



Minnesota Plant Press

The Minnesota Native Plant Society Newsletter

www.mnnps.org

Volume 33, Numbers 2-4

Summer, Fall, Winter 2014

Monthly meetings

Dakota Lodge

Thompson County Park

1200 Stassen Lane

West St. Paul, MN 55118

First Thursday Oct.-Dec., Feb.-June

6:30 PM-Social

7-9 PM- Business and program

Check website for details or changes

Fall Programs 2014

November: Peggy Booth and SNA staff: "SNA Highlights: SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan & SNA Outreach Initiative." POM: Badoura Pines

December: Phyllis Root, "Writing Picture Books: Spreading the Word about Our Native Habitats" POM - *Liatris aspera*, Rough Blazing star

Spring Programs 2015

February: David Remucal, Rare plant conservation at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. POM: *Polemonium occidentale* (Western Jacob's ladder)

March: Chris Lenhart. Potential hydrologic and ecologic impacts of Emerald Ash Borer on black ash wetlands. POM: TBD

April: Susan Wilkin and Marilyn Garber, Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Florilegium project. POM: TBD

May: Janeen Ruby, Designing and testing protocols for long term monitoring of *Cypripedium candidum*, small white lady's slipper. Place of the month: Expandere Wildlife Management Area

June: Bonnie Harper-Lore, What you should know about invasive plant policy. POM: TBD.

Changes in Society Leadership

The Minnesota Native Plant Society was formed in 1982 by a group of enthusiastic professional botanists, wildflower lovers, conservationists, and native gardeners.

In its first year, the Society had 63 single and 30 family members. The Society is governed by a nine member Board of Directors elected by the members at large each spring. Members of the Board serve a three year term that expires in June and can serve consecutive terms. The society's officers, who do not need to be Board members, are elected by the Board. Members can nominate themselves for office. Messages from outgoing President Scott Milburn and new President Mike Lynch and can be found on pages 2 and 3 respectively. A full list of board members and society functions can be found on page 3.

Save the date

The annual MNNPS symposium, "**Botanical Ramifications of Environmental Change**" will be held on March 21 at the Bell Museum of Natural History. Speakers include Charles Umbanhowar, St. Olaf College; Ruth Shaw, University of Minnesota; Jeremy Ash, Plant Ecology Lab, University of Wisconsin; Steven Travers, North Dakota State University; and Pati Vitt, Chicago Botanical Garden. Topics include climate as a driver of past vegetation change, genetics of adaptation, identification of Midwestern plants most vulnerable to climate change, evidence of phenological shifts during the 20th century, and the complications of translocation as a way of addressing climate change. Cost of the Symposium is \$45 for members, \$55 for non-members, and \$25 for students. Attendees who join the society at the time of the Symposium receive the member rate.

Outgoing President's Message

Scott Milburn

I have been honored to serve as an officer the past decade with two years as Vice President and eight years as President. It's been a great run and I would like to thank some of the key people who were implemental in our success during this time. First and foremost, Ron and Cathy Huber operate as a unit responsible for the treasurer's position and membership. This serves as notice of my appreciation of their efforts. Another key person in my opinion has been Gerry Drewry, long time editor of the Plant Press. Editor is a difficult job and Gerry set the bar extremely high during her tenure. Elizabeth Heck is another individual of importance during the past ten years. Elizabeth took us from the beta version of our website to the current form. She also provided the updates even when off and away in tropical settings. Linda Huhn and Andres Morantes are also to be thanked for serving as program chairs as well as Ken Arndt as field trip chair.

What I enjoyed most during my time was serving as the symposium chair. The key lesson for me was to keep things simple. We found a permanent home and partnership with the Bell Museum and a local caterer (Trotter's Café). Both entities simplified the process and reduced much of the planning time. We also had great topics varying from landscapes and regions to pure botanical talks. I took pride that we were able to land high profile botanists including Welby Smith, Dr. Anton Reznicek, Dr. Don Farrar, Dr. John Semple, Dr. Hugo Cota-Sanchez, Dr. Harvey Ballard, and Dr. Robert Freckmann. For those paying attention since 2007, the brochure has been in the same format and that was no accident. I would like to thank Jeanne Schacht for designing the initial brochure and the subsequent brochures. The annual event was always well attended and the feedback from the members was very positive. This annual event is critical to our success as an organization and it is a big factor in what separates us from other groups. It is my hope that we do not deviate from this high quality approach moving forward.

Another thing that I am proud of is the fiscal health of the Society. We had roughly \$17,500 in the coffers when I first came on as president. In my time we have donated over \$12,000 to various organizations and we have kept membership fees the same. Upon my exit, we had over \$26,000. One of the last moves made during my time was to provide financial support to the Minnesota Wildflowers website in the neighborhood of \$4,000. Ken Arndt was the architect behind this and we deemed this as a great investment. A quarter of the money is considered a donation and the remainder is to be paid back over a three-year period. In exchange, we are provided ad space on their home page. That ad space is key to providing the necessary exposure we need. The amount of web traffic on the Minnesota Wildflowers website is significant and impressive. This far outweighs the benefits we have seen thus far with social media.

In closing, I will share with you that I needed a break for a bit. People in key positions moved on and we have not been able to find their replacements, thus the conundrum that many volunteer groups face. We had fewer resources to pull from and as everyone knows, time is finite. I wish I had more to give now, but other obligations persist from family to work. I look to continue on as a board member and I will focus on providing guidance and ensuring that we stay true to the mission of the Society.

The Minnesota Native Plant Society:

A non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and appreciation of Minnesota's native plants and plant communities through education and public awareness.

Society leadership

Board members' names are followed with the year their term expires in parentheses.

President: Mike Lynch (2017)

Vice President: Shirley Mah Kooyman

Secretary: Rob Cahalan (Board 2017)

Treasurer & Membership Database:
Ron & Cathy Huber

Field Trip Organizer: Ken Arndt (2016)

Programs and newsletter:
Jyneen Thatcher (2016) & Nancy Sather

Webmaster: John Arthur (2015)

Social Coordinator; Vacant

Social media: Vacant

Other Board members:

Angela Anderson (2016)

Steve Eggers (2015)

Otto Gockman (2017)

Scott Milburn (2015)

Incoming President's Message

Mike Lynch

My fellow Minnesotans, ask not what your native plant society can do for you, ask what you can do for your native plant society.

The Minnesota Native Plant Society is an interest group bound together by a common passion for our native flora and plant communities. It is the membership that makes this society so interesting. There are so many people from different backgrounds and experiences with native plants who come together to share their knowledge and learn from each other. Whether you are veteran botanists who have been studying plants for decades, or an avid amateur naturalist who wants to include wildflowers in their garden, all of us bring something to the table.

Over the years I have enjoyed meeting so many of you at meetings and I am continually amazed at all the smart passionate people out there. But seeing you in meetings or on field trips is not enough. I want more. I challenge all of you to make your mark on the native plant society. We need people who want to volunteer their time, energy and knowledge to help support our mission. Whether that is leading a field trip, representing the society at an event, writing columns for the newsletter or recruiting new members, you all have unique talents that will help the society continue to grow and provide a great resource for the state.

MNNPS Outreach efforts

Jyneen Thatcher

In an effort to expand our outreach efforts, the Society displayed our information at the Society for Ecological Restoration, Great Lakes division meeting; the Landscape Revival in Roseville (a festival for native plant restoration interests); and other similar venues. We are tracking membership recruitment from these events, to see which are most effective. If you know of upcoming events that the Society should attend, please contact Jyneen Thatcher. The Society warmly welcomes new members at any time of year. Members receive reminders of upcoming meetings, the newsletter, and the member rate at the annual symposium.

Technical or Membership Inquiries: contact@mnnps.org

Website: <http://www.mnnps.org>

Sedge Meadows, Bogs and Swamps: Field Trip to Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve

Steve Eggers

On Saturday June 28th, a group of 13 composed of MNNPS and MN Wetland Professionals Association members explored some of the wetland jewels at CCSR, which is located in Anoka and Isanti Counties and the Anoka Sand Plain. Dire forecasts of thunderstorms and heavy rain had been made starting the two days leading up to that Saturday, but during the field trip the weather was pleasant with alternating periods of sun and clouds.

Our first stop was the south shore of Fish Lake and its adjacent expanse of sedge meadow. We observed aquatic vegetation including large-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton amplifolius*), water shield (*Brasenia schreberi*), white and yellow water lilies (*Nymphaea odorata* and *Nuphar variegata*, respectively) and wild rice (*Zizania palustris*). Wire-grass sedge (*Carex lasiocarpa*) dominated the sedge meadow, which also included Canada blue-joint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*), mad-dog skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*) and invading cattails (*Typha* spp.). Along the sand ridge separating the sedge meadow and lake we found winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*) in full bloom. We walked back through an oak savanna, managed with prescribed burns, and were treated with a colorful white/yellow display of flowers of northern bedstraw (*Galium boreale*) and puccoon (*Lithospermum carolinense*). This is ideal habitat for red-headed woodpeckers, a species in decline, and as if on cue one did a fly-by. We stopped at two, small, isolated wetland basins within the savanna. The first was a seasonal basin dominated by long-scaled tussock sedge (*Carex haydenii*). Canada blue-joint grass and woolgrass (*Scirpus cyperinus*) were present as well. Barbara Delaney explained how the periodically exposed soil along the margins of these seasonal wetlands is prime habitat for some of the rare plant species of the Anoka Sand Plain. The second isolated wetland basin was very different floristically although it was only a stone's throw away. It appeared to be more acidic as evidenced by the dominance of bog sedge (*Carex oligosperma*) and presence of leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*) and royal fern (*Osmunda spectabilis*).

Next it was off to Cedar Bog Lake and an easy hike along a boardwalk through a high quality northern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) swamp. Due to the wet spring, 2014 was one of the worst years in memory for mosquitoes just about anywhere in Minnesota, but they were inexplicably absent this day even in the dark confines of the cedar swamp. We did the yellow birch test – cut twigs have the scent and flavor of wintergreen – although I was reprimanded for breaking off too large a piece of a twig (no collecting allowed on CCSR without a permit). Halberd-leaved tearthumb (*Persicaria arifolia*) and poison sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*) were observed on the walk in. The boardwalk terminated at an open water pond fringed with water willow (*Decodon verticillatus*). We were struck by the silence as if it invited contemplation of glacial time.

Our last stop was another boardwalk – Beckman Lake Bog. High water levels had submerged most of the boardwalk so it was somewhat tricky navigating the bog. No one slipped and got into difficulty that I saw. Beckman Lake Bog is a floating mat with characteristic species of acid bogs. We observed the *Sphagnum*-moss mat and bog sedge, poor sedge (*Carex magellanica*), tawny cottongrass (*Eriophorum virginicum*), three-way sedge (*Dulichium arundinaceum*), bog buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*) and sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*). A few small cranberries (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*) were in bloom – the flowers have flared-back petals like shooting stars. Other members of the heath family observed were leatherleaf, Labrador tea (*Rhododendron groenlandicum*) and bog rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*). This was the conclusion of the field trip and the timing could not have been better. Skies were darkening to the west and winds were starting to whip up. The forecasted thunderstorms were rolling in.

Pictures from the Cedar Creek Field Trip



Seasonal wetland



Cedar swamp



Beckman Lake boardwalk



Linda Huhn at Blueberry Hill near Bayport.

Other field trips

Jyneen Thatcher

On June 14, 2014, a small group of members joined John Moriarty for a tour of the restored prairie at Crow-Hassan Regional Park Reserve. John explained the site history, and pointed out some of the challenges faced in this restoration. The site has a variety of plant community types, but most time was spent on the dry prairie, where we saw multiple species of *Penstemon* and *Houstonia* in bloom, while the blue-eyed grass and pasque flower had finished flowering. On September 21 a small group visited Blueberry Hill, a dry prairie remnant overlooking the St. Croix River near Bayport.

State Funds Approved for New Museum and Planetarium

Martin Moen, Bell Museum

In May the State of Minnesota approved \$51.5 million for a new natural history museum and planetarium. Final design work is now underway to create a modern museum and planetarium with the programs and amenities that 21st century audiences expect. The new facility will be built on the northwest edge of the University's campus in St. Paul, a location that is close to both Minneapolis and St. Paul and one that provides good access to major freeways and mass transit. The project will expand science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education statewide, enhance the museum's role of training undergraduates in science education, and provide a public portal to University research. The project is not expected to impact collections at the University of Minnesota Herbarium, presently housed in the Biological Sciences Building on the St. Paul Campus.

MNNPS Membership update

Ron Huber

New members during the 1st quarter

Stacy Anderson, Minneapolis, MN
Gabe Atkins, Brooklyn Park, MN
Harvey Ballard, Athens, OH
Arla Carmichiel, Long Lake, MN
Belwin Conservancy, Afton, MN
Crystal Boyd, Burnsville, MN
Elizabeth Brombach, St. Paul, MN
Elizabeth Brown, St. Paul, MN
Anthony Demars, Minneapolis, MN
Chris Firkus, Minneapolis, MN
Shelby Flint, St. Paul, MN
Robert Freckmann, Stevens Point, WI
Kerry Furtney, St. Paul, MN
Nicholas Goldsmith, St. Paul, MN
Katy Goodwin, Minneapolis, MN
Dena Grossenbacher, Minneapolis
Paul Hoppe, Ogilvie, MN
Alison Hruby, White Bear Lake, MN
Christopher Johnson, Scandia, MN
Steve Kelley, Long Lake, MN
Courtney Kerns, Grand Rapids, MN
Kirk Larson, Bemidji, MN
Susan J. Lindoo, Newport, MN
Ryan Lisson, St. Paul, MN
Dan McSwain, Stillwater, MN
Erin O'Leary, Andover, MN
Robert Payton, Minneapolis, MN
Anne Pfankuch, West St Paul, MN
Victoria P. Price, Eden Prairie, MN
Gary J. Rathman, Comfrey, MN
Sarada Sangameswaran, Minneapolis
Perry Scott, Indianapolis, IN
Ruth Shaw, Roseville, MN
Michael Sonnek, Mapleton, MN
John Thayer, Cottage Grove, MN
John West, Minneapolis, MN

New members during the 2nd and 3rd quarter

Britta Anderson, Minneapolis, MN
Paula Baker, St. Louis Park, MN
Michael Benson, Otsego, MN
Jarod Bladen, River Falls, WI
Thomas & Susan Christiansen, Edina, MN
Audrey Cullen, Minneapolis, MN
Susan Granger, Morris, MN
Drew Guhanick, Andover, MN
Wendy Haan, Minneapolis, MN
Jennifer Kamm, Plymouth, MN
Mary Elaine Linden, Golden Valley, MN
Thomas & Stephanie Long, Eden Prairie, MN
Stephen Mastey, St. Paul, MN
Caroline Oswald, Bloomington, MN
Debra Ott, Casselton, ND
Eric & Debra Sanden, River Falls, WI
Chao Xiong, Minneapolis, MN

New members during the 4th quarter

Keylor Andrews, Gem Lake, MN
Jean Beales, Brooklyn Center, MN
Glynn E. Behmen, Edina, MN
Maxine Bethke, Oakdale, MN
Kristina and John Delaundreau, St. Paul
Richard Hansen, Letcher, SD
Duane Ed Henricks, Valley City, ND
Kimball Knutson, Minneapolis, MN

New Lifetime Members 2015

Thank you to longtime family members Mary Shedd and Steve Wilson, of Tower, MN for becoming our newest Lifetime Members on January 6, 2015. Your continued support is very much appreciated.

The Society warmly welcomes the 66 new members who joined in 2014.

The Minnesota Native Plant Society membership year starts January 1.

Dues may be paid at the February meeting or mailed to

P.O. Box 20401, Bloomington, MN 55420.

Membership categories are:

- Individual or family, \$15;
- Student or senior, \$8;
- Institution, \$20;
- Donor, \$25;
- Lifetime, \$300

Plant Lore—Cocklebur

Thor Kommedahl

What is cocklebur and how did it get its name?

Cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*) is a member of the aster family. *Xanthium* means yellow, as a yellow hair dye can be made from the thick yellow plant sap. *Strumarium* means cushion-like or swollen and refers to its once medicinal use for treating swollen necks.

Where does it grow?

Native to Minnesota and North America, but distributed worldwide, cocklebur is now a cosmopolitan weed in road sides. It was probably naturally a plant of river shores such as its present habitat at Cannon River Bottoms. It is an important noxious weed in soybean and corn fields. Because of its importance as a weed, it is presently the subject of intense genetic analysis.

What does the plant look like?

Plants are annuals up to 5 feet tall. Leaves vary from heart-shaped to shallow 3-5 lobed. Male and female flowers are separate. Female flowers are enclosed in a 2-chambered bur (involucre) covered with stout, hooked prickles adapted to dispersal by animals. Oval burs contain fruits (achenes) of unequal size in two chambers, and germinate at different times. From 500 to 5400 burs can be produced by a single plant.

Are the plants edible or poisonous?

Not generally edible; however, seeds have been ground, mixed with cornmeal, made into cakes, and steamed for food. The nutritional quality of cocklebur plants is slightly less than that of alfalfa. On the other hand, plants are toxic to grazing animals. The achenes and seedlings contain the toxin carboxyatratyloside. Mature plants also contain at least four other toxins. Humans and animals have died from ingesting plants.

Does the plant have other uses?

Zuni people made a poultice by grinding seeds with squash seeds and corn grains to apply to wounds to remove cactus splinters. On the down side, burs caught by sheep result in lower value of fleece.

Editor's note: A full list of reference materials about cocklebur can be found on the source page for the species at the USDA PLANTS website: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/reference?symbol=XAST>

Additional information can also be found on the Plants for a Future webpage:

<http://www.pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Xanthium+strumarium>



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database
Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913.
Illustrated flora of the northern states
and Canada. Vol. 3: 346.

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

SUMMER-FALL-WINTER
2014-2015

Dakota Lodge, Thompson County Park
1200 Stassen Lane, West St. Paul, MN 55113



Directions:

Take Highway 52 to the Butler Ave. E. exit in West St. Paul.

Go west on Butler 0.2 mile to Stassen Lane.

Go south on Stassen Lane to the parking lot at the end of the road in Thompson County Park