



# Minnesota Plant Press

The Minnesota Native Plant Society Newsletter

Volume 29 Number 4

Fall 2010

## Monthly meetings

Thompson Park Center/Dakota  
Lodge

Thompson County Park  
360 Butler Ave. E.,  
West St. Paul, MN 55118

## Programs

The Minnesota Native Plant Society meets the first Thursday in October, November, December, February, March, April, May, and June. Check at [www.mnnps.org](http://www.mnnps.org) for more program information.

6 p.m. — Social period

7 – 9 p.m. — Program, Society business

**Nov. 4: “Characterizing patterns of natural disturbance in Minnesota’s wet mesic southern boreal mixed wood forest ecosystems,”** by Michael Reinikainen, master of science student, Department of Forest Resources, U of M. **Plant-of-the-Month:** Naked miterwort (*Mitella nuda*), “a good indicator for my research sites,” by Michael Reinikainen. **Seed exchange.**

**Dec. 2:** To be announced.

## Seed exchange Nov. 4

The annual seed exchange provides an opportunity for members to obtain seeds of native plants at no cost. Seeds must be placed in envelopes and labeled. No bulk piles of seeds will be accepted.

## MNNPS website

For information about Society field trips, meetings and events, check the website: [www.mnnps.org](http://www.mnnps.org)

## Election will affect environmental legacy

by Scott Milburn, MNNPS president

We live in a state that has had a reputation as a place of ubiquitous natural resources. It’s a legacy we hope will continue for future generations, and public support, such as the recent constitutional amendment, is encouraging.

Yet the overall political process seems counterintuitive when it comes to protecting and overseeing those natural resources. Ideally, the heads of agencies that oversee our natural resources would be chosen on merit and experience rather than political favor. However, that is not the usual pattern. We obviously have an election for the next governor of Minnesota this November, and my concern is this trend will continue regardless of who presides over our state.

There are other issues dominating this election, and debate has neglected detailed thought and discussion about natural resources. Instead, the debate has focused the attention on jobs, taxes, and regulation due to the sour economy. These are important issues, but this should not deter action from other important concerns.

Unfortunately, we are often thinking only of today as dictated by this current political system. The majority of our politicians serve under the banner of entitlement, all too often compromising to protect their political careers. The reason I bring this up is that it does affect the mission of the Society. We continue to see a changing landscape that brings a series of challenges. We face a growing population, which puts added pressure on our resources. We should be optimistic, however, because we have opportunities to be creative and solve problems before they appear. This goes back to the issue of putting the best and the brightest in positions of leadership. So as November approaches, members of the Society need to consider such issues and hope that the next governor will appoint true leaders, rather than continuing our current system.

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# Conservation Corner

by Elizabeth Nixon

The MNNPS Blog on Conservation topics is two quick clicks away from the Society's Internet home page. Issues include legislative status on funding invasive species control, the ecological price of holiday decorations, and the need to have a voice for native plants at the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council decisions on allocating the Minnesota legacy amendment dollars.

Clicking on the Education Blog brings to your attention both a crucial education and conservation initiative, that of No Child Left Inside. I hope you will consider what you can do to support this initiative. The MNNPS has helped by funding urban school buses to transport kids to an annual schoolchildren's bird festival in Ramsey County. Sad as it sounds, education dollars are not available for this.

Experiential learning in the natural world by children has been taken on as a serious outdoor conservation strategy by federal, state, and local decision-makers. The federal government hosted a national road trip this year called America's Great Outdoors ([www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/index.cfm](http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/index.cfm)). I learned that top agency leaders are seriously soliciting programmatic ideas for getting urban (the vast majority) kids outdoors. Our state DNR had a very successful "More Kids in the Woods" inaugural season ([www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/education/morekidsinthewoods/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/education/morekidsinthewoods/index.html)).

You don't have to be an expert to volunteer as a chaperone getting more kids out in nature in your community. We hope you will read more about No Child Left Inside legislation at the MNNPS Blog, and consider what you can do to help advance the ideas at any level of effort that you can give.

## Two-state invasive species conference

The first collaborative Minnesota-Wisconsin Invasive Species Conference will be held Nov. 8 - 10 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, St. Paul. It will cover invasive aquatic and terrestrial plants, animals, pests, and pathogens. Information is at [www.minnesotaswcs.org](http://www.minnesotaswcs.org)

## 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, ecosystems.
6. Preservation of native 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.

## MNNPS Board of Directors

**President:** Scott Milburn, [scott.milburn@mnnps.org](mailto:scott.milburn@mnnps.org)

**Vice President:** Shirley Mah Kooyman, [shirley.mah.kooyman@mnnps.org](mailto:shirley.mah.kooyman@mnnps.org)

**Secretary,** program coordinator: Andrés Morantes, [andres.morantes@mnnps.org](mailto:andres.morantes@mnnps.org)

**Treasurers,** membership data base: Ron and Cathy Huber, [ron.huber@mnnps.org](mailto:ron.huber@mnnps.org)

**Derek Anderson,** board member, [derek.anderson@mnnps.org](mailto:derek.anderson@mnnps.org)

**Ken Arndt,** board member, field trip chair, [ken.arndt@mnnps.org](mailto:ken.arndt@mnnps.org)

**Michael Bourdaghs,** board member, [michael.bourdaghs@mnnps.org](mailto:michael.bourdaghs@mnnps.org)

**Elizabeth Heck,** board member, webmaster, [elizabeth.heck@mnnps.org](mailto:elizabeth.heck@mnnps.org)

**Daniel Jones,** board member, [daniel.jones@mnnps.org](mailto:daniel.jones@mnnps.org)

**Dylan Lueth,** board member, [dylan.lueth@mnnps.org](mailto:dylan.lueth@mnnps.org)

**Elizabeth Nixon,** board member, conservation committee chair, [beth.nixon@mnnps.org](mailto:beth.nixon@mnnps.org)

**Erika Rowe,** board member, [erika.rowe@mnnps.org](mailto:erika.rowe@mnnps.org)

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# Three agencies work together, set restoration guidelines for native plant communities

by Dan Shaw, BWSR vegetation specialist/landscape ecologist, and Ken Graeve, Mn/DOT botanist. This is a summary of their talk at the June 3, 2010, MNNPS meeting.

As an increasing number of restoration projects are underway in the state, Board of Water and Soil and Resources (BWSR), Mn/DOT and DNR staffs have been working to develop a new list of state seed mixes as well as new native vegetation standards and restoration resources to guide professionals.

The new list of state seed mixes has been developed to combine mixes from the three agencies, keep species within their native ranges, eliminate confusion, and create more consistency for restoration efforts. A new seed-mix numbering system and a substitution table that lists pre-approved substitutions for species in mixes have also been developed. The substitution table will allow vendors more flexibility in preparing mixes, which will help to keep costs down and will also promote landscape-scale diversity in the use of these standard mixes.

New BWSR "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" were developed through a collaborative effort by BWSR partners. These partners included federal, state and local agencies, vendors, consultants, non-profits and universities. These guidelines were written to meet legislative language, while developing consistent standards for native vegetation seed and plant sources, diversity levels, and quality.

Since they were finalized last winter, the guidelines have been adopted by the DNR, Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, and Lessard-Sams

Outdoor Heritage Council grant programs. New Mn/DOT seed specs have also been developed for construction projects. These specs incorporate the new list of state seed mixes and bring Mn/DOT requirements in line with the BWSR native seed guidelines.

Examples of new restoration resources include a Mn/DOT Native Seed Mix Design Manual to assist the development of site-specific seed mixes ([www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native\\_vegetation/](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/)); the Minnesota Wetland Restoration Plant ID Guide; the Minnesota Wetland Restoration Guide Vegetation Section, and the BWSR What's Working Website ([www.bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/WhatsWorking.html#veg](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/WhatsWorking.html#veg))

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## Prairie research grants are available

Prairie Biotic Research (PBR) has announced its 2011 competitive small grants program which funds grants of up to \$1,000 to individuals for the study of any grassland taxon anywhere in the United States. Proposals must be received by Jan. 7, 2011.

PBR is an all-volunteer Wisconsin non-profit established in 2000 to foster basic research in prairies and savannas. Grants are funded by donations. Since 2002, PBR has awarded 100 grants worth \$94,849 to people in 24 states. Many of these grants supported graduate students. They expect to award at least 12 grants of up to \$1,000 each in 2011.

For additional information on the grants or to make a donation, go to [prairiebioticresearch.org](http://prairiebioticresearch.org)

## Weapons to fight emerald ash borer are tested

Biological and chemical controls are being tested in two areas as Minnesota fights the invasive emerald ash borer.

### Stingless wasps

On Sept. 22, scientists from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Plant Protection Division released two species of stingless, predatory wasps on a dozen ash trees on a Mississippi River island in Houston County. Different proportions of male and female wasps were let loose on the trees. The wasps search out ash borer larvae or eggs and insert their own eggs into them. The developing wasps then consume their hosts.

Release of the wasps was approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It will be several years before scientist can analyze the results. The stingless wasps were reared in a Michigan laboratory. The wasps and ash borers are both native to Asia.

### Chemical control

Minneapolis parks officials are testing the effectiveness of insecticide injections on about three dozen ash trees in the Lowry Hill and Whittier neighborhoods. There are no known infestations in these areas, but they are considered vulnerable to the emerald ash borer. The treatment costs about \$17 per tree and must be repeated every three years.

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## Treasurers' report

Treasurers Ron and Cathy Huber report that on Sept. 30, 2010, the Society had assets of \$24,115.40, which included \$8,867.30 in certificates of deposit.

Total income for the first nine months of 2010 was \$9,186.78. Expenses totaled \$9,700.18. Estimated expenses for the remainder of the year are \$1,543.



# Bylaw changes proposed

The MNNPS Board of Directors has proposed changing the organization's bylaws. Members will be asked to vote on the revisions at the December and February monthly meetings.

The proposed changes are shown below. Additions are underlined like this; deletions are indicated by a strike-through line like this. If only the title letter of a section is changed, and content of that section is unchanged, that change is not shown.

## 5. BYLAWS OF MINNESOTA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY (adopted 1983, revised 1988, 1989, 1998, 2003)

### ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

**SECTION A.** There shall be seven eight classes of membership:

[1. Individual, 2. Family, 3. Student, 4. Senior]

5. Institutional. A legal organization. Twice the Individual rate. Entitled to one vote and one mailing of newsletter, does not include privilege of holding office.

6. Donor. Those individuals or organizations who make a gift, devise or memorial of \$25.00 three times the Individual rate, or more. Same privileges as individual.

7. Lifetime. Twenty times the Individual rate. Same privileges as Individual.

[8. Honorary.]

**SECTION B.** ~~Dues are payable upon application for membership and annually on the first of October.~~ Membership is based upon the calendar year with dues payable in January. Any person with delinquent dues shall not be a member in good standing entitled to mailing of newsletter, voting rights or privileges of holding office.

**SECTION H.** New members joining after April June first shall be considered paid through September of the following year. have the

choice of receiving back issues of the newsletter for that year. or applying the membership for the full following calendar year.

**SECTION I.** ~~Special assessments to cover agenda may be proposed at any monthly meeting by the President for vote upon by the membership. A two-thirds majority of the members present shall carry. A quorum of 20 percent of the general membership is necessary.~~

### ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

**SECTION B.** Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held quarterly in June, September, December, and March at such time and place as the President shall determine. The Secretary or Program Chair shall give due notice of all meetings via the website, ~~Minnesota Plant Press newsletter, e-mail or by telephone.~~ The meetings shall be conducted by the President with assistance from other officers as requested and the Secretary shall take and record minutes.

**SECTION C.** Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President at such time and place as he or she shall determine. The Secretary shall give due notice of all meetings by e-mail, post card, or telephone as appropriate. Said meetings shall be conducted by the President and the Secretary shall take and record minutes.

**SECTION D.** The Annual meeting of the membership shall be during the March meeting or at such time and place as the President shall determine in the month of March. Notice of the Annual Meeting shall be given by the Secretary via the Minnesota Plant Press newsletter. The election of Directors to the Board and transaction of pertinent business shall be conducted by the President. ~~and the Secretary shall take and record minutes. The Treasurer shall prepare and give an annual~~

~~accounting of the corporation's receipts and expenditures which shall be published in the next newsletter. Chairpersons shall report on their committee's activities. A dinner may be held in conjunction as the Board of Directors shall determine. Notice of the Annual Meeting shall be given by the Secretary via the Minnesota Plant Press newsletter. Directors will be elected by a simple majority.~~

**SECTION E.** ~~Directors will be elected by a simple majority. An identified absentee ballot may be cast by mail. An absentee ballot may be obtained from the Secretary and must be returned to the Secretary before the election. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. Election results shall be immediately announced by the President and published in the Minnesota Plant Press by the Secretary.~~

### ARTICLE V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**SECTION D.** Board members are expected to attend three of the four board meetings, including mandatory attendance at June meeting, and are expected to actively participate in the operations of the Society.

**SECTION F. G.** The Board of Directors shall each year appoint a Nomination Committee of not less than three persons, chaired by the Vice President, to propose a slate of three new directors, with notice of the proposed slate being mailed at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting. The Nomination Committee shall propose a slate of new officers to the Board of Directors.

**SECTION G.** ~~All members in good standing are welcome to attend meetings of the Board of Directors and have standing to make suggestions deemed in the best interests of the corporation by the President.~~

**SECTION H.** ~~Directors shall serve from the time of the June Board~~

~~meeting following their election to the June meeting following the election of their successor.~~

~~SECTION I. In case any Director shall by death, incapacity, resignation or absenteeism fail to serve his or her full three-year term, the Board of Directors shall appoint a successor to serve out the balance of such term.~~

~~SECTION J. Whenever a vacancy shall occur in any office, it shall be immediately filled by the Board of Directors.~~

## ARTICLE VI – OFFICES

~~SECTION C. The Vice-President shall actively assist the President, shall preside in the President's absence, shall chair the nominations committee and may be considered for the next presidency.~~

~~SECTION D. The Secretary shall take and record minutes of all board meetings and shall give due notice of the Monthly and Board meetings via the Minnesota Native Plant Press newsletter.~~

## ARTICLE VIII - STANDING COMMITTEES

The standing committees of the corporation are as follows:

- ~~1. Program, Education, and Lectures.~~
- ~~2. Membership and Outreach.~~
- ~~2. Publications (Minnesota Plant Press newsletter)~~
- ~~3. Conservation~~
- ~~4. Symposium~~

## ARTICLE IX – NEWSLETTER

~~The Minnesota Plant Press newsletter shall be published at least three times a year, in September (fall), January (winter), and May (spring) and at such other times that the Board of Directors determines.~~

## ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

~~A quorum to transact business shall be 20 percent of the general membership. Changes to the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws shall~~

# Searching for plants in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area



Mike Lee, botanist/ecologist for the Minnesota County Biological Survey, studied plants in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area this summer. His work included identifying plants and drying the specimens he collected. This is part of the ongoing work by MCBS to document plant communities and rare flora in the Border Lakes area.

The photo above shows how Mike Lee used solar power when pressing and drying plant specimens. In the photo at the left, he is examining a rock face, looking for potential areas with rare plants. Both photos are by Scott Milburn, MNNPS president.

## MNNPS welcomes new members

The Society gives a warm welcome to five new members who joined during the third quarter of 2010. Listed alphabetically, they are:

Nancy Lizette Berlin, Red Wing;  
Donald A. Doeksen, St. Paul;  
Daniel and Diane Stauner, New Hope;  
Barbara Wieman, Burnsville.



## Prairie ecology, management are new book topics

*The Ecology and Management of Prairies in the Central United States*, by Chris Helzer, published for the Nature Conservancy by the University of Iowa Press, 2010, paperback, 208 pages, illustrated, \$29.95.

*Review by Arlene Kjar, MNNPS member; president of Prairie Partners of Cannon Valley, a volunteer group in Northfield that helps others with nature areas; a member of Prairie Smoke Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts; and a retired teacher.*

*The Ecology and Management of Prairies in the Central United States* is an excellent book that provides background knowledge about how prairies work. The author provides information on how to mix and match management techniques in ways that will help to keep prairies vigorous and viable.

Chris Helzer is the program director for The Nature Conservancy's Eastern Nebraska Project Office in Aurora, Nebraska. He oversees the management and restoration of approximately 5,000 acres of conservancy-owned land.

The first part of the book consists of a description of the complex workings of prairies. Grasslands that are dominated by only a few plant species, especially non-native grasses, lack the ability to support the majority of prairie-dependent species and, in Helzer's opinion, are not prairies. He defines a plant community as all the plants that grow and interact together in a particular place. The strategies the plants develop to survive strengthen the community's ability to respond to drought, flooding, intense grazing, fire and other disturbances. A high quality prairie can have as many as 150 - 300 species of plants.

Helzer believes that invasive species removal needs to be prioritized. He feels that preventing new weeds from becoming a problem should always be first.

He states that the reason grassland birds are so scarce is because they need a very large area for nesting. Their predators come in from the edges of the prairie, especially when trees are present. A greenway patchwork of areas that are close or connected can provide corridors for their movement.

In the last half of the book, he identifies different ways to manage the prairie. Patch-burn grazing is a system in which a third of the prairie is burned. Cattle (or the grazing animal of choice) will eat from that area and leave the rest of the prairie to grow. This allows the grasses and forbs to recover. Every year another third of the prairie is burned, and the grazing animals will move to the new area without being fenced.

This is an excellent book to add to your nature library. It is published for the Nature Conservancy by the University of Iowa Press.

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## Bell Museum opens exhibit on shelter

**Sustainable Shelter: Dwelling within the Forces of Nature** opened Oct. 16 and runs through May 15, 2011. Just as birds gather local materials for their nests, humans build homes that use natural resources to meet their needs and desires. But while shelters in the animal kingdom work in tandem with natural cycles, most human shelters consume more natural resources and energy than they need.

This exhibit explores innovative home building technologies and strategies that can help restore the viability of natural systems; contrasts human dwellings with those of other animals; looks at housing around the world, and changes in U.S. houses over the past 150 years.

## Book explores state wild places

*"Our Neck of the Woods: Exploring Minnesota's Wild Places,"* edited by Daniel J. Philippon, published by the University of Minnesota Press, 2009; paperback, 277 pages, \$19.95.

*Review by Gerry Drewry*

Most of these 57 personal "Sense of Place" essays were published in issues of *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* since November 1994. Each article reflects the strong sense of place felt by the author.

Some are by well known writers, including Paul Gruchow, Sigurd F. Olson, Peter M. Leschak, Bill Holm, and Greg Breining. Some writers are members of the Minnesota Native Plant Society, including Erika Rowe, Nancy Sather, Kathleen Weflen, and Vera Ming Wong.

It is easy to find specific essays. The table of contents sorts them by category: Making Camp, Encountering Wildness, Getting Wet, Embracing Winter, Doing Science, Practicing Conservation, and Finding Home. A geographical index groups the essays by biome: Coniferous Forest, Deciduous Forest, and Prairie Grassland.

Some of the essays are lyrical, especially Sigurd Olson's *Trapper's Cabin*. Some are informative, such as Anne M. Dunn's *Sugar Bush Journal* and Eric Hanson's *Count Your Loons*. Some paint contrasting pictures of the same topics, including Lake Superior in winter and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Some praise specific aspects of nature, from winter to native plants to exploring a cave.

In summary, if you enjoy Minnesota's outdoors, you will find essays that reflect your experiences, inspire you to visit other locations, or make you feel that you are there with the author.

# Plant Lore

by Thor Kommedahl

## What is speckled alder?

Speckled alder is *Alnus incana* subsp. *rugosa*, and native to Minnesota. It belongs in the birch family.

## How did it get its names?

Alder is an ancient name for tree. The Old English name was *alor*. *Alnus* is the Latin name for alder. *Incana* means gray (stem color), and *rugosa* means wrinkled (network of sunken veins on undersides of leaves). It is called speckled because of the numerous warty lenticels on the stem that are pale yellow or orange.

## What does the plant look like?

It is a thicket-forming shrub, occasionally a small tree, with simple and alternate leaves. The terminal bud is stalked. It produces yellowish male flower clusters (catkins or aments) and reddish female, cone-like inflorescences bearing small, one-seeded, winged fruits (samaras). Wind disperses samaras. This female catkin remains on the plant in winter — useful for identification.

## Where does the shrub grow?

It grows in wetlands or moist lowlands in the wooded areas of Minnesota, often as an understory in forests.

## Is it poisonous or medicinal?

It is not poisonous or edible, but American Indians used a bark tea for diarrhea treatment, as a diuretic, for toothache, anemia, and many other problems.

## Is it ecologically significant?

Alder roots fix nitrogen comparable to that by legumes. As an understory plant in forests, alder promotes growth of many deciduous and coniferous trees. Songbirds eat the “seeds,” and it is the larval host for the green comma butterfly; it also attracts the tent caterpillar moth and other moths.

## Is it part of any other “lore?”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in his *Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*, wrote:

*“And under the alders that skirt its edge,  
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,  
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.”*

**Right: Stalked speckled alder terminal bud. Below, top: Male and female speckled alder catkins, in winter. Below, bottom: Leaves, female catkins of speckled alder. Photos are by Peter Dziuk.**

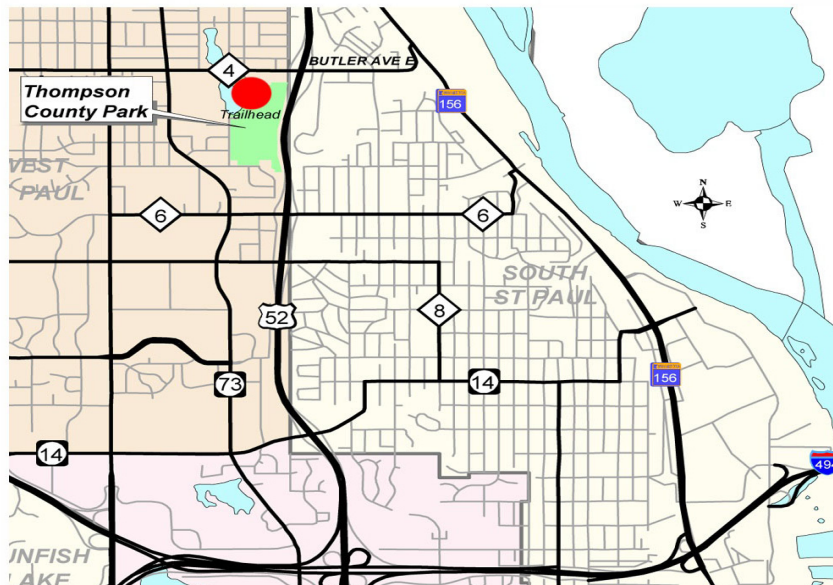




Minnesota Native Plant Society  
P.O. Box 20401  
Bloomington, MN 55420

**Fall 2009**

**Thompson County Park:**  
360 Butler Ave East, West St. Paul, MN 55118



**Directions:**

Take MN Hwy. 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 Thompson County Park.