



Minnesota Plant Press

The Minnesota Native Plant Society
Newsletter

Volume 14, Number 4

Summer 1995

Upcoming Monthly Meetings

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Visitor Center, 3815 East 80th Street
Bloomington, MN 55425-1600 612-335-2323

July 25, 1995. New-Board Meeting, University of Minnesota, 491 Borlaug Hall, St. Paul Campus, 6:45 PM.

Summer Field Trips (see page 3, column 3)
August 12 **Iron Horse Prairie**, Dodge City
August 12 **Prairie Day**—Arboretum
August 12 **Prairie Wildflower Hike**, St. Croix
All summer: **Bakken Physic Garden**,
Monday-Saturday, Minneapolis

Regular Meetings

October 4, November 1, December 6, 1995.
January 3, February 7, March 6, April 3, May 1, 1996.

Seed Exchange November 1, 1995

Deadline for Fall Issue is September 1, 1995.

The Fall issue will contain the dues statement and a Directory of Members. If your dues are paid up, you will be listed in the Directory.

Please send suggestions for topics and speakers for the regular programs to Charles Umbanhowar.

Minnesota Native Plants: Now on-line

Those with interest in any aspect of native plants of our area could find this kind of dedicated mailing group to be a valuable resource.

Functions include

- Plant rescue: notification, coordination
- Garden "chat": notes on the passing scene, materials to share, horticultural discussion
- Field trips (personal, MNPS, TNC, other): calendar of events, trip reports, ecological notes and discussion
- Government related: political information, action, coordination; planning input
- Visitor contact point: e.g., for those seeking field trip/resource suggestions or wanting to contact peers
- Mechanism for sharing net resources: e.g., materials from other state native plant mailing groups

The group (list) is served by the University of Minnesota mainframe and is free. Anyone can subscribe but only members can read from it or review the membership: it is not anonymous. Messages (files) are not edited or moderated. Nonmembers can send files. All files should be *signed* (in addition to your address in the heading) and appropriately titled.

To subscribe

- Send E-mail to: listserv@vm1.spcs.umn.edu
- Leave subject blank.
- In the text: SUBSCRIBE MN-NATPL your name (not address) or (UNSUBSCRIBE MN-NATPL your name)

For correspondence to the group, send E-mail to MN-NATPL@vm1.spcs.umn.edu

For questions, call Robin Fox

We thank Robin Fox for setting up this procedure for our use [ed].

May Wright 1905-1995

May Wright, a founding member of the MNPS in 1982 and a great source of gardening lore and inspiration to native plant enthusiasts all around the Twin Cities, passed away May 4, 1995. Her expertise in gardening with native plants, especially those grown from seed, was legendary, but more telling than her expertise was her lively enthusiasm. She wrote articles for the *Minnesota Plant Press*, helped with our seed exchanges and plant sales, and generally was a font of information and an inspiration to all. May was easily the First Lady of Native Plant Gardening. Some of us were lucky enough to have had a guided tour of May's own garden. The only MNPS Spring Symposium honoring an individual was the 1990 Symposium dedicated to May on gardening with native plants. May was involved to the end and in April attended this year's Spring Symposium at Belwin Center.

May was a biologist by profession as well as by avocation. She had a Ph.D. degree in ecology from the University of Chicago, and worked for many years as a statistician for the Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics at the University of Minnesota. Thus her gardening enthusiasms were backed up by a thorough knowledge of biological principles. During her many years of living in White Bear Lake, she planted her own native plant garden and developed her knowledge of the cultivation of native species—all at a time when native plant nurseries were unknown in the area, few people were interested in native plant growing, and there was no MNPS. She developed different habitat areas in her garden, and carefully investigated the best ways to successfully germinate seed of each species.

May first expressed an interest in plants in grade school in Chicago where she took a summer course in botany, an interest encouraged by her parents. In college, she studied science and mathematics as an undergraduate, then obtained a master's degree in genetics. However, it was in graduate school in ecology that she began the study of seed germination and began to think about

plants in their natural settings. These interests led to her contributions to our knowledge of the propagation of native plants. Some are cited in the *Directory to Resources on Wildflower Propagation*, prepared at the Missouri Botanical Garden in 1981 for the National Council of State Garden Clubs; a more extensive account appears the same year in her papers on *Domesticating the Wild Flower* in the *Minnesota Horticulturist* (vol. 109:100-104, 121) and with Margaret Smithburg in the same issue on *Cultivation and Germination Procedures for Wild Flowers* (pp. 105-108). Other accounts of May's contributions to native plant gardening in Minnesota can be found in the *Minnesota Horticulturist* (vol. 109:109-111, and last May on pages 22-25).

We will miss May's vast knowledge of native plants and their cultivation, but most of all we will miss her unfailing good humor, enthusiasm, and energy for the subject which unites us.—Esther and David McLaughlin.

Esther, Biology Department, Augsburg College; David, Plant Biology, University of Minnesota.

Species 2000 to count all known species of plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms on Earth

Species 2000 is a project initiated by the International Union of Biological Sciences and its objective is to count all life forms on Earth. A master species database will be created globally to enable study of diversity. It will serve as a clearing house for taxonomic data on the world's known species. Rapid progress is expected during 1995. Information can be obtained from Species 2000 Secretariat, Biology Department, University of Southampton, Southampton, SO16 7PX, UK. Fax +44 1703 592444. E-mail sp2000@soton.ac.uk

The Minnesota Native Plant Society

Minnesota Plant Press
Thor Kommedahl, editor

Membership dues are \$10 per year for regular members and includes subscription to the newsletter; dues for students and seniors are \$8, for family \$12, for institutions \$20, and donors \$25. Checks can be made out to: Minnesota Native Plant Society, and sent to: Minnesota Native Plant Society, 220 Biological Sciences Center, 1445 Gortner Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108.

Four issues are published each year.

MNPS Board of Directors

President: Rebecca Schirber,

Vice-President: Diane Hilscher,

Treasurer: Ruth Phipps,

Secretary: Linda M. Huhn,

Members:
Arden Aanestad,
Nancy Albrecht,

Char Bezanson,

Chase Cornelius,

Rick Jannett,

Esther McLaughlin,

Val O'Malley,

Roy Robison,

The Minnesota Native Plant Society is a tax-exempt 501 c3 organization as determined by the US Internal Revenue Service.

Briefs from the Board

•The 1995-96 officers elected are: Char Bezanson, president; Charles Umbanhowar, vice-president and program chair; Ruth Phipps, treasurer; and Christine Drassal, secretary.

•*MNPS Guide to Spring Wildflowers in the Twin Cities Region* will be revised by fall 1995, by Jim Schuster and John Moriarty.

•Board retreat was set for June 14 on St. Paul Campus (Room 491 Borlaug Hall), with Becky Schirber as convener.

•Roy Robison reported that 90% of MNPS members live in the 7-county metro area.

•Esther McLaughlin reported 74 paid registrants to the Spring Symposium. The symposium was videotaped by Gary Perrault.

•The policy was restated that MNPS does not lend out its mailing list.

•The long range planning committee was renamed the Goals and Planning Committee (GAP), and will meet July 17, 1995.

•The Orientation Manual for Board Members is being assembled by Rick Jannett.

•Don Knutson will chair again the Symposium Committee for 1996.

•Incoming Board members are: Gerry Drewry, Thor Kommedahl, and Charles Umbanhowar.

MNPS Display Board Use

All members are welcome to show our display board at events, museums, and schools, if an attendant is present or it is safely displayed. This 3 by 5 foot, 2-sided board holds information on the Society, native plants, and stewardship. Call Don Knutson at 612-721-6123 (work) or 612-379-7314 (home) to request it.

Spring Conference at Belwin on Minnesota's coniferous forests attracted 74 participants

This Conference was held at the Belwin Outdoor Educational Laboratory, in Afton, Minnesota, on Saturday, April 1, 1995,

Naturalist Ron Winch started by showing some outstanding photos of northern forests. Jan and John Green followed with an overview of Minnesota's conifers.

Plant succession at Seagull Lake within a forest was illustrated by Lee Frelich, ecologist at the Department of Natural Resources in the University of Minnesota. The interrelation between white pine forests and wildlife was described by Lynn Rogers from Ely, Minnesota.

Welby Smith, botanist for the DNR of Minnesota, depicted the gorgeous orchids that inhabit coniferous forests in the state.

Many participants enjoyed the walk around the rich, wooded area of the Belwin outdoor laboratory.

We congratulate Don Knutson for planning another successful conference, and Esther McLaughlin for arrangements in obtaining use of the facility. We thank all who helped in parking cars and cleanup of the buildings and grounds, and Janice Odegaard, Environmental Coordinator, Belwin Outdoor Laboratory.

MERP is a biodiversity conservation organization

The Minnesota Ecosystems Recovery Project (MERP), formed in 1992, is based in Red Wing, Minnesota. Its main focus is to conserve native biodiversity and covers the tallgrass prairie, northern coniferous and deciduous hardwood biomes of Minnesota. These three biomes converge at the three major drainage systems of North America. Within the state are nine major watersheds and more than 50 natural community types. For more information, contact MERP, POB 293, Red Wing, MN 55066; (612) 385-7512.

Summer Field Trips

Nancy Albrecht

August 12, 1995 9 AM to 4 PM
Iron Horse Prairie, Dodge City. Leader: Steve Eggers, Ecologist with the US Army Corps of Engineers. One of the best preserved mesic-to-wet prairies and indicator plants of threatened and endangered species. Car pool from south metropolitan area. For directions, call the director

August 12 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM
Prairie Day—Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and Schaefer Prairie. Meet at Landscape Arboretum (Highway 5, Chanhassen). Reservations required. Please call *Nature Conservancy* (612-331-0750). Fee is \$22 for members of either *Nature Conservancy* or *Minnesota Landscape Arboretum*; \$28 for non-members. Fee covers travel and lunch.

August 12 10 AM to 11:30 AM
Prairie Wildflower Hike. Wild Rivers State Park, Leader: Dave Crawford. Meet at Park Contact Station. Reservations not required. Trip will follow Dry Creek Prairie—one of the better remnants of prairie along the St. Croix River. No fee but state park vehicle sticker is required.

All summer:
The Bakken Physic Garden Monday-Friday 9 to 5; Saturday 9:30 to 4:30. Tours by appointment only. 3537 Zenith Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55416; (612) 927-6508. Fee \$3; \$2 for students and seniors. "Physic" is an archaic term for medicine, so a Physic Garden is one that contains medicinal plants. Seventy-one species of herbs, shrubs and trees with medicinal properties are grown in this garden. A list is available for visitors to the Garden.

Eatable Mushrooms: Gearing Up for the Morels

Stan Tekiela

So, you want to hunt for morel mushrooms (*Morchella* spp.) this spring; you say that you can't tell the difference between a morel and a hubcap, and you missed my talk, given at the March meeting of the Minnesota Native Plant Society; well here is another chance to learn about these fungi.

Morels represent common spring-time mushrooms in Minnesota, and, yes, it is a native fungus. Depending on whom you talk to, there are six to 12 different kinds of morels, most of which occur in Minnesota. All are edible and very tasty. Don't be fooled—there are several false morels. Some of these are imposters but edible, and some are poisonous. One should be careful.

Morels share common characteristics. Look for a cap that is riddled with pits and ridges; not folds and creases. Spores are produced on the pits and ridges. Mushrooms that have the folds and creases instead of the pits and ridges are the "I-want-to-be" mushrooms and are not edible.

True morels have hollow stems. When a morel is cut in half—the long way—one can see that the stem is hollow, like a straw. Any cottony material within the stem indicates that it is a false morel. In all but one kind of morel, the cap of the morel is attached directly to the stem. This means that the top of the stem is attached to the bottom of the cap. This is easy to see when you cut the mushroom in half to check for the hollow stem.

All morels grow on the ground and not on wood, except for some unusual exceptions.

In Minnesota, we find morels in May. Most morel hunters time their hunting with other signs of nature, such as when oak leaves are the size of squirrel's ears, when lilacs are blooming, or when apple trees or trilliums are in bloom, or some similar indication. Start looking for morels in southern Minnesota in early May and in

northern Minnesota in late May.

Most successful morel hunters concentrate their search near dead elm trees or along banks of major rivers such as the Minnesota or Mississippi rivers. South-facing, well-drained hills are another favorite spot. One thing for sure, mushroom hunters do not reveal their favorite locations for finding morels. If someone does tell you where to find morels you have to be suspicious that you are being sent on a "wild goose chase."

If you find some of these elusive fungi, collect them in a wicker basket or paper bag—never in a plastic bag. Wicker and paper allow the mushroom to "breathe" and stay fresh longer. It's not a good idea to eat morels or any other mushrooms raw. Cooking will help kill bacteria and aid in digestion of mushrooms—some people have special difficulty in digesting mushrooms.

This summarizes briefly a 90-minute talk. Good luck, and remember "when in doubt, throw it out!" Learn mushroom identification by consulting appropriate references.

This is a brief summary of a talk given by Stan Tekiela, at the meeting March 1, 1995, of the Minnesota Native Plant Society. Stan is the author of the book "Start Mushrooming."

What is a bird's nest fungus?

Its name is *Cyathus striatus* and it has a vase-shaped fruiting body smaller than a dime and covered at first with a thin, hairy membrane that ruptures at maturity. Inside the vase are several drab to black "eggs" (peridioles) at the bottom, each containing spores. Each fruiting body is attached to its woody host with a cinnamon-brown pad of mycelium. It grows in groups on bark, sticks, or other woody debris in spring, summer, and fall during wet periods. It is widely distributed.

The Bookshelf

Guide to Minnesota Prairies. This 72-page book published by the Natural Heritage Program of the DNR in 1984 has been reprinted in 1995. It is an introduction to the diversity of prairie types found in the state and the assessment of the ownership and protection status of Minnesota prairies as well as a directory to 40 selected prairie preserves. It is available from Seth Kammen Enterprises, 3355 Hiawatha Avenue South, #203, Minneapolis, MN 55406; 642-9568. It sells for \$14 which includes postage and tax.

Scientific and Common Names of 7,000 Vascular Plants in the United States, by L. Brako, A.Y. Rossmann, and D.F. Farr. This 295-page softcover volume (8.5 by 11 inches) was published in 1995 by APS Press, 3340 Pilot Knob Road, St. Paul, MN 55121-2097. It sells for \$29 plus \$3.50 for shipping and handling. Or call 612-454-7250 if ordering by credit card. The names are listed first by scientific name and again by common name. A list of synonyms and a listing by family are included.

North American Native Orchid Journal is a new quarterly journal published by the North American Native Orchid Alliance—a group dedicated to the conservation and promotion of our native orchids. The first issue was in March 1995, and included articles and orchid news, a checklist of North American orchids, and book reviews. Membership includes subscription to the journal of \$22 per year. The editor is Paul Martin Brown of Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. To join, write to Nancy Webb, 84 Etna Street, Brighton, MA 02135.

Orchids occur in every county in Minnesota.

Minnesota's system of parks and trails is reputed to be among the best in the United States

The Minnesota Parks and Trails Council has been organized to further the establishment, development and enhancement of parks and trails in the state and to encourage wise use and protection of these lands. Recent land acquisitions have been Magney State Park (80 acres), Tettegouche State Park (5 acres of shoreline), White-water State Park (10 acres), Afton State Park (30 acres along the St. Croix), Lake Bemidji State Park (small addition), Banning State Park (200 acres), Sibley State Park (17 acres), Crow Wing State Park (80-acre island and 58-acre peninsula) and the Harmony-Preston Trail (Preston to the Root River).

Seven other parcels are being held for disposition. Other ongoing projects include property on the Pigeon River, Illgen Falls property at Tettegouche State Park, Split Rock Lighthouse State Park, the North Shore's Devil Track River Area, White Bear Lake "Round the Lake" project, Mississippi River bluffs trails in Frontenac State Park, and work with several counties on land development.

This group has also been involved in Lake Superior Water Trail legislation, securing a bonding bill to get funds for state park and trails acquisitions and development, getting permits for persons with disabilities, and work on plans for developments along both the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers.

More than 8 million people visit our parks and 7 million our trails. This has been a 50% increase in the past 10 years.

If interested in information, membership, or a newsletter, contact Minnesota Parks & Trails Council, PO Box 26243, St. Paul, MN 55126-0243. Or call (612) 631-2818, or (800) 944-0707.

Say **Thank You** to outgoing officers and members of the Board next time you see them!

Botanical potpourri

GLEANINGS FROM NEWSLETTERS

•A newly discovered plant species and 50 populations of rare plants were found near the site of the Hanford nuclear facility in southeastern Washington reports Ron Geatz. This 560-square-mile site has been off-limits to the public for nearly 50 years and the future of this site is under study.—*Nature Conservancy* 45[3]: 7, 1995)

•Roadside plantings by the Minnesota Department of Transportation tend to focus on native plants and flowers instead of non-native grasses reports Ron Shara. Since 1984, DNR has had a roadside wildlife specialist who currently is Cathy Fouchi. More than 20 bird species are known to utilize roadsides for nesting habitat.—(*Roadsides* 1[4]:6, 1994)

Floristic data are becoming increasingly important for regional biological inventories, impact assessment, research, management decisions, and policy formulation according to M.W. Palmer and P. Neal of Oklahoma State University, and G.L. Wade of the US Forest Service in Vermont. A resurgence in floristic research is hoped for, especially with the application of computers.—(*BioScience* 45:339-345, 1995)

About 500 acres of land adjacent to the Bluestem Prairie in the Red River Valley is being sold to Round River, Inc., in Princeton, Minnesota, subject to a conservation easement that permanently protects the prairie remnants on the land. The objective of this transaction is to establish a local supplier of native seed and restoration services in the Red River Valley according to Jim Erkel in the Nature Conservancy Minnesota Chapter, Spring 1995.

Common milkweed was named *Asclepias syriaca* by Linnaeus who mistakenly wrote that plants came from the Orient. It was introduced early into southern Europe. Asklepios was the Greek god of medicine

Plant Lore

What is white-sage?

White-sage is not a sage (*Salvia* spp.) but is a composite, known as *Artemisia ludoviciana*. It is known also as prairie-sage, and western mugwort and is native to northern North America, including Minnesota.

Where is white-sage found?

This small, perennial shrub grows in prairies, in open dry soils and thin woodlands throughout the state.

How is it distinctive?

The aromatic leaves, resembling willow leaves, have fine white hairs on upper and lower surfaces to give leaves a whitish, felt-like appearance. The shrub produces long rhizomes.

How did it get its name?

Some say it was named after the Greek Artemis, daughter of Zeus and sister of Apollo. Artemis was the virgin huntress and goddess of wildlife, childbirth and all young things. Others attribute the name to Queen Artemisia, of Caria, Asia Minor. *Ludoviciana* is Latin for Louisiana, or "of St. Louis".

Does white-sage have any historical significance?

It was perhaps the most important ceremonial plant of many Native American tribes. They decorated their ceremonial lodges with this plant. Leaves were burned as an incense to drive away evil spirits and the ominous and persistent dreams of sick persons. It was used also to purify implements and utensils.

Does it have any medicinal properties?

Native Americans used this plant as an astringent and for treatment of stomachaches, diarrhea, fevers, rashes, and headaches. However, some people develop an allergy to this plant and contract dermatitis.

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