastings biology class

by Bonnie St. James. Reprinted with permission from the Sept. 14, 2006, *Hastings Star-Gazette*.

High School teacher Joe Beattie's biology classes are always hands-on and intensive. This year is going to be no exception. But this year, students have new tools — plant presses built by an ecologist who was in Hastings last week to teach the students how to use them.

Field biology students found themselves dressed in waders last Thursday and in water up to their knees. They were learning about collecting wetland plants from Jason Husveth, principal ecologist for Critical Connections Ecological Services, Inc. and past president of the Native Plant Society.

Beattie asked the Native Plant Society last year for help in getting plant presses so his students could collect, press and dry plants. Husveth did more than was asked. He took the project on himself and built seven presses, which he donated to Beattie's class and then came to show the students how to use them.

At 7 a.m. last Thursday morning, the students gathered with Beattie and Husveth in the parking lot at the Hastings Lock and Dam and walked to the berm between Lake Rebecca and the Mississippi River west of the lock and dam. They all put on waders and followed Husveth into a little piece of wetlands.

Husveth explained how rare plants could occur in very small communities or "pockets" like this one. He pointed out the native arrowroot and smartweed, and the invasive cattails and purple loosestrife. He showed them the tools he used — plastic bags and a serrated knife — that wouldn't cut anything probably but plants. Then he collected an arrowroot plant to show them how it is best done.



*One of donated plant presses*

"Collect as much of the plant as you can," he said. "Look at the smartweed. If you collected just the top, you wouldn't be able to see how tall the plant is."

He placed the plants in separate bags, and then had the students do some collecting. The students would also collect prairie plants at a piece of prairie on 3M grounds on Friday, and forest plants at Vermillion Falls Park on Monday.

After the plants were collected, the students climbed out of the water and out of the waders and watched Husveth prepare a plant for pressing. The arrowroot plants were long, so he folded them in thirds.

The presses Husveth built consist of an open frame made of lath, a piece of cardboard the same size (all cut to a standard size used by collectors), blotter paper to absorb the water, a layer of newspaper, the plant, more newspaper, a sheet of blotter paper, a layer of newspaper and the top frame.

Then the press is pulled together tightly to form a bundle, and a strap made of webbing is secured tightly around it, to release water.

# Collectors needed for Millennium Seed Bank Project

Betsy Allen, coordinator for the Millennium Seed Bank Project at the Chicago Botanic Garden, wants to hire botanists to collect seeds of native plants.

They are collecting seeds from 1,500 different native species in the Midwest for long-term conservation as part of the international Millennium Seed Bank Project (<http://www.rbgekew.org.uk/msbp/index.html>). These seeds are dried to a low moisture content, stored in an airtight container, and then frozen. The Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, thinks that the average lifespan of these stored seeds is 200 years. The seeds are used mostly for "what if" scenarios, but a portion can be used by qualified groups for restoration or research. For each species, they collect between 5,000 and 20,000 seeds from one population and take two herbarium specimens.

Allen hopes to collect seeds in Minnesota this year. "If we want to fulfill our requirement to Kew," she said, "we have to collect seed from 300 species in one year. Yikes! We have money to pay contract botanists to help me out with making these collections. Do you know any amateur botanists or poor, starving graduate students that earning money by seed collecting might be appealing?"

A species list is posted online at <http://cbgseedbank.org/targetspecies.html>. For additional information, contact: Betsy Allen, Millennium Seed Bank Project coordinator, 847-835-6957; [ballen@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:ballen@chicagobotanic.org); Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL 60022.

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## Use new mailing address

The Society's mailing address is P.O. Box 20401, Bloomington, MN 55420

# Thank you

*Following are excerpts from a thank-you letter from the Greater West Metro Humane Society Memorial Garden Committee.*

“In the spring of 2004, [we] received a \$200 grant from your society to purchase seeds of native plants for our planned prairie wildflower and pond edge areas. The Memorial Garden was planned to create a peaceful landscape next to our adoption center where people could enjoy perennial beds and native plantings. With supporters’ donations, we place small granite plaques in the garden in honor and memory of beloved people and pets.

“This year we have seen a great blossoming of our native areas in spite of the harsh heat and drought.



**Memorial garden in bloom**

“In the fall of 2004, we planted a short mesic prairie area above a boulder wall and a small area of short grass woods edge savanna where the trees produced some shade. In the spring of 2005, we planted the edge of our pond with a short sedge meadow mix.

“We hope to develop a path in the prairie area with educational markers and to develop a woodland wildflower garden with path. The planting you funded has brought pleasure to many people and has created a wildlife habitat. ... We hope your members may visit the adoption center and garden someday.” The garden is located at 4375 Hwy. 55 S.E., Buffalo, MN 55313.

## Compatibility problem with Flora ID CDs can be fixed

*by Bruce Barnes, Flora ID Northwest, LLC*

The default settings in the just-released Internet Explorer version 7 interfere with the Flora ID XID software the keys run in. Some users may not notice this problem. Below is a description of the problem and the changes in the IE7 settings which are needed for one of the minor features of the program to work

### The Problem

If your computer has Internet Explorer version 5 or 6, when an attribute image or a species image is clicked, it expands to full size in a separate window and there is no problem. If you have Internet Explorer version 7 (IE7), this window appears as a blank screen.

### The Solution

IE7 calls the page which is created “about:blank”. So if you add this URL to the list of trusted pages, it will show its content.

The simplest way to do that is: Go to Tools> Internet Options > Security Tab. Select “Trusted sites” and click “Sites” button.

First remove any check mark that may be in the box at the bottom labeled “Require server verification (https:) for all sites in this zone.”

Type: “about:blank” (without quotation marks) into the “Add this website to the zone” field (overwriting any address that appears there), and then click “Add” button in the Dialog Box. The words “about:blank” should appear below in the list of websites. Click “Close” to save the settings. In this screen, make sure that the “Security level” for the trusted sites is set to Medium or lower. If the security level is a Custom setting, click Default level to provide a slider that enables you to select the level you wish, in this case Medium or lower. Click OK.

## Oakdale Park benefits from ‘Think Native’ plantings

*by Ron Rogstad, administrative services director, City of Oakdale; from a city newsletter.*

A group of volunteers from Hope Evangelical Free Church in Oakdale, along with Oakdale city staff, a community volunteer, and the Oakdale Tree Board chair, planted more than 100 native plants and trees in Oakdale Park on June 9 from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

The plants were given as part of the “Think Native” grant program sponsored by the Minnesota Native Plant Society, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of the native plants of Minnesota through public education and advocacy.

The Oakdale planting was originally planned for the wetland buffer area near 4th St. N. and Hadley Ave., but was moved to Oakdale Park because the majority of the plants obtained were shade or semi-shade varieties. City Forester Chris Larson prepared prairie, woodland, and meadow sites for the plant materials; all the sites are adjacent to paved walking trails in the park.

The Society established its grant program to educate the public about native plants and to encourage the use of native plants in home and public projects. The city also received surplus seeds from the Society’s annual November seed exchange.

Larson plans to use the surplus seeds to help replace the ground cover in the buckthorn removal areas in the park.

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The image problem between IE7 and XID will now be corrected.

If you choose to not change the settings, you can still view images at their full size by simply dragging to the left the vertical divider between the left and right windows.

# Growth pressures on natural resources studied

by Sharon Pfeifer, DNR Central Region community assistance manager. This is an abstract of her talk Dec. 7, 2006, at the MN NPS meeting.

In the next quarter century, growth pressures in the Twin Cities metropolitan region will be intense, as more than one million new residents and 500,000 new homes consume unprotected, sensitive natural areas.

This GIS-based regional assessment was conducted to: 1) examine socioeconomic changes and potential natural resource impacts, and 2) provide recommendations to address trade-offs between future growth and conservation. Sensitive land and water habitats and groundwater availability were analyzed in the context of social and economic factors, including changes in population, urbanized land area, number and size of new housing subdivisions, commute times, job locations, community types, and local fiscal capacities.

Growth scenarios suggest that regional growth will be most intense at the fringes of the seven-county core region and just beyond in the four "collar counties," where groundwater is an additional constraint to growth. Because most communities in the path of growth have modest or below average tax capacities, they will be challenged to conserve land and water resources. If growth continues in the form of large lot, low-density development, almost all remaining unprotected sensitive natural areas will be developed.

Future conservation will require strategic regional scale planning, conservation cost-sharing, and additional resources to bridge gaps in information, analyses, and technical assistance to communities.

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## Restoration of Arden Hills site

by Wade J. Hammer, wetland ecologist, Svoboda Ecological Resources. This is an abstract of his presentation at the April 6, 2006, MN NPS meeting.

The Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS) is a 1,786-acre military installation in Ramsey County, Minn. The Original Land Survey, completed in the late 1800s, makes note of bur oak and white oak woodlands, with tamarack swamps in the low areas in the approximate vicinity of the property.

Thirty home sites were displaced when the site was purchased in 1941 by the federal government for use as a military installation. The site hosted 22 years of active munitions production through the Vietnam War. At its peak, 26,000 people were employed there. It was listed as a superfund site in 1983. Clean-up at the site continues.

Tallgrass prairie restoration projects have occurred at the AHATS since the early 1990s. As part of a Masters of Science project, a study assessing the relationships among management (seeding and burning), vegetation, and environmental factors (soil, aspect, and slope) was completed. The study included completion of 75 vegetation surveys, consisting of three random plots in 25 purposively placed grids. The surveys consisted of cover class data for all plant species. The surveys were completed twice during the summer of 2002 (late June/early July and mid-August). Multivariate statistical analyses of the vegetation survey data revealed relationships between vegetation and soil texture, vegetation and shallow depth to ground water (within 1 m), and individual plant species and fire frequency. The intended use of the findings is to improve management of designated tallgrass prairie restoration sites at the AHATS.

# Winter field trips planned

by Kenneth J. Arndt

We have planned three MN NPS winter field trips. If you haven't signed up yet, just send an e-mail to me at karndt@pioneereng.com or sign up at our general meeting in February. I will be at the field trip table with sign-up sheets and other information on upcoming trips.

**Saturday, Feb. 17, 1 - 3 p.m., Terrace Horticultural Books, 503 St. Clair Ave., St. Paul.** Owner Kent Patterson has opened his store to all MN NPS members and is offering to donate 20 percent of all sales from the afternoon to the Society. So if we spend \$1,000, then the MN NPS will get \$200. There is no limit to the number of Society members who can come, but I do appreciate your letting me know if you can make it.

**Saturday, March 3, 1-4 p.m., Pine Bend Bluffs SNA in Inver Grove Heights.** Join botanists Scott Milburn and Jason Husveth and urban forester Ken Arndt for an afternoon of winter botany at this fantastic Scientific Natural Area. We will hike from atop the bluffs down through the mixed hardwood/coniferous forests to the Mississippi River, where we will explore the seeps for skunk cabbage in bloom. The hiking will be moderate in difficulty, due to the 150- to 200-foot elevation change from the top of the bluff down to the river. The trail itself is easy going; it's the elevation change I want people to be aware of. We have to limit the number of people to 20, due to site-sensitive reasons. More detailed information will be available in mid-February.

**Late March or early April, Warner Nature Center in Marine on St. Croix.** Join Dr. Jans A. Janssens of Lambda-Max, Ecological Research as we explore the world of bryophytes at this unique natural area. A date will be set in the next month.



# 110-acre prairie is gift to Regal Meadow Preserve

By Melissa Andrie. This excerpt is reprinted with permission from the Aug. 2, 2006, Paynesville Press.

“We have a prairie. What it needs is help continuing as a prairie.”

With these words, Don Knutson [former MN NPS president] passed on that land at a dedication ceremony. The prairie, one of very few remaining parcels of wet to wet-mesic prairie, was donated by Knutson to The Nature Conservancy, and it is now one of three areas of land in the Regal Meadow Preserve, which covers a total of about 620 acres. Knutson donated the land in memory of his son, Dean Anders Knutson, who died in 1997.

Grazing and fire created good natural disturbances to the prairie in the past, and it has never been plowed. “You can’t rebuild this. It’s a genuine native stand,” said John Maile, the project manager of the Ordway/Glacial Lakes Project, of which the Regal Meadow is a part.

There are “a whole suite of plants associated” with wet prairie, according to Carmen Converse, the “plant lady” and program director of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources’ County Biological Survey. Some examples are cord grass, blazing star, prairie anemone, and heartleaf golden alexander.

In the floodplain of the Crow River, the Regal Meadow is also home to the small white lady’s slipper as well as non-plant life, like the regal fritillary and the Poweshiek skipper, both species of butterflies.

“You get addicted to things,” Knutson said of his interest in conservation. Through an unusual series of events, he became the catalyst for the donation of this special piece of land, with its hundreds of species, many of them unique. While he taught a botany class at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus, he was approached by a student who said she and her husband owned a piece of prairie land and wanted him to look at it, to see if it was thriving. Though prairies were not his specialty, he came and discovered it to be thriving prairie.

After Knutson recommended that the couple contact The Nature Conservancy if they ever wanted it to become publicly protected land, he did not hear from them for 10 years. Then the former student contacted him. She wanted to give him the land to take care of and to “keep it as a living, vital, natural prairie system,” according to Knutson.

After owning the land for a couple of years, two years ago he began the process of shifting the land from private to public ownership, to make sure that it was protected while he was “still in shape to do it.”

The land is located about a half-mile west of Regal on Highway 55. It is open to the public and will continue to be open for hunting.



Leadplant photo by Peter Dziuk

## Plant Lore

by Thor Kommedahl

### What is leadplant?

Leadplant is *Amorpha canescens*, a native perennial shrub in the pea family. It is also called prairie shoestring, downy indigobush, or false indigo.

### How did it get these names?

*Amorpha* is a Greek word meaning “deformed,” because it has only one petal instead of five typical of legumes. *Canescent* refers to the hoary leaf appearance due to the short, white hairs, which accounts for the name leadplant, but also it was once thought (erroneously) to be an indicator of lead ore. Shoestring describes the long, tough roots. Because it resembles plants in the genus *Indigofera*, it is sometimes called false indigo or downy indigobush.

### What do plants look like?

They are perennial shrubs usually less than three feet, but up to four feet tall. The alternate leaves are pinnately compound with 15-51 nearly stalkless, whitish, hairy leaflets. Blossoms, in dense terminal spikes, are bluish-purple with a single petal, at first tubular, then unfolding. It has one seed per pod. Bees and wasps are attracted for pollination.

### Where do the shrubs grow?

Leadplant grows in the dry, prairie areas of the state and sometimes in sandy, open woods.

### Is it edible?

Not for humans, but deer, rabbits, and livestock find it palatable; it is high in protein. It is not poisonous either.

### Has it medicinal properties?

Not really; however, Omaha Indians made a paste from stems to treat neuralgia and rheumatism.

### Is it economically important?

It has no particular landscape features, but it is sometimes included in native plant gardens.

Minnesota Native Plant Society  
P.O. Box 20401  
Bloomington, MN 55420

Winter 2007

## Thompson County Park



Take Hwy. 52 to the Butler Ave. E. exit in West St. Paul. Go west on Butler 0.2 miles, then go south on Stassen Lane, the park entrance road.