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SPRING 1992

NEWSLETTER

volume 10, number 1

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A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JOHN MAYRONNE

Governor Edwards has agreed to keep full funding for the Louisiana Nartural Heritage Program. However, in his recently-presented budget, four of the six positions are targeted for elimination. Please call or write and voice your opposition to any cuts and recommend more funding for this program. Send a copy of our alert (recently mailed to all members) to Governor Edwards, Head of Wildlife and Fisheries Joe Herring, the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program, and your local legislators.

Our state cannot afford to loose such an important program whose efforts have benefited all aspects of our biological diversity. If you did not receive the alert, or want more information, please call or write me (see below). YOUR EFFORTS DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

A special thanks to those who attended our annual meeting and to Ben Martin for his efforts in organizing the accomodations and refreshments. Our excellent speakers purveyed the importance of individuals understanding and being in harmony with nature, realizing that future generations will be dependent on the finite unspoiled resources we hand down to them. I feel our business and environmental committee meetings were both very productive. A special thanks to Beth Erwin for the many long hours she has put in for our organization. (P.S. Thanks, Terry, for not privately listing your phone number.)

LNPS brochures are ready for distribution. If you would like some or know someone who would, please contact me or Jessie Johnson, our addresss are listed below.

We also have T-shirts. If you'd like one, send your size, desired color and style (mamou or lingleaf pine habitat) and $12 per shirt to Jessie Johnson.

We are considering a future conference on native plants. If you are interested let me know; please include topics of interest and possible locations that could and would accomodate such a function.

Kelso Walker of Opelousas is again manning our booth in the Festival de Fleurs in Lafayette, April 10th through 12th. If you'd like to help, please let me know. If you would like to have a booth for our organization at your area festival, notify me or another LNPS officer so we can structure payment of fees, as well as brochure and T-shirt shipments. Kelso, your efforts and beautiful photographs are greatly appreciated.

The increase in membership fees as well as an increasing membership will help our organization fund educational programs, field trips, legislative

actions, printing of manuals and other educational information consistent with the goals of our organization. We are now in line with other native plant societies' fees within the country. If you would like to donate funds to a specific concern of our organization it would be greatly appreciated and tax deductible.

Jessie Johnson
Briarwood Nature Preserve
Rt. 1, Box 195
Saline, La. 71070

John D. Mayronne
320 N. Theard
Covington, La. 70433
Ph. 504-892-5424

KARLENE DEFATTA WINS AWARD AND OTHER NEWS FROM OUR WINTER MEETING

Founding member Karlene Defatta, who originally envisioned the LNPS and got is started on its way, was the recipient of the first award ever given by the society in its eight years of existence. The award was given in recognition of her continued and unfailing support of the society. At the suggestion of Richard Johnson, members present voted to name the award the Karlene Defatta Award in Karlene's honor and that it should given only when deemed appropriate for outstanding efforts furthering the purpose and goals of the LNPS.

Last but not least, our 1991 officers were elected:

President:	John Mayronne (Ph. 504-892-5424)
Vice-President:	Bill Fontenot (Ph. 318-235-6181)
Secretary:	Darlene Jhanbakhsh (Ph. 318-238-5206)
Treasurer:	Ella Price (Ph. 318-929-3984)
Editor:	David Heikamp (Ph. 504-831-2342)

New Board Members (3-year terms):
Jane Hall
Malcolm Vidrine
Nelwyn McInnis

DUES REMINDER

Don't forget that membership dues for 1992 are due by the first of the year, January 1, 1992! Members who have not paid their dues by April 1, 1992 will be dropped from the roster. Please send your dues (PLEASE NOTE THAT DUES HAVE INCREASED) to the address below. If you know someone who is interested in joining the LNPS, give them the following address. Make checks payable to the LNPS:

LNPS
Rt. 1, Box 195
Saline, Louisiana 71070

The dues schedule is as follows: Student=$5.00, Senior Citizen=$5.00, Individual=$10.00, Family=$15.00, Organization=$25.00, Sustaining=$50.00, Corporate=$100.00.

DEADLINES FOR NEXT 4 NEWSLETTERS:

Don't forget! In an effort to better coordinate the distribution of information concerning field trips as well as other dated information the newsletter uses the following deadline policy. Any information received after the deadline will be included in the next newsletter . Deadlines for the next four newsletters are as follows:

Summer Newsletter:	June 1, 1992
Fall Newsletter:	September 1, 1992
Winter Newsletter:	December 1, 1992
Spring Newsletter:	March 1, 1993

The editor's address is:

David Heikamp
717 Giuffrias
Metairie, La. 70001
Ph (504) 831-2342

WILD PERENNIALS FOR MEN

by Bill Fontenot

During my formative years spent in Evangeline Parish, it was my dad and his friends who introduced me to world of wild trees, shrubs, and vines - mostly in relation to those species which served as important forage for squirrel, deer, and other wildlife. But my mom was the true plantperson of the family, and dad and I received an ample training in the wonderful world of perennial gardening, for we handled much of the planting and maintenance duties under mom's persnickety supervision. If left to our own devices, we would have surely opted to replace her "flowers" with more utilitarian life forms such as vegetables and fruit trees. But under her uncompromising directorship, we were resigned to the chore of "flower gardening", saving our fruit and vegetable designs for our camp on Bayou de Cannes. And even there, in that most sacred realm of manhood, mom demanded that we install such "useless" items as Red Buckeye, Tulip Poplar, and Southern Magnolia that she inherited from old "Prof" Lafleur, a friend and confidant of some lady named Caroline Dorman. Wel, at least they were woody plants - tough, strong buggers that you didn't have to pamper and constantly be on the lookout for when assuming more manly duties such as mowing the grass.

Today with my life blessedly revolving around native plants and the animals who use them, herbaceous perennials have continued to take a back seat to their woodier counterparts. But like native trees and shrubs, perennials too, have their tough side. Yessir, God made 'em persistent as well as beautiful - much like the women who have unswervingly stood by them and planted them for so long. For the past 10 years, a constant barrage of propaganda emanating from my wife, Lydia, and others like Therese Grissom, Ruth Voorhies, Zoe Lynch, Mary Courville, Jessie Johnson, Virginia Cook, Betty Tietje, Beth Erwin, and Diane Bullard has worn me down and got me wondering if I am somehow missing the boat. The final straw has come only recently, as menfolk have begun accosting me with outlandish Tales of Perennial Courage, Bravery, and Power. First, it was my old botany professor, R. Dale Thomas, with his Partridgeberry, Phlox, and Spotted Touch-Me-Not (he severely tempted me with this last one). But he's a botanist, I figured. He's responsible for all plants, herbaceous included. Then it was Drs. Charles Allen and Malcolm

Vidrine, with their Blazing Stars, Coneflowers, and spellbinding Grass Pink Orchids. Ah, but they're prairie researchers, I stammered to myself. They're surrounded with that stuff all day long. They wouldn't recognize a tree if it walked up and introduced itself to them. Finally, it was my best pal, John Mayronne, with his mallows, penstemons, and such. Here, my male rationalization circuit really kicked in: Johnny's a fool for anything with leaves and flowers, I thought "Just humor him, he'll snap out of it," my brain said.

But, as is normally the case, my iron-clad rationalizations caught a bad case of rust, and reality slowly began to seep in. Doggone it, all these prissy plants really are beautiful! Enough was enough. I was missing the boat. Stunned into surrender, I've begun to take serious note of most any perennial that crosses my path. I've collected seed, germinated plants, added them to both my woodland and prairie landscape designs, and, yes, come to know and appreciate them not just for their beauty, but for the important role they play in every ecosystem that they populate.

I have composed the following list of native Louisiana perennials that I now confess (gulp) to have become as dear and trusted friends as any Black Cherry, Shagbark Hickory, or Nuttall Oak that I have ever met. For cultivation purposes, I have divided the list into sunny and shady performers.

The Sunlovers

Mountain Mint (Pycnanthemum tennuifolium) - Somehow, Charles Allen got me interested in this one. Unlike the more floriferous mint family members, Mountain Mint sports more muted, unadorned, cream-colored bloom heads which turn to a pleasing charcoal-gray upon seed maturity. Very manly. The foliage is very fine-textured, strongly aromatic, and exceedingly lush in cultivation. It is actually the most outstanding character of the plant. With absolutely no help from the gardener, Mountain Mint will form a dense, low-growing mat that is impervious to drought, insects, and radioactive fallout. My kind of plant.

Camphorweed (Pluchea sp.) - Also known as Stinkweed - a blatant misnomer, to be sure. Aromatic, yes. Pungently so. But stinky? No - especially if you're a man. Men, you see, hardly notice stinky stuff (unless it happens to be a diaper). Come to think of it, most men do get sort of smelly themselves, don't they? Of the four Pluchea species that occur in Louisiana, Pluchea camphorata seems the best for gardening purposes. Variously described as annuals or perennials, Pluchea blooms possess the finest shade of mauve (granted, a suspect color for a man to admire) of any native plant. Fall-blooming and sturdy, with handsome deep-green foliage and numerous fuzzy bloom heads composed of disk flowers only. An Asteraceae family member with an ultimate height of three to four feet.

Swamp Sunflower (Helianthus angustifolius) - Though I've admired this plant in the wild for years, it was John Mayronne who alerted me to its cultivated possibilities, and boy, am I glad he did. He calls it "Autumn Sunflower", and oh how it brightens up a September-October yard. Big, rangy, brilliantly flowered, with strap-shaped, forest-green leaves that provide excellent textural interest throughout the summer and fall. What a plant! A prolific bloomer that will thrive in any soil. Perfect for corners, fences, and back edges.

A White Milkweed (Asclepias perennis) - Butterfly fanatic that he is, Dr. Malcolm Vidrine first introduced me to the charms of this plant. Indeed, all milkweeds are exceptional garden candidates, but there's something about the pink-blush to pure white flower clusters of A. perennis that really turns me on. Maybe it's the dramatic contrast that this bloom coloration offers

against the deep green leaves of the plant. Maybe it's just the deep-seated male yearning for purity in all things (except himself, of course). Of all miklweeds, this species is also the most shade-tolerant, normally occurring on streamsides and wet woodland edges. Sometimes called Aquatic Milkweed, though this seems exceptionally strange, since a near majority of milkweed species in Louisiana enjoy the soggiest of conditions.

Salt Marsh-Mallow (Kosteletzkya virginica) - Big, sprawling, rambunctious, and loud. Sounds like Lydia's description of me. The only thing dainty about this plant is its pink bloom color. Flowers are 1.5 to 2 inches in diameter, and occur all summer through early fall. Grows anywhere that's sunny, and in any soil. Every garden should possess one of these. Be careful, though, given half a chance, it will take over.

Louisiana Irises (Iris sp.) - I'm not talking about hybrids here. Give me full strength stuff, for I'm a man and can easily handle it. Besides, it was probably men (don't tell Caroline Dorman or Mary Debaillon!) who first discovered these beautiful inhabitants of our local swamps and marshes. The blue-purple I. brevicaulis is a hardy, low-growing species which finds its western limit near Austin (Cowboy country, you understand). My favorite is I. nelsonii , the rare red or yellow flowered cousin to I. fulva . Known by breeders as "Super Fulvas", I. nelsonii is essentially an ecotype, or sport of I. fulva . As native plant conservators, we should make every effort to cultivate the Louisiana iris species, for they are fast disappearing in many of their traditional haunts.

Joe-Pye Weed (Eupatorium fistulosum) - There are many Eupatorium species that would look absolutely stunning in wide, sunny, perennial borders, or better yet, in small restored prairie gardens (these can be as small as 20 feet by 20 feet, and still look very nice). Joe-Pye, due to its name, should be a man's first choice. This name was supposedly borrowed from a New England indian who promoted the plant for medicinal uses. The purple-toned hues of its rayless flower clusters are always a most welcome sight around the prairie ponds and other wet habitats where this tall, hollow-stemmed plant resides. Blooms through much of the summer.

The Shadelovers

Indian Pink (Spigelia marilandica) - My all-time favorite perennial. Like Swamp Sunflower, I'd admired it for many years around Bayou des Cannes and in the transitional slopes around Chicot State Park, but it was Jerry Tate who reintroduced it to me in the woods around the west fork of Bayou Lacassine in Jefferson Davis Parish. Though hard to propagate (it does terribly from cuttings, and produces only a few seeds on a very sporadic basis), it is well worth the effort, for Indian Pink will prosper in any soil and in almost any exposure and moisture regime. Its upright, tubular red flowers with star-shaped, chartruese mouths will decorate your garden from April through October if you deadhead frequently. Its tough, fleshy roots were once the primary source of a colonial period anti-intestinal worm remedy. A Loganiaceae family member, Indian Pink retains similar toxic properties that fellow Logania like Carolina Jessamine (Gelsemium sempervirens) are notorious for. Indeed, both strychnine and rotenone are obtained from Central and South American Logania species. Remember men thrive on adventure and danger. This is our kind of plant.

Mayapple (Podophyllum peltatum) - Also known as "Mandrake", a manly name if there ever was one. Large colonies of this vigorous spring ephemeral once blanketed all suitable habitats (primarily, transitional forest slopes adjacent to stream bottoms) in our state. Development, timbering, and livestock activities have greatly reduced their populations. Showy,

creamy-white single blooms occur on fertile (told by 2-leaved arrangement; sterile plants have but one) plants in April, about six weeks after the foliage has pushed through the leaf litter. Blooms are fragrant. Fruit follows in late spring to early summer. Happily, remnant colonies are known to persist after light development or timbering activities have occured. The sight of a large stand of Mayapple, with its large, lobed foliage providing a miniature canopy about one and a half feet above the forest floor, is mighty appealing.

Jack-in-the-Pulpit (Arisaema triphyllum) and Green Dragon (Arisaema dracontium) - I placed these two cousins together, since they both appear at about the same time, producing the same effects, occupying the same niche, but usually in different habitats: the former in sandy soil, the latter in clayey soil. They do, however, occur together in loessial soil lowlands adjacent to small streams. The loess terraces in the Feliciana and St. Landry parishes are good examples. Like Mayapple, these two Arum family members mysteriously (if there's anything that a man likes more than adventure, it's mystery) poke their heads out of the cold ground in the early spring. Forget about "pretty" flowers with these two, for they produce a very practical spathe/spadix arrangement which handles fertilization duties quite reasonably, thank you. Coarse, forest-level foliage and the fall appearance of sturdy, bright red fruit clusters are added bonuses. Jacks and Dragons definitely belong to the menfolk.

Blue Star (Amsonia sp.) - Now ladies, who are man's best friends? Dogbane (Apocynaceae) family members, of course. Of the four Blue stars occuring in Louisiana, two have found their way into gardening circles, the popular Amsonia tabernaemontana and A. ludoviciana , a rarer, hairier-leaved cousin. Even though it was a woman (Jessie Johnson) who turned me on to A. ludoviciana , and another woman (Beth Erwin) who let me in on the secret of propagating these species from cuttings, I'll take all the credit, which, of course, is the manly thing to do. Though the thin, willowy foliage and delicate, star-shaped, plumbago-blue (occasionally white) spring blooms of these two species are sort of "girly", the sturdiness and robust qualities of the plants themselves easily qualify them as a man's kind of plant. Though they most commonly occur in semi-shaded bottomlands, they are also found in full-sun prairie locales.

Bear's Foot (Polymnia uvedalia) - Clair Brown described this odd Composite (Asteraceae) family member as a "rank perennial herb", a ruggedly excellent description, as far as I'm concerned. Averaging about six and a half feet in height, this plant features a typical sunflower-like bloom, only with thicker and fleshier petals and conservatively smaller (about an inch and a half) than its more garish cousins. Also desirable is the fact that Bear's Foot prefers to remain tucked into the edges of alluvial woodlands, rendering it strangely shade tolerant as compared to the rest of its family members. Even its seeds are comparatively large and robust for a Composite. Most outstanding is its exceedingly coarse, sycamore-like foliage which does indeed resemble the outline of a bear's track. Ladies, I'd advise using a little extra "woodsman's imagination" on this latter point. Uncommon and interesting, Bear's Foot is long overdue a place in natural gardens.

Well, that about finishes up the list, guys. Yo, so whatdayathink? Sure, I left out a few obvious ones like Ironweed, Skullcap, Bloody-butcher, and a whole slew of grasses that Charles Allen's been harping about. Hey, maybe you've got a coupla favorites that we oughta know about. But be careful. Those women are always watchin' and waitin' for a slip-up. Wow! There's a simply exquisite stand of Ladies' Tresses blooming right outside my window!....Ooops.

THE NATIVE ELMS OF LOUISIANA

by

R. Dale Thomas and Charles M. Allen of Northeast Louisiana University Herbarium, Monroe, Louisiana 71209

There are four species of native elms in Louisiana; American Elm (Ulmus americana), Cedar Elm (Ulmus crassifolia), Slippery Elm (Ulmus rubra), and Winged Elm (Ulmus alata). Three of these (American, Slippery, and Winged) flower in the spring (January - March) before the leaves appear, while Cedar Elm flowers in the fall with leaves on the tree. The pollen produced by each of the elms is considered a cause of hay fever (or "tree fever"). The elms produce small flattened one-seeded fruits surrounded by a wing; these fruits are called samaras and are spread about by the wind. All four species have deciduous leaves with lop-sided bases and with pinnately arranged veins. The margins of the leaves are either singly or doubly toothed.

The wood of all elms is used for tool handles, vehicle parts, agricultural implements, woodenware, baskets, flooring, veneer, furniture, cooperage, cabinets, sporting goods, boxes, crates, framework, toys, ships, fuel, hubs of wheels, and crossties. All four of the elms are now harvested in Louisiana for pulp wood. Most forestry industries do not distinguish between the species when using them for lumber. The wood of Cedar Elm and Winged Elm is very difficult to split and thus not very useful for firewood. Most elm lumber has traditionally come from American Elm but it holds a lot of water and decays quite rapidly. The longer-lasting wood of Slippery Elm has been used for posts. The fruit of all four elms are used as food by birds and squirrels. Squirrels eat lots of elm buds in early spring. Cedar Elm, with its fall fruits, is widely used by squirrels.

Probably no other tree in Eastern North America has as much tradition as the American Elm. The Indians used large elm trees as places to hold their councils. The colonists used the American Elm extensively in street plantings. Many house sites were chosen based on the presence of large elm trees. Beginning in the 1930s many hundreds of thousands of large elm trees have been killed by Dutch Elm Disease. The whole face of many towns and university campuses has been changed. Because of its form, the American Elm when planted along streets will arch over the streets forming shaded lanes. As a lawn tree, it offers superior shade for houses. It is rather ironic that a typical complaint about elms is: "They are the most useless piece of vegetation in our forests. They cannot be used for firewood because they cannot be split. The wood cannot be burned because it is full of water. It cannot be used for posts because it rots in a short time. It can be sawed into lumber but it warps and twists into corkscrews and gives the building where it is used an unpleasant odor for years." Even though most pioneers found little use for the wood of the American Elm, it became the most important shade tree throughout most of Central and Eastern United States.

The bark of elms is fibrous and that of three species (American, Slippery, and Winged) has been used to make rope and various types of binding materials. Indians made canoes from elm bark when paperbark birch was not available. Winged Elms have also ben used as a substitute for witch hazel in witching for water.

The mucilaginous layer found in the inner bark of Slippery Elm has had a variety of uses in folk and other medicines. A pleasant tasting tea can be made by seeping the inner bark in water and adding sugar. Dried bark can be powdered and used as a flour or as a thickening agent in soups, jellies, etc. A tea made from the bark has been used as a laxative, for diarrhea, to treat

fever, respiratory infections, and to assist in childbirth. Indians made poultices from the bark to use to heal wounds, especially gunshot and arrow wounds. Deep wounds were drained using a v-shaped piece of bark. The powdered bark was used throughout eastern North America by Indians to cause wounds to heal, to heal sore throats, and to treat stomach disorders. One author (Thomas) can remember his annual drinking of Slippery Elm tea in the spring to thin his blood after a cold winter in the Great Smokies.

American Elm and Slippery Elm both have big leaves with doubly serrate margins. The leaves of American Elm are usually smooth on the top and those of Slippery Elm are always very rough (like sandpaper) on the top. The twigs of Slippery Elm are hairy and those of American Elm are smooth. The fruit of Slippery Elm is smooth and that of American Elm has a row of long, silky hairs around the margins. The leaves of Winged and Cedar Elms are smaller. Each can have cork (wings) on their twigs. Cedar Elms are restricted to clay soils so are a common inhabitant of our bottomland hardwood forests where it is associated with Hackberry, Honey Locust, Overcup Oak, and Nuttall Oak. Winged Elm grows everywhere and is probably most abundant in fencerows and on upland sites. Slippery Elm and American Elm are scattered throughout the state in both upland and lowland sites.

All four of our elms are easily transplanted from nature. Their seeds germinate readily if planted soon after maturity. If the seeds are removed from the fruits, the seeds can be refrigerated for long periods of time and still germinate. Because of the likelihood of American Elm being killed by Dutch Elm Disease, the other species should be used in lawn plantings.

My Love Affair With Illicium floridanum

by Carl Amason

I cannot remember when I bought my first Illicium foridanum or where as time and illness have taken their tolls on my memory. I think it might have been 35 years ago and frankly I really didn't know such an American species existed, but at that time I had just learned that is was an American wild shrub with pretty and interesting flowers that stink and that its leaves were fragrant when crushed. Furthermore, I think it was in Mobile, Alabama at one of the first meetings of the Magnolia Society and that gracious and eminent plantsman Tom Dodd had brought some to the meeting for sale. At that time, it was considered to be a member of the Magnoliaceae (Magnolia) family and that was sufficient cause for me to buy three of them. Really, I had never seen a flower or smelled a crushed leaf let alone ever having seen one of the plants. I was impressed with the shrub from the beginning as it had rather thick, succulent, evergreen leaves at least four inches long and over an inch wide. Sure enough the crushed leaves smelled like the paste school children used to buy (and a good school chum used to eat!). To this day I enjoy the fragrance, but I have never been tempted to taste Illicium .

So it was with a mixture of happiness, glee, and deep thought and special consideration just where to plant my plants, consisting of erect stems about two feet tall with about ten leaves; about half concentrated in a false whorl at the top. It took me days of wondering just where they would do best in my rather casual "landscape", but I finally settled on a moist place, uphill slightly from a weak-flowing spring - not too wet, but not too dry.

They prospered, but did not bloom the first year. In fact, it was four or five years before I saw a bloom. They have a disturbing way of almost totally collapsing in the summer heat when they need watering, but they perk up almost immediately when watered. When winter came, I watched my new-found shrubs daily and the morning of the first hard freeze, I must admit an element of

shock as I thought to myself that those tender gulf coast plants would not grow here in Calion (Union County, Arkansas) - thirty miles north of the Louisiana border. I might as well grow tropical palms in my woods, I thought. Quickly I can assure you those plants have not only survived without any freeze damage (including several harsh winters when the temperature went below 0 degrees F), but the sad-looking leaves perk right back up when things warm up. So, they've done just fine here, both winter and summer.

When I first found an open bloom, I thought it was a red beauty - a star-shaped dark red flower over an inch across that was just waiting to be smelled. And what a smell! To me, they smell just like a wet fish. So it was just like the book said, the flowers stink. Some articles give the common name as Pole-Cat bush, but I don't get that connection.

But to come to an interesting conclusion to my trials with Illicium floridanum , my two original shrubs are probably eight feet tall, and bear heavy crops of flowers, fruit, and seed. The fruit a green, pointed pinwheels, and when it is desirable to gather some seed, pick the fruit before any slits have formed and put them in a sack or a box for the seeds jump out, and need to be contained. Shortly after doing this, you'll hear a steady thumping of the seeds as they're expelled. Should one jump out of the container, it is very difficult to pick up the oily, polished seeds from the floor.

To plant the seeds is no real challenge to an advanced seed sower. Just keep the soil medium well-drained but damp and in late winter they'll come up. I seldom gather seed to give to friends who come to see me. I just go and dig up a self-sown seedling, I suspect there may be a hundred about, some quite a distance from the others. Furthermore, those that fall on truly wet or seepy areas soon perish; those that fall in dry uphill areas perish before the long, hot summer is over.

Recently, while touring gardens in Memphis, Tennessee, I was amazed and pleased to see specimens of Illicium foridanum growing in some fine woodland gardens. Frankly, they seem to be happier in my sandy woods than in the loess soils of Memphis, but that could be partly due to their winters. My final point is, they grow like they're native to my acid piney woods here in southern Arkansas, and I've enlarged the scope of my collection by acquiring the cultivar "Halley's Comet" and a so-called white-flowering form and even Illicium mexicana , all of which are fine garden subjects for me.

BOGS, BIRDS AND GEMS FESTIVAL

The West-Central Chapter of the LNPS, along with the Vernon Parish Tourist Commission will sponsor a Bogs, Birds and Gems Festival. The weekend celebration will feature guided field trips through concentrations of the endangered Red-Cockaded Woodpecker, including a visit to a cavity tree that contains a nest with adults feeding young. This year a great effort will be made to have ornithologist who'll capture and band nestlings while the group is allowed to watch.

LNPS will serve as guides through the bogs and upland areas where plants endemic to the longleaf pine ecosystem will be seen.

There'll also be a commercially-operated gem wash where soil from the state's only opal mine will be available for participants to purchase and wash to retrieve opalized quartzite fragments. Also near the mine is an outpost on Bayou Toro where canoes can be rented or your own canoe can be hauled to the put-in and take-out sites.

The West-Central Chapter would especially like to call attention to the longleaf pine ecosystem which exists on public lands in this area of the

state. It is our belief that a large statewide interest will help in making future management decisions favorable to its perpetuation.

An additional treat will be available thanks to Dr. Charles Allen and his daughter Tanya. Many of the native plants we admire were known, and used by, early Americans for food or for herbal medicines. Indians passed their knowledge and skills used in gathering and preparing these plants on to the European settlers. Dyes extracted from these plants were used in home textile manufacture and fibers from native plants were used to make cords and ropes. Baskets were woven from a variety of raw materials found growing wild.

Early uses of plants make for fascinating reading. Dr. Charles Allen, however, has gone a little deeper into the subject. He eats them! While much has been written about plants used as food for emergency survival, Dr. Allen and his daughter Tanya can spread a table with native plants that are not only edible, but downright tasty. Dozens of beverages can be made from some common plants by drying the leaves and steeping them in hot water. Tubers, fruits, stems, leaves, and flowers of some plants are eaten raw or cooked before eating.

Many people would like to try some properly prepared staples from the woods, but most of us never know where or how to start. Well, Charles and Tanya are going to solve taht problem for us. One feature of the Birds, Bogs and Gems Festival which starts on May 23rd will be a kitchen set-up featuring edible native plants prepared for eating and drinking. The field kitchen will be located at a picnic area in the Kisatchie National Forest near both the bogs and the woodpecker trees we'll be visiting. Directions will be provided.

There'll be no charge for the samples and the quantity available will probably be less than enough for a full meal for each of us, so plan to bring your regular field lunch.

Detailed plans for the festival are not quite finalized. For more information concerning the festival, contact Robery Murry or the Vernon Parish Tourist Commission:

Robert Murry
P.O. Box 7
Simpson, La. 71474
Phone (318) 383-6123

Vernon Parish Tourist Commission
Leesville, La. 71446
Phone (318) 238-0349

LAND ACQUIRED BY LA DEPT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

In 1989, approval was given for the sale of approximately 18 million dollars in bond monies by the LDWF's land acquisition projects. Among the first areas purchased with these funds is a tract in the Tunica Hills, presently called the Tunica Hills Area. The site was purchased from the Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation primarily through the efforts of the Habitat Conservation Division, Natural Heritage Program. The following is information concerning the tract. All LNPS members should make an effort to visit this scenic part of Louisiana! A LNPS field trip to the area is planned later this year for the summer/fall meeting.

Nelwyn C. McInnis

Lousiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Tunica Hills Area
West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana

LOCATION: The Tunica Hills area is a scenic 590 acre upland hardwood forest in the rugged Tunica Hills blufflands of West Feliciana Parish. It is located

approximately 14 miles northwest of St. Francisville and approximately 2.5 miles northeast of Tunica, Louisiana, in Township 1 South, Range 1 West, Section 93 in its entirety. It can best be assessed from LA Highway 66 (Angola Road), then west on Parish Road 968, then north on an unnamed parish gravel road that bisects the property.

USES/RESTRICTIONS: The Tunica Hills area was purchased for the purpose of conserving a threatened and biologically significant habitat and the full array of native species it supports in perpetuity. The site is currently open to the public year-round, for day-use only. All access, other than the parish road, is by foot-traffic only. Wheeled vehicles are prohibited. Recreational opportunities currently available include hiking, birding, photography, outdoor education, and hunting. Because hunting is allowed, caution should be taken during hunting season, such as wearing hunter-orange. Trash disposal facilities are not available, so the removal of all trash or garbage is requested.

DESCRIPTION: The Tunica Hills have long been recognized as ecologically significant by ecologists, botanists, paleontologists, and zoologists. Tunica Hills is an area of deeply dissected hills in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana and adjacent Wilkinson County, Mississippi. The forest is classified as southern mesophytic and is dominated by a climax community of southern magnolia, American beech, and American holly. It is the southern-most extension of what is called the "loess blufflands" that formed on the escarpment east of the Mississippi River. Loess or wind-blown silt, was deposited on previously dissected uplands east of the river between periods of glaciation in the late Pleistocene and early Holocene (80,000 - 10,000 years ago). The blufflands extend in a 10 to 25 mile wide band from the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in southern Illinois, southward to Louisiana. The loess deposits vary from 2 to 200 feet deep, and are thickest on the western edge of the bluffs adjacent to the Mississippi River floodplain in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: During continental glaciation, the Blufflands serves as an important north to south migration route for plants and animals associated with cool temperate southern mesophytic forests. It is believed cold glacial meltwater and accompanying cold air masses moving down the river combined with warmer southern air to produce advection fogs, which supplied moisture and maintained cooler temperatures in areas near the river. Eventual erosion of the loess deposits after glacial retreat formed narrow ridges and deep vertical ravines, providing a continuum of relatively cool, moist, shaded habitat capable of supporting species intolerant of hotter and dryer conditions. Relic populations of several species more common in the Appalachians, Ozarks, and areas northward still occur today in the Tunica Hills, many at the southern-most extension of their range. At least 20 state-rare plant species occur in the Tunica Hills. At least 10 species of plants are known in Louisiana only from the Tunica Hills, including the only known Louisiana locations of wild ginseng and Canada wild ginger.

The intermingling of cool temperate floras of the north with warm temperate floras of the south has produced one of the most species-rich upland hardwood forests in the entire continental United States. While there are a few other areas in the southeast where similar mingling of northern and southern species occurs (e.g., the Apalachicola River Bluffs in Florida and the Flint River floodplain in Georgia), the loess bluffs area in the Tunica Hills is the largest, and provides a larger variety of micro-habitats.

In addition to vegetational diversity, the Tunica Hills is rich in fauna as well. There are 13 state-rare animals known to occur in the area, including black bear, Webster's salamander, long-tailed weasel, Coopers Hawk, and Worm-eating Warbler, as well as the uncommon eastern chipmunk and timber

rattlesnake. The area is also known to support an abundance of game species such as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and gray squirrel.
CONTACT: Questions concerning the Tunica Hills Area should be directed to the Habitat Conservation Division, LDWF at (504) 765-2821.

CAJUN PRAIRIE SPRING WILDFLOWER FEST

The Cajun Prairie Spring Wildflower Fest is set for Thursday May 14 through Sunday, May 17, 1992 in Eunice, Louisiana. Things to see and do are:

Jean Lafitte National Park Visitor Center: view the Cajun Prairie Natural History Exhibit, the Eunice Cajun Prairie Children and Young Adult Art Exhibit, and the video "Wildflowers of the Cajun Prairie". The exhibit and video will be available for viewing from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Thursday, May 14, Friday May 15, and Sunday, May 17 - as well as from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM on Saturday, May 16. The video will be shown on request during these times.

Eunice Cajun Prairie Restoration Site: meet at the corner of Martin Luther King Drive and East Magnolia Avenue. Join us at any time between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM on Saturday, May 16, and see the spring wildflowers.

Liberty Theater: attend the live Prairie Cajun Music Show at the Liberty Theater from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Saturday, May 16.

Remnant Strips of Cajun Prairie: tour the remnant strips of Cajun Prairie. Meet at 9:00 AM on Sunday, May 17 at the Jean Lafitte National Park Visitor Center. Each participant is responsible for his/her own transportation, food, water, etc.

For more information write:

Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society
P.O. Box 172
Eunice, Louisiana 70535

or call:

Dr. Charles Allen (318) 546-6208 or (318) 342-1814
Dr. Malcolm Vidrine (318) 457-7311 or (318) 457-4497
Phil Bourgeois (318) 546-0650 or (318) 457-3641
City of Eunice (318) 457-7389 or (318) 457-6575
Jean Lafitte National Park Visitor Center (318) 457-8499

MOREHOUSE PARISH FIELD TRIP PLANNED FOR SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1992

This will be a field trip of the prairies of Morehouse Parish, led by Drs. Thomas and Allen. Meet at the parking lot of the Bank of Morehouse/Farmer's Agri-credit on US 165 East in Bastrop, across from the Sonic and Sherwin Williams store at 9:30 AM. Contact persons are Terry and Beth Erwin, home phone (318) 281-6783, work phone (318) 281-5741.

BUTTERFLY GARDENING FOR THE SOUTH - BOOK REVIEW

by Beth Erwin

"Butterfly Gardening for the South" by Geyata Ajilvsgi, Taylor Publishing, Dallas, Texas, 1991, 360 pp. hardbound, $34.95.

Anyone who has ever read any of the author's wildflower books knows of her easy-to-read, easy-to-understand style. The book is very comprehensive, beginning with a chapter on understanding the butterfly, and progressing through creating a butterfly garden. Along the way are chapters on natural pest controls which I found very interesting, as well as separate chapters for larval food plants and nectar food plants. The photography is outstanding as is the printing. There are special notes on south Texas butterfy gardening and south Florida butterfly gardening as well as how to photograph butterflies. You may want to request it through the local library first since the price is significant to most budgets. However, I warn you, you're going to want it because it is beautiful and useful as well. Terry bought it for himself for his birthday!

GROWING WILDFLOWERS

by Beth Erwin

I am hoping now that the duties of secretary have passed on to very capable hands I'll be able to keep up with my column. I'm doing a lot in the yard, now. For the last two years, I have cut back severely on plant acquisitions due to lack of space. I have looked longingly at the new yarrows that are available now and all the different salvias and bee-balms, too. The only available space I have is the front yard, which is essentially a St. Augustine grass monoculture. It is also a football practice field. It is about to become a flowerbed. Ben and his football buddies have already ploughed up a fair amount of grass, so there'll be less grass to remove now than there was last fall. I have to go slow with the rearranging of existing beds because I am not quite sure what is where. Since I was too chicken to burn off the beds in December (it's against the law within the city limits of Bastrop) I mowed instead. I rely heavily on the remaining seed heads for year-round identification. Terry pointed out a week after I planted the mountain laurel that I had planted it on the Indian Pinks. So that's what all those roots were! I hope things work out between the two plants. This same thing happened a few years ago when I accidentally planted a fragrant sumac on top of the Carolina geranium. That turned out rather well, I think, as they coexist beautifully. Somehow, I don't think the mountain laurel and the Indial Pink will get along as well.

Part of our planting plans from years past included moving the Mexican Primroses out to the edge of the driveway entrance since they are so fond of concrete and asphalt. We never have gotten around to moving them, but they have been moving themselves. I'm sure by the end of summer they'll be at the street at the rate they're moving. It is interesting, they're not spreading, just moving.

I am not going to talk about what's just coming up here right now, the last week in February, because it's old news to the rest of the state (unless you live in Beelman or Galion). I hope some of you will be able to make it here for the field trip in May, we've found some neat spots since the last trip here!