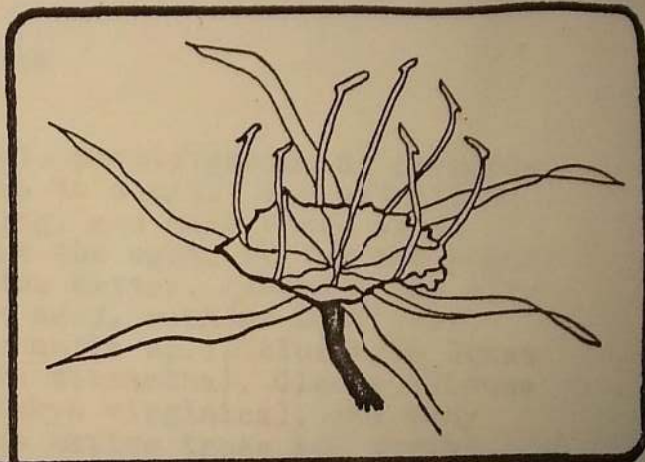


summer 1983

Volume I, Number 2



**the Greater New Orleans
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**



Well, here is the summer newsletter. Our society is moving along nicely with 37 paid members. If you have not yet paid your dues, please do so as soon as possible. Again, dues are \$5 per year, per household. All dues, as well as any correspondence, should be addressed to me, David Heikamp (editor) at 717 Giuffrias Ave., Metairie, LA 70001.

As you can see, this newsletter is much expanded over our first (Spring) issue. Both the quantity and hopefully the quality are vastly improved. We have received permission to reprint several articles of merit in this issue, a seed exchange program has been started, and we are currently looking into planting a small wildflower garden somewhere in the metropolitan area, possibly along the Linear Park in Jefferson Parish, or maybe at the Nature Center in New Orleans East. More details will be forthcoming by the time the Fall newsletter is printed.

One very important thing to note is that THE DATE OF THE APRIL 30 FIELD TRIP HAS BEEN CHANGED TO MAY 14. Everything else about this trip remains the same. We will be making this trip in conjunction with the Louisiana Fern Society. We will meet them at 8:30 AM sharp at the Essen Lane Exit on I-10 on the way to Baton Rouge. We will be leaving Lakeside Shopping Center at 7:30 AM on the dot, so that we won't be late. Any members from out-of-town can meet us at the Essen Lane Exit. As always, guests are welcome! Be sure to pack food and drink for the trip.

As for the state wildflower society, people from all over the state met at Briarwood on Saturday, March 19 to discuss the current situation. Every area of the state was represented, and all in attendance were enthusiastic over the chance to form a state society. A meeting is planned for sometime this summer in Alexandria, La. to actually form the society. As more information becomes available, I will pass it along. This is a golden opportunity that we shouldn't pass up.

Also, the Louisiana Natural History Museum in Lafayette sponsored a Wildflower Workshop on Friday, March 25. The main thrust of the workshop was that public spaces deserve to be beautified with wildflowers. Louisiana is to have a state wildflower day proclaimed, and the Dept. of Transportation is to develop a program of limited, timed mowing of highway right-of-ways in order to give the wildflowers time to set seed. They have also agreed to plant by broadcasting any seeds of wildflowers they are supplied with (apparently anyone can donate the seeds). The Dept. of Transportation has not agreed, however, to stop spraying the roadside with herbicides, so it remains to be seen how well this program will work.

That is about all I have to say as far as an introduction goes. I do hope you enjoy this newsletter as much as I did in putting it together!

David Heikamp

SEED EXCHANGE PROGRAM

This program will need as many people participating as possible in order to succeed. Now is a good time to start. Pay attention to where various wildflowers are blooming, and make notes as to where they are. If you can somehow mark the spot, or tag the plant with a weather resistant tag, so much the better. Even in the city there are many opportunities to collect seed, such as Dayflower (*Commelina erecta*), Spiderworts (*Tradescantia* sp.), Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium* sp.), Corydalis (*Corydalis micrantha*), Cleome (*Cleome houteana*), Salt Marsh-Mallow (*Kosteletzkya virginica*), and many others. Some of your neighbors may have native trees and shrubs planted in their yards, and will be willing to share seed with you. Many of the original irises collected in New Orleans in the 1930's for instance may still be growing in people's gardens, and are worth every effort to propagate them.

When to go back to collect the seeds depends on both the plant involved and the weather that particular year. As a general rule though, annuals will mature their seed sooner than perennials, as short as a month for annuals, as long as several months for perennials.

If the plant is an annual, you can take the whole plant. If it is a perennial, cut off the portion of the plant with the seed, and be careful not to disturb the rest of the plant. In any case, never take all the seeds from an area of any particular species. Always see to it that enough is left to continue the species in that spot. Put the seed in paper bags, label carefully as to the date collected, what species or a good description of the plant, your name for future reference, and where it was collected.

When you get home, store the seed in a cool, dry place. It is generally not necessary to refrigerate them, and in no case store them in a sealed container or plastic bag, as they will mold. Clean the seed as much as possible. A regular sieve from the kitchen is very good for this.

Finally, send all the seed you collect to me at the following address:

David Heikamp
717 Giuffrias
Metairie, La. 70001

Make sure the seed is packaged so the post office will not crush them. A small box is best, or a piece of cardboard hollowed out to form a cavity will accept a good number of smaller seed, and can usually be mailed for 20¢ in a regular envelope. If possible bring the letter to the post office and give it to a post office employee to hand stamp. Simply marking a letter "Please Hand Stamp" will never work.

In the fall newsletter, a list of available seeds will be **published** along with some background on the seed, seed packets will be available for 25¢ or 35¢ per packet to cover costs, and any leftover money will be added to the treasury.

BUTTER WEED OR YELLOW TOP

(*Senecio glabellus* Poir.)

by Garrie Landry, Dept. of Biology,
USL, Lafayette

Few plants make such a conspicuous part of the Louisiana landscape this time of year as does the Butterwood, *Senecio glabellus*. Often one can encounter acres of gold color when these plants are in bloom. This is our most common species of *Senecio*. It occurs nearly throughout the state, though it may be absent from dry areas such as upland piney woods.

The plant is a fleshy annual, freely branching from the base and above, stems 1-5 dm tall. The leaves are elliptic to oblanceolate, to 9 cm long and to 4 cm wide, pinnately dissected and sessile (without a petiole). The flower heads are nearly an inch across with yellow rays surrounding a yellow disk.

The plant first makes its appearance in early fall, as rosettes of leaves which are green often tinged with purple colors. Flowering occurs in the winter and spring months. The earliest flowering date recorded for Louisiana is December 1st, and the latest is May 14th. Since this is primarily a winter plant, likely the flowering dates reflect annual climatic conditions. This species flowers differently elsewhere in the U.S. In the central states its period of flowering is March-June. The Butterweed is most frequently found in alluvial woods, swamps, wet forests, fresh marshes, moist cultivated fields and roadside ditches. It occurs from North Carolina along the coast to Texas, including Arkansas. Look for it everywhere in south Louisiana, especially along the interstates.

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PROPAGATION OF DECIDUOUS AZALEAS

by A.D. McNees

NOTE: The following article is here reprinted from the January 1983 Newsletter Of The Alabama Wildflower Society, with permission of The Alabama Wildflower Society and Mr. A.D. McNees.

There does not appear to be anything mystical about the rooting of species and hybrid deciduous azaleas. By using correct methods, keeping good records and by following a prepared outline it can be a routine practice. I know successful gardeners who have been growing plants all their life who look on propagation as something beyond their grasp. "T'AIN'T SO!"

The following method has worked successfully for me and it is one method and certainly not the only method. I am sure it can be improved and I intend to continue to experiment in the future as there is always something new, i.e. willow water, triacontanol, etc. CUTTING I always take what I can get, but the best cutting is the very tender first growth. Contrary to most other types of cuttings these have to be tender. I do not believe that you can take them too young or too tender.

TEMPORARY HOLDING If there is to be any delay in the sticking of the cuttings, they should be cared for as follows; I use plastic freezer bags (1 gal. size) and spray the inside of the bag with a trigger spray-bottle with water until droplets are seen on the inside of the bag. I then place the cuttings in the bag and blow it up like a balloon and seal it with a tie. The blowing up of the bag will protect the cuttings and also put carbon dioxide in with them.

LENGTH The cutting should be three plus inches long and I always pinch out the terminal. This will induce branching and it has been reported that this pinching is what makes the plants break dormancy in the spring.

WHEN The day after a rain and in the misting rain is excellent. Always in the morning if possible. These cuttings have to be turgid and have to be kept that way. Here in north Alabama anytime in April when you can get the length is all right.

PREPARATION I reduce the leaves to four or five at the top of the cutting and all leaves that would come into contact with the rooting medium are removed. Excessively long leaves should be reduced in size by one third to one half. No wound is necessary.

DIP The following is a strong brew and will not hurt the cuttings when used as a quick dip. If you soak the cutting in this I guarantee their demise.

- 3 gallons water
- 1 tablespoon Banrot
- 1 teaspoon Benlate
- 2 tablespoons Malathion
- 2 tablespoons Kelthane

ROOTING MIX I use two and one half gallons of screened peat moss and two and one half gallons of coarse perlite (fine perlite will keep the mix too wet). The peat moss will have to be moist and the only way I have found to do this is to soak the peat moss in

water and squeeze out by hand (messy job). The two ingredients are then mixed until there is an even color contrast. It will be light and fluffy when finished.

CONTAINER I use a rooting tray from Western Maine Nurseries Inc., 36 Elm Street, Fryeburg, Maine, 04037. It is called a Multi-Pot Nursery Tray, 8.75" X 14" and will hold 67 cuttings. The above is a commercial nursery and will only sell 10 trays at a time. The delivered cost is around \$3.75 each. These tray are reusable and will last many years.

I fill the tray with the mix and tap the tray on the ground to settle, then I refill the tray until the mixture is level with the top. DO NOT PACK IN THE TRAY; the mixture needs to be loose. Tapping is all that is necessary. I have tried several alternates but these trays seem to do the best job.

HORMONE No hormone is necessary. When I have used hormones, the bottom of the cuttings that rooted turned black where it was in the hormone and rooted above where the hormone was applied. I am sure that hormones are a boon to the propagation of a great many plants and I use 2% IBA on rhododendrons; but for me the use of hormones on deciduous azaleas has not proved to be successful.

INSERTING With one motion the cutting is plunged directly into the center of the mixture about one half to two thirds the length of the cutting. I do not firm the mixture around the cutting.

WATERING I use a watering can and thoroughly wet the tray full of cuttings. These cuttings are not firmed in and sometimes will turn in the container. This does not apparently make any difference.

ROOTING BOX The rooting box is under lath shade with a 50% sun exposure at high noon and probably less in the morning and afternoon as the thickness of the lath strips woul reduce the amount of direct sunlight let in. The box measures 34 inches deep by 60 inches wide, outside dimensions. There is no bottom to the box and it rests on top of approximately 10 inches of pea gravel drainage. On top of the pea gravel the 2" X 8" treated lumber is nailed together to form the 34" X 60" rectangle. On top of the 2" X 8" boards there is a 2" X 6" frame nailed together the same way with hinges on the back so it can be raised. Between the 2" X 8" base and the 2" X 6" top there is a one inch wide sponge weatherstripping (replaced annually). Across the top of the 2" X 6" top there is loosely stretched a piece of 6 mill plastic. I use white nursery batten tape about 3/4" wide around all sides, on top of the plastic. This tape is stapled about 4 inch intervals. I then go around the outside of the frame with my knife and cut the plastic exactly the same size as the top of the frame (makes a neat job). On the inside of the top of the frame two roofing tacks are nailed on the front and two on the back, about half way down. From the hardware store I get some 6 inch spaced welded wire fencing and cut this into a three foot square being sure there are no sharp edges sticking out. Then stick one side of this wire behind and on the top side of the two roofing nails on the back, and then bend the wire upward to raise and make the plastic tight and create a quonset hut-looking affair. You may need to wait and place the front two roofing nails after a trial to see where they need to go. A handle on the front, an eyelet above the handle, a chain with a hook hanging from the lath roof to hold the box open and the job is complete.

PLACING I set the trays in the rooting box and water again to be sure they are very wet.

LABELING The tray is lettered across the front from A to G and numbered down the side from one to ten. This enables you to keep up with the identification of the plants. Later identification is very important and you cannot trust your memory. A nursery pen that will absolutely not wash off is required.

AFTERCARE I spray weekly with the following: 1 teaspoon Benlate to 1 gallon of water, and I make sure they do not dry out.

ROOTING TIME Most of the plants will root in twelve weeks and a few will root in eight weeks.

HARDENING OFF After they have rooted I raise the lid of the rooting box for one hour for three days late in the afternoon. Then two hours for three days then overnight for three days. During this period it is necessary to keep a close watch on the correct moisture as they become acclimated to less than a saturated atmosphere.

POTTING I pot up in Lerio #C-350 pint pots with the following mixture. The following makes about 20 gallons of mixture which will fit nicely in a large wheelbarrow. My measuring bucket holds two and one half gallons.

- 3½ buckets pine bark (mini-nugget size)
- 2 buckets screened peat moss
- 1 bucket good top soil
- ½ bucket sand
- 2 tablespoons Epsom Salts
- 1 cup Gypsum
- 2 cups soil amendment (Sta-Green 13-6-6 plus minor elements)

These pots are then set under the lath house and attention to watering is always a must. No additional fertilizer is added until the following spring. A periodic spraying with Benlate, Kelthane, Malathion and any other chemicals you normally use in the care of your plants would be helpful.

NEW GROWTH New leaves and adventitious shoots from below the potting mix will show up in about three to five weeks. New growth is necessary before cold weather.

OVERWINTERING All of the plants must be kept under plastic for the first winter. If you do not have anything in the rooting box you can overwinter 135 without any trouble. All that have some growth before fall will break into growth the following spring when they will need repotting and fertilization. Some will set buds the first summer.

NOTE On occasion the plant will just callus and not form roots. Take your fingernail and break off the callus and if the cutting is still in good shape, reinsert and it will sometimes root in about four weeks.

I hope the foregoing will help you in rooting some of these plants. If you have a successful method for Heavens Sake please don't change. I promise you who have never rooted any plants a great thrill in seeing these little white rootlets and the creation of a favorite plant.

I would be interested in hearing from anyone who has a different method and I welcome suggestions for changes and improvements.

Pete McNees
1408 Memory Lane
P.O. Box 350

GROWING NATIVE BLUEBERRIES

by Paul Lyrene

NOTE: The following article is reprinted here from the August, 1982 issue of "The Palmetto", Vol 2, Number 3, which is published by the Florida Native Plant Society. I would like to here thank the Florida Native Plant Society for their permission to reprint this article.

When I was a kid, my mother dug three wild blueberry plants from the piney woods near Pensacola and put them in her garden. They all died in less than a year, which surprised me, since she is a good gardener. For the past five years I've had the good fortune of working on blueberries at the University of Florida, and I think I've learned some things that might help you avoid my mother's unhappy experience with native blueberries.

First, I should say there are seven reasonably-distinguishable species of true blueberries native in Florida, as well as several kinds of huckleberries (genus Gaylussacia) that sometimes get mistaken for blueberries (genus Vaccinium). The easiest way to determine which of the two genera a plant is in is to peel a berry and examine the seeds. If the berry contains exactly ten nutlets arranged in a circle like the sections of an orange, you've got a huckleberry and you may as well not read the rest of this essay, which is about blueberries. If the seeds are smaller, not arranged like sections of an orange and not numbering ten, you've probably got a blueberry.

The next problem, if you were trying to identify your blueberry, would be to figure out which of the seven Florida species you have, but let's skip that, since you can grow all seven by approximately the same recipe. I should have asked at the beginning why you want to grow blueberries. If your answer has anything to do with pies and muffins, you're reading the wrong essay. You should be reading the "Blueberry Fact Sheet", a copy of which you can get free by calling you County Agent's office. If your answer has something to do with attracting birds into your yard, or seeing lots of bell-shaped flowers in March, or beautiful foliage, you're in the right place.

If there were space here and if I thought I could hold your attention long enough, I'd try to develop five topics: (1) How to grow blueberry plants from seed (it's easy if you follow the recipe). (2) How to start blueberries from stem cuttings and from rhizome cuttings. (3) Why you shouldn't transplant wild blueberries (it's one of the harder ways to start a plant and it depopulates the woods) and how to do it if you insist. (4) How to grow the plant in your yard once you've got it well rooted. (5) How and why to grow blueberries as potted plants. Maybe your editor will allow me to try 1, 2, 3, and 5 later. For now I'll briefly attack number 4.

Let's assume you have some blueberry plants. For example, maybe you bought some varieties such as Woodard, Tifblue, Climax, Southland, Delite, Bluebelle, Aliceblue, or Beckyblue from a garden store. As it says in the Blueberry Fact Sheet, these are domesticated forms of Vaccinium ashei, which is native in northern Florida. With both wild and domesticated blueberries, you have to have two different varieties near each other to get a full crop of berries.

To grow blueberries you need: (1) Have a soil pH between 4.0 and 5.5. This is probably lower than you have in your yard. If so, you should lower the pH by working into the soil two pounds of wettable sulfur per 100 square feet of treated soil. Treat a circle at least one yard in radius around each plant. (2) Choose a planting site that

... NATIVE BLUEBERRIES, continued

(3) Dig a four-gallon hole for each plant. Mix two gallons of the exhumed soil with two gallons of wet Canadian peatmoss and use the four gallons of mixture to place around the roots of the plant.

(4) Mulch the plants with a very thick layer of pinestraw. (5) Give each plant five to ten gallons of water if there is a drought of ten days or more during the growing season. The water requirements of blueberries are like those of azaleas. Just because some wild blueberries grow in swamps, don't assume you should treat them like water lilies. (6) Fertilize: I'm almost afraid to recommend it because blueberries are extremely sensitive to overfertilization or to fertilization with the wrong stuff. However, I'll risk it because proper fertilization will double the growth rate and help keep the soil pH low, which in turn keeps the leaves from turning white from iron deficiency. Spread fertilizer evenly over a circle centered on the plant and having a radius of one yard. Fertilize the area from the base of the plant outward to the perimeter of the circle. Use sulfate of ammonia (ammonium sulfate). Use one ounce of ammonium sulfate per plant each time you fertilize and fertilize every two months throughout the year. If you can't find ammonium sulfate, there are three reasonable alternatives: (1) Once each year spread wettable sulfur at the rate of one pound per 100 square feet over the pine-straw mulch. (2) Use azalea-camellia fertilizer instead of ammonium sulfate. Use only one half ounce per plant six times a year. As with ammonium sulfate, spread the fertilizer on top of the pinestraw mulch and let the rain carry it down. (3) Spread two pounds of cottonseed meal around each plant three times a year.

With luck and care, your blueberries will last longer than my mother's.

TRILLIUMS OF LOUISIANA

by David Heikamp

NOTE: Much of the following information was taken from "Revision Of Trillium Subgenus Phyllantherum (Liliaceae), a paper by Dr. John D. Freeman that appeared in "Brittonia", Vol. 27, No. 1, January - March, 1975.

True harbingers of spring, Trilliums deserve a spot in any garden. Of the four species that occur in Louisiana, all have mottled leaves and generally blood-red flowers. All Louisiana species are of the sessile-flowered type, which means that the flower has no pedicel. Sessile-flowered Trillium species are native only to the United States, including one species, Trillium pussilum which sometimes has a pedicel and sometimes not.

The four species native to Louisiana are, Trillium recurvatum, Trillium gracile, Trillium foetidissimum, and Trillium ludovicianum. Contrary to what Dr. Clair Brown says in "Wildflowers of Louisiana and Adjoining States", Trillium sessile does not occur in La. Except for Trillium ludovicianum, the Louisiana species also occur in a yellow-flowered form which is usually quite rare. These yellow-flowered forms are very pretty though, the color being a clear, bright yellow. In any given population, the mottling on

TRILLIUMS OF LOUISIANA, cont.

Trillium recurvatum occurs in the northwestern portion of the state, it has recurved sepals, slender and elongated rhizomes, and bracts which are distinctly petiolate.

Trillium gracile occurs in western Louisiana, in Sabine, Natchitoches, Calcasieu, and Bienville parishes. This species flowers later than all other Trillium species of the Coastal Plain, flowering from early April to mid-April. It is closest to Trillium ludovicianum, but appears to be taller and more graceful than that species because it is generally smaller in all parts. Its sepals are usually purple on the upper side, and curved-reflexed - not sharply recurved as in Trillium recurvatum. Its petals are usually purple, whereas Trillium ludovicianum has petals with purple bases and greenish blades. Also, the ovary of Trillium gracile is 3-angled, not 6-angled as in Trillium ludovicianum.

Trillium foetidissimum is the only Trillium species in Louisiana to occur east of the Mississippi River. It does not occur west of that river, occurring in Louisiana only in the Florida parishes. It occurs in rich wooded areas, such as those surrounding Afton Gardens on La. Hwy. 66. This species does very well in the New Orleans area, preferring a deep, rich soil high in organic matter. Horse manure is excellent. I have tried growing Trillium recurvatum, as well as Trillium cuneatum and Trillium stamineum collected in eastern Alabama with no success. Quite possibly, Trillium ludovicianum and Trillium gracile will also do well in New Orleans.

The last Louisiana species, Trillium ludovicianum, or Louisiana Trillium, occurs in central Louisiana, and its distinctive features have already been discussed under Trillium gracile.

Here in New Orleans, Trillium foetidissimum rarely sets seed, but in late summer, after the leaves have died back to the ground, plants can be lifted and divided. In its native haunts it blooms from mid-March to early April. This is the best time to collect them, and they are easily transplanted at any time. As long as they have a rich soil that is moist but not soggy, they will grow and multiply in sun or shade. It multiplies well, and makes a really nice show in conjunction with azaleas, silverbells, or other shrubs. When you find them, they will be abundant, and you will be amazed at the variations that exist as far as degree of mottling. Monstrose plants are also common, such as plants with only two leaves, instead of the normal three. You only need to collect a few plants, selecting whatever ones suit your fancy. Always be on the lookout for a yellow-flowered plant. They are rare but very pretty. In a few years you will have a good number of plants, simply by lifting and dividing. I always add a little rotted manure to the soil when I do this, then mulch with whatever is available. They will respond nicely, and reward you with year after year of their beauty.