

Mississippi Native Plants

The Newsletter of the Mississippi Native Plant Society

Fall 1997

Volume 17 Issue 4



Jack's Ridge Nature Trail

by Ron Wieland



Mississippi Native Plant Society members helped facilitate Migratory Bird Day at the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area on 26 April this year. Migratory Bird Day is sponsored by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other cooperators. Pearl River Wildlife Management Area is located at the junction of Highway 43 and the Natchez Trace Parkway, about a 40 minute drive north of Jackson and just east of Canton. The entrance is a few 100 yards east of the junction, just north of Highway 43 (an entrance sign is present). The tour provided three locations for viewing wildlife: the eagle nest station, the heron rookery, and Jack's Ridge Nature Trail. The society assisted in guided tours of the nature trail. The day turned out to be very wet with heavy intermittent rainfall. Besides being awash with rain, the air was filled with the constant chatter of warblers, geese, and mockingbirds.

The trail is named after, Jack Herring, past executive director of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, who has a keen interest in growing native plants. Jack gives an annual spring lecture at the Museum of Natural Science on native plant gardening. His slides and discussion of native wildflowers makes an inspiring and convincing presentation on the utility of natives in backyard gardens in Mississippi. Over his years of traveling throughout Mississippi, Jack has discovered numerous rare plant populations.

Jack organized the plantings and signage along the nature trail. Jack's Ridge Nature Trail begins at the parking area for the water bird viewing kiosk, stationed at the entrance to the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, and extends to the north through the forest around the office buildings.

Signs are displayed throughout the trail listing more than 150 plants of the state. All six magnolia (Can you name them?)* and five pine species found in Mississippi are represented; twenty seven different oaks, special rarities such as silky camelia, leather wood, butternut, Kentucky coffeetree, blue ash, Alabama snow-wreath, bladdernut, and bur oak are also represented.

Along the trail is a backyard wildlife habitat demonstration area that provides examples of ways to attract wildlife to your own backyard. Bird feeders, bird baths and other accessories are demonstrated. Did you say you wanted to learn more about Mississippi's native flora? How about teachers, are you looking for a place to take your science class for a field trip? By all means, check out Jack's Ridge Nature Trail. We'll even throw in the birds. If you travel the Natchez Trace Parkway, this is a great place to stop to stretch your legs and to enjoy wildlife, the diverse southern hardwood forest, and native wildflowers.

* *Magnolia acuminata*, *M. grandiflora*, *M. macrophylla*, *M. pyramidata*, *M. tripetala*, and *M. virginiana*

Mississippi's Hidden Treasure

Every so often I get to visit a place that is a bit out of the ordinary. In late June I made my way, along with members of the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District, to the Natural Resources Conservation Service - Jamie L. Whitten Plant Materials Center located outside of Coffeerville MS. I heard they grew wildflowers there and took this opportunity to find out more. Located in the rolling hills of the Holly Springs National Forest most of the research plots at this facility beared little resemblance to those of other agricultural research stations I have seen.

We were taken on a tour of the grounds and I decided then that I needed to get my resume in order and apply for the first position that opened up there. It was beautiful. The research area which was originally forested had been cleared to allow planting. While some research plots were on level ground, many of the plots were on gently sloping terraine providing a perfect environment on which to test how well certain species or maintenance techniques help with erosion control. The entire facility was surrounded by the towering canopy of the woods. There was even a large pond and we were told that wild turkey occasionally frequent the research plots. No doubt they're checking out the PMC newly released partridge pea variety named 'Lark' for a possible snack.

There were soybean plots in which every twenty rows or so was planted a row of switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*). Evaluating the use of clumping native grasses as wind breaks in soybean fields was only part of this study. They also had under number six selections of switchgrass which are shorter and are looking for uniform maturation qualities from this group so as to be able to harvest and use this windbreak as cattle fodder. This



The **Mississippi Native Plant Society** is a non-profit organization established in 1980 to promote the preservation of native and naturalized plants and their habitats in Mississippi through conservation, education and utilization.

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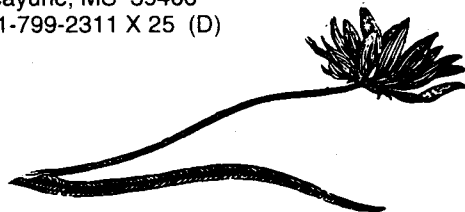
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takes double-cropping to another level.

Other wind breaks were located at the outer edges of the fields. These were mixtures of clumping grasses, shrubby perennials and small thicket-type shrubs, which could be cut back to a manageable height each year. Because of root competition commonly used tree windbreaks such as poplar need a 20 foot or more between them and the crop. These alternative native wind breaks only require a five foot distance between them and the crop.

Plantings for wetland restorations were also show cased. The PMC has released selections of powdery thalia (*Thalia delbata*), woolgrass (*Scirpus cyperinus*) and creeping burhead. These as well as cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), swamp rose mallow (*Malva* sp.), narrow leaf swamp sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*), meadow beauty (*Rhexia mariana*), and rush (*Juncus effusus*) show cased plants that can successfully be used in damp areas.

But it was the brilliantly colored half-acre or more plots of halcy black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), clasping coneflower (*Dracopsis amplexicaulis*), and calliopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*) that made me sit up and think "Now this is research!" These were the seed production fields and they were so bright that I found myself squinting when the sun came out from behind the clouds. As seed from each species ripens the fields will be combined, seeds collected and cleaned. Seed from the earlier blooming lance-leaved coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) and the lyre-leaf sage (*Salvia lyrata*) had already been harvested, but there were still a few flowers of the coreopsis to provide a glimpse of what most certainly was a show-stopping scene a month earlier.

Newly planted production plots containing purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) and Indian blanket (*Gaillardia pulchella*) had just started to come into bloom. Late summer and fall bloomers such as narrowleaf swamp sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*), mistflower (*Eupatorium coelestinum*), and bur marigold (*Bidens aristosa*) were nothing more than lush plots of green awaiting their turn for the ooh's and aah's. The cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), meadow beauty (*Rhexia mariana*), and butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) are also newer additions to the trial plots and will no doubt provide a sight to behold in the next few years.

Not seeing any, I asked about whether or not they grew asters. After all, they're about the most carefree group of fall bloomers available. PMC Biologist Janet Grabowski pointed out that some plants, such as asters, produce seed that the equipment at the PMC can't clean very well. In order for the PMC to distribute them the seed need to be fairly free of chaff. Distribution? Tell me more!

In the past the Coffeeville PMC has had a contract with the Natchez Trace Parkway and supplied wildflower seed for the parkway planting. They are currently offering seed for sale to the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This means that the MSWCD can bulk purchase the available seed and sell it to their constituents.

Call the state headquarters of the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission in Jackson (601-354-7645) for information on obtaining seeds from your county Soil and Water Conservation District. They'll point you in the right direction.

-Lynn Libous-Bailey



To reach the Coffeeville Plant Materials Center take the 220 Tillatoba Exit off of I-55. From there head East on 330. The USDA-NRCS PMC is located on the left, 5 miles from the exit. For more information about scheduling a tour call the PMC at 601-675-2588.

SOMETHING ON YOUR ADDRESS LABEL CAUGHT YOUR EYE?

IF THERE'S **CELERY YELLOW** ON THE DATE THIS IS YOUR **LAST ISSUE**. IF THERE IS **ORANGE** YOUR **DUES EXPIRE SOMETIME THIS QUARTER**. DON'T PUT IT OFF - MAIL YOUR RENEWAL CHECK TODAY!!

MNPS Annual Meeting to be held on October 4 at the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area



Members are cordially invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Native Plant Society. The meeting will be held on **October 4, 1997, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM** at the **Pearl River Wildlife Management Area Education Center**.

The Education Center is located at the junction of Highway 43 and the Natchez Trace Parkway. At the junction travel eastward on Highway 43 (towards Ross Barnett Reservoir) for several hundred yards until you see the sign and entrance way to the Management Area. Drive north about a quarter mile to the headquarters building where the meeting will commence. Parking is available at the Education Center.

A business meeting will be held from 11:00 AM to 12:00 noon. A **Brown-Bag Lunch** will follow, at which time we have scheduled a speaker. After lunch, around 1:00 PM, we will take a walk on Jack's Ridge Trail (**see the article on page 1 for what's in store!**). Time permitting we will take a tour of the Ross Barnett Reservoir Marsh area, where numerous wetland plants will be in bloom among an assortment of wetland sedges, rushes, willows, grasses and herbs.

For more information contact Ron Wieland at 601-354-7303 (D) or 601-981-7731 (E).



There's how many???

How good are you at guessing numbers? If you think you've got the nack or are simply looking looking for interesting cocktail conversation starters then read on. The following information was written by Janet M. Grabowski and published in the October 1995 Technical Note Vol 11 No 3 from the Coffeerville Plant Materials Center. Can you correctly match the following native plant species with their number of seed per pound?

- | | | | |
|--|---|---------------|----------------|
| 1. <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> Butterfly milkweed | 5. <i>Helianthus angustifolius</i> Swamp sunflower | A. 13 Million | E. 1.4 Million |
| 2. <i>Bidens aristosa</i> Bur marigold | 6. <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> Cardinal flower | B. 330,000 | F. 220,000 |
| 3. <i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i> Lance-leaf coreopsis | 7. <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> Black-eyed susan | C. 87,000 | G. 1.7 Million |
| 4. <i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i> Plains coreopsis | 8. <i>Salvia lyrata</i> Lyre-leaf sage | D. 125,000 | H. 500,000 |
- 1-C; 2-D; 3-F; 4-E; 5-H; 6-A; 7-G; 8-B.

Mississippi Native Plants The Newsletter of the Mississippi Native Plant Society



Mississippi Native Plants is the quarterly publication of the Mississippi Native Plant Society.

Winter (Issue 1) December/January/February
 Spring (Issue 2) March/April/May
 Summer (Issue 3) June/July/ August
 Fall (Issue 4) September/October/November



Deadlines for the Winter Issue are as follows:
 Articles--**Oct 15** Calendar of Events--- **Oct 30**

Deadlines for the Spring Issue are as follows:
 Articles---**Jan 15** Calendar of Events---**Jan 30**

Hard copies or articles in Word Perfect or Word submitted to the Editor are solicited and welcomed.

**Mid-South Native Plant Conference to be held in Memphis
on October 24-26 at Christian Brothers University**

**Keynote Speakers:**

Judy Glattstein - 'Why Use Native Plants in Your Landscape?'
Dale Hendricks - 'Exceptional Garden-Worthy Native Cultivars'
W. Gary Smith - 'The New American Garden: Changing Attitudes'

General Sessions:

John Mickel - 'Native Ferns for Your Mid-South Gardens'
Carl Amason - 'Garden Musings'
Bob-Brzuszek - 'Designing With the Native Landscape'
Plato Touliatos - Favorite Native Trees for Homeowners

Concurrent Sessions:

a: Jan Midgley - Propagation for Home Gardeners
b: Julius Furr - Planting Nursery Grown Plants
c: Larry Lowman - Selecting and Naming Cultivars
d: Bob Brzuszek - Creating a Bog/Swamp at Home
e: Russell Studebaker - Poke Weed - A Pariah?
f: Scott Woodbury - Planting a Residential Prairie
g: Dale Hendricks - Large Scale Propagation
h: Margaret Leggett - Field Trip : A Neighborhood Garden Project
Tom Pellett
i: Carl Amason - Native Magnolias of the S.E.
j: Gregory Pendano - An Intro to Native Mosses
k: L. Aldridge / N. Stanley- Gardening with Children
l: Gail Barton - Hypertufa in the Native Garden

MEALS INCLUDED / ACCOMMODATIONS UP TO YOU

Mid-South Native Plant Conference Registration Form



Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (day) () _____ (eve) () _____
T-Shirt Size: (Circle one) M L XL XXL (Unspecified = XL)
Circle Concurrent Sessions you will attend: a b c d e f g h i j k l

Refer to ground rules for cancellation refund policy.
Let us know if you have any special needs

Amount Enclosed

Make Checks payable to: MSNPC

\$ _____ Registration Fee \$85, or

\$ _____ Preregister by Oct. 1
Fee \$70Return to: MSNPC, LNC
5992 Quince Road
Memphis, TN 38119

Goldenrod in the Garden - Plant a fall tradition

With the arrival of the cooler fall temperatures the golden yellow blooms of the goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.) can be seen along the roads, fallow fields, on the back property line where the lawn mower only sporadically visits. Often maligned it is unjustly accused of being the source of pollen that triggers allergies this time of the year.

Goldenrod pollen is dispersed by insects and is too heavy to be easily carried by the wind. But because its flower clusters are bright and showy they draw attention away from the true allergy causing culprit. Ragweed (*Ambrosia* sp.), which blooms concurrently with the goldenrod, produces small inconspicuous



**Seaside goldenrod
(*Solidago sempervirens*)**

flowers that shed their highly allergenic pollen from late summer through October. The pollen is light and easily dispersed by the wind. It is this plant that causes the millions of sneezes each fall, not the innocent goldenrod.

There are nearly 25 species of goldenrod found growing wild throughout Mississippi. While many are too rambunctious for the garden setting there are several species which can be grown successfully. While most people believe that goldenrods are simply too weedy to be brought into backyard cultivation there are numerous species worthy of the garden.

European and British gardeners have been using goldenrods in their gardens to provide fall color for generations. But these late season bloomers have more to add to the landscape than just color. They also provide a late season food source for wildlife.

Butterflies especially welcome goldenrod as a nectar source at this time of the year. Monarchs, Great Purple Hairstreak, and an occasional sulphur can be seen nectaring on goldenrod, though they are at constant odds with the bees that also visit the flowers.

Birds find goldenrod an attractive source for food. Not so much for the nectar or pollen that it produces, but for the protein from the small insects that can be found within the flower heads.

I have watched with amazement as the hummingbirds dart in and about the flower stalks of the early goldenrod (*Solidago pinetorum*) in search of insects. Flowering for this species begins in mid-summer; early for a goldenrod. And unlike most of its relatives which have hairy leaves, it produces a mound of slender, glossy, kelly-green curled leaves. The three foot stems which arise from the mound of foliage in early summer, gracefully arch with sprays of flowers.

A selection of the rough goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*) named 'Fireworks' exhibits one of the most attractive floral displays in this genus. A slow spreading clumper 'Fireworks' grows to a height of about three feet and then begins producing flowers on long horizontal sprays which radiate outward just like a firework display. It blooms from August through September and is attractive in the garden both in and out of bloom.

Planted next to a Boltonia 'Snowbank' which produces white fleabane like flowers, and a fall blooming orange flowered regal sage (*Salvia regla*) this goldenrod combines to make an attractive planting which will provide nectar and a source of protein for a variety of butterflies and birds.

In the late fall the tall seaside goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*) is visited just as frequently by the Ruby Crowned Kinglet as it is by the Monarch butterflies. A well behaved clumper, this goldenrod produces glossy smooth, often greyish, leaves up to ten inches long. Mature clumps of this plant resemble a shrubby oleander more than a native goldenrod.

Beginning in mid summer the seaside goldenrod sends up its flower stalks which may reach a heights of up to six feet tall and are often topped by a dragon fly or two. By late fall they are topped with the clusters of flowers typical of most goldenrods. And judging to the amount of time the Ruby Crowned Kinglet spends hovering around them they harbor quite an assortment of insects.

If you're looking to satisfy the appetite of more than just the birds and butterflies then you may want to consider growing the sweet goldenrod (*Solidago odora*). The smooth glossy leaves produce a scent and taste reminiscent of tarragon. The leaves of this goldenrod make a fine tarragon substitute in cream cheese spreads, herbed butters or other culinary creations.

Consider planting some garden worthy native goldenrods this fall. And this time next year start the fall tradition. Whip up a batch of boursin, kick back and watch the butterflies and birds enjoy the goldenrod just as much as you are!

-Lynn Libous-Bailey



Sweet goldenrod
(*Solidago odora*)

Rendezvous

Late blooming asters,
We call you Farewell Summer
For you are the last to lay your pale
Colors upon her bier

Steal a bit of the sky,
Hold it fast in your petals,
And wait for me in the forgotten road
Where the treetops cross.



I will outwit November's wind and meet you there
For I have a lake of the sky
Hidden in my heart
We will remember Summer together.

by Sylvia Trent Auxier
In Love-Vine
Published in 1953 by The Story Book Press



Chelone - There's nothing 'slow' about this turtle!

by Karen Partlow

This charming native plant known as turtlehead (*Chelone* spp.) livens up the garden during the late summer and fall. To be quite frank, by this time of year I have become lethargic from all the yellows and golds of summer in the garden. Turtlehead, especially the pink flowering species, provides a color change, helping to wake me up out from my summer color stupor.

There are three commonly known species of turtlehead native to the southeast. Most commonly found in Mississippi are *Chelone obliqua*, which has rose-to-pinkish flowers, and *Chelone glabra* which produces white flowers. The third species, *Chelone lyonii* which also has pink-to-rose flowers is more commonly found in the Carolinas and Tennessee.

Flowering on all species occurs in a spike-like raceme above opposite deep green lanceolate leaves with serrate edges. It is the flower shape that gives rise to the common name of turtlehead. A member of the figwort or snapdragon family (Scrophulariaceae) turtlehead has the characteristic two lipped corolla found in many other members of the family. The upper lip on the flower is curved or domed shaped with a notch the tip. It is positioned over the bottom lip in such a way as to give the appearance of a turtle's head.

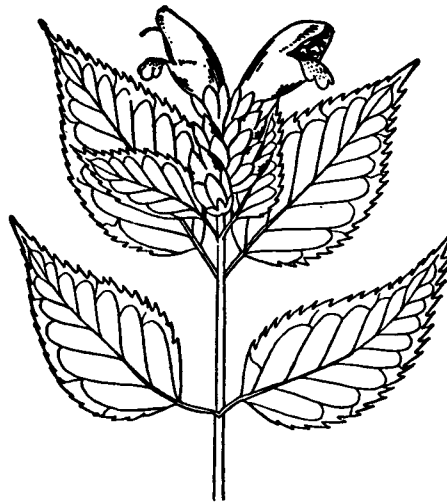
The habitat for this native is swampy or low areas and open creek banks. However it is well-adjusted to garden situations that have an acidic soil with adequate moisture. My first garden experience with *Chelone* ended badly for the plant and me - I did not

provide it with enough moisture during the hot dry summer months. The next plant I purchased was placed in a moist environment and I have been pleased (as is the plant) with the results. A setting that receives several hours of morning sun with dappled afternoon shade is ideal. It is advisable to stay away from the late afternoon scalding sun. This plant naturalizes if happy and makes a nice planting in combination with southern shield fern (*Thelypteris kunthii*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), and hog fennel (*Oxypolis rigidior*).

Propagating turtlehead is a breeze. Divide clumps in spring as it emerges from dormancy or take cuttings during the summer, taking care to keep them moist. However, for me the easiest way is by seed. After frost, when blooms turn a papery brown, collect the seed. Inside the paper shell are numerous seed which can be sown outdoors in a flat or pot, or in the ground for that matter. It is important that they go through a cool winter dormancy for germination. In the spring you will

have plenty seedlings to share.

In closing, I would like to suggest turtlehead as an excellent plant for getting children involved with the native flora around them. Just the name will grab their attention. It is a fun plant for me too. I am always taking someone over to my clump of turtlehead and asking, "Doesn't this look just like a turtle's head"? I giggle with the little girls as they nod agreeingly and exclaim with delight "It does"!



Karen Partlow owns and operates Nature's Nook nursery in Meridian, MS and can be reached at 601-485-5161, or natures@cybertron.com Her catalogue is on line at www.cybertron.com/naturesnook

Plant and Seed Swap at MNPS Fall Meeting

It has been suggested that in conjunction with the fall meeting of the MNPS (Pg. 4) there should be a native plant and seed swap. Hurray!! For those interested in participating the following guidelines should be followed:

- 1) **SOUTHEASTERN NATIVE PLANTS ONLY.**
- 2) Plants should be in pots. Please do not bring bare rooted material.
- 3) Seed should be cleaned and placed in an envelope in quantities appropriate for household use.
- 4) Seed envelopes should be labeled and all pots should contain a stake labeled with the following information:
Scientific name; Common name; Place of seed collection and/or Origin of Mother Plant (if purchased)

Summer Jewels Along the Creek

by Joe McGee



One hot, late summer afternoon years ago I saw jewelweed in bloom for the first time when I found a single tall, spindly plant arching over the bank of Okahatta Creek near my parents' place in Newton County, Mississippi. I remember that first sighting vividly along with unexpected discoveries of wild orchids or clumps of Indian pipe after late September rains. While jewelweed is much more common than an orchid or Indian pipe, I could hardly believe that anything could be so exquisite. The brilliant red-dotted orange blossoms peeked out on hair-thin pedicels from the axils of slightly scalloped, cool green leaves and immediately sparked my imagination.

I soon learned how easy it is to grow this native annual wildflower right in my own yard! Cultivating jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) is just about as basic as it gets. One needs to locate and then visit regularly, a stand of jewelweed in order to collect the seeds when they mature in early fall. Plants bloom sporadically in June and July in east central Mississippi but the main flowering period is August and September. Blooming usually continues right up to the first October frost unless the autumn is very dry.

Collecting jewelweed seeds is fun for adults as well as youngsters. To children with vivid imaginations and a bent toward the natural world, jewelweed blossoms seem magical, like fairy lanterns or the honey pots of elves. And...I've yet to meet a child who was not delighted by the explosive seed pods. Because the capsules have such a 'hair-trigger' response, jewelweed is also known as touch me not and snapweed.

Mature seeds are dark greenish-black and can be seen within their translucent capsules. Peeling the seed coat from a ripe seed exposes the seed which is a beautiful robin's egg blue. I find it easy to collect the seeds by carefully bending a stem laden with ripe capsules into a large brown paper grocery bag. The trick is to get the branch inside the bag before the capsules explode.

Sow the seed in a planting site which duplicates the natural habitat of the jewelweed. In the wild it is found in low, moist shady sites along streams, swamp borders, roadside ditches and in moist open woods. Some shade during the hottest part of the day is advisable since jewelweed is very shallow rooted and plants receiving too much sun in July and August tend to take on a yellowish 'anemic' appearance.

Once established in a spot which more or less duplicates the habitats where it grows naturally, jewelweed will reseed itself and come back year after year. I saw seedlings on Valentine's Day this year amid the desiccated, knobby and hollow skeletal remains of the previous generation's stalks. The seedlings have large thick cotyledons, resembling those of peas.

For me, the soft green foliage and jewel-like flowers were justification enough for planting jewelweed in my landscape. As a bonus, the flowers' abundant nectar attracts migrating ruby-throated hummingbirds in late summer and autumn. In recent years I've estimated several dozen hummers visiting my jewelweed patch on any given afternoon in late August or early September. Sulfur butterflies also frequent my jewelweeds and bumble bees apparently nip holes in the bottom of the flower tubes to release the rich store of nectar.

I regard the pendulous blossoms of this native plant with their complicated shape and nasturtium colors to be a jewel among plants. And summer in Mississippi would not be summer without them.



Editors Note: This article is reprinted in part from Garden Paths - A Newsletter From Flowerplace Plant Farm with permission from MNPS member Gail Barton; publisher and editor; PO Box 4865 Meridian MS 39304; 601-482-5686 or E-mail at igbarton@aol.com MNPS member Joe McGee is a naturalist living in Newton County MS. Perhaps he will bring some jewelweed seed to share at the plant swap in October! I for one would love some.

Pondberry and Flood Control Live Harmoniously in Delta

by Karen Chaney

After nearly eight years of surveying some 20,000 acres of bottomland hardwoods in the Yazoo Basin, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers biologists have accumulated some important data about an endangered plant species known as the pondberry (*Lindera melissaefolia* (Walter) Blume).

The surveyors also have located what is believed to be the largest colony of pondberry in the United States, across some 250 acres near Shelby in Bolivar County, MS. "We have not only surveyed thousands of acres, but did a biological assessment," said Corps' biologist Gary Young. "We had a workshop with experts from all over the south to discuss the pondberry."

Pondberry is a deciduous shrub that grows to approximately six feet tall at maturity. It has pale yellow flowers that are produced in the spring before the leaves appear, bright red oval-shaped fruit in the fall and aromatic leaves characteristic of other *Lindera* species. Beyond these characteristics, biologists agree on little else about this plant, which is considered endangered by the U.S. Department of the Interior. "It is a flood-plain plant, but besides that, we have been trying to determine just what exactly are the best growing conditions for this shrub," Young said.

The Corps of Engineers first began researching the pondberry in the late 1980's as part of environmental impact studies for Yazoo Basin flood control projects in the Mississippi Delta. "We have surveyed thousands of acres on just about every project in the Yazoo Basin since 1988," said Kent Parrish, the Corps' study manager for the Upper Yazoo and Upper Steele Bayou project. "We wanted to make certain no pondberry would be in the direct right of way of our projects. We didn't find any in the right of way, but what we did find was a huge colony near Shelby and another colony in the Delta National Forest. We also were able to compile a lot of data and add to the base of knowledge about where the pondberry occurs and what may affect its growth."

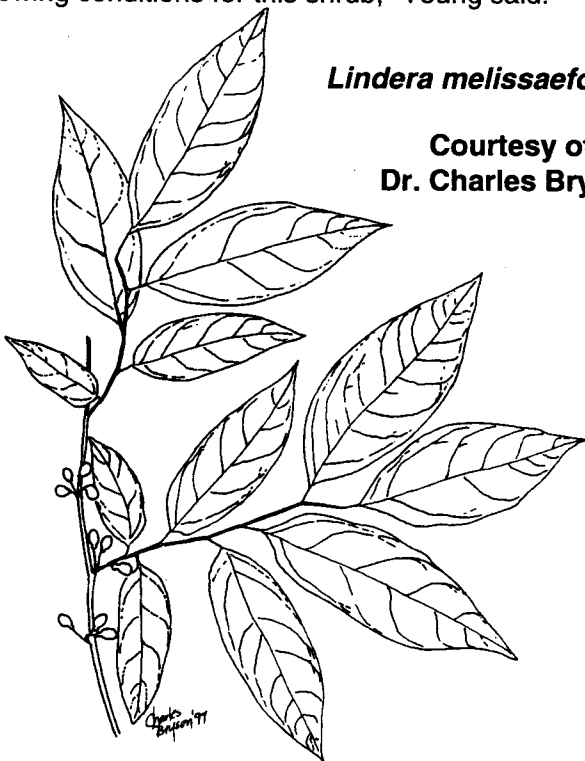
The Corps biologists have used the survey information to form their own opinions about the pondberry. "We now believe that the pondberry is affected more by local ponding than by overall flooding," Young said. "The colony in Bolivar County is at an elevation above the 100-year flood frequency level, but it is in an area where rainwater stands." "We didn't expect to find the pondberry in this area," Parrish added, "because it was not what was thought of as a typical site. It was too high."

Pondberry colonies have been identified in six states; Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. The most significant threats to the plant are drainage ditching, land clearing, cattle grazing, other domestic animals and timber harvesting. If the plant had been found on Corps right-of-way, Parrish said, there would have been two options to lessen the impact of the construction. The first choice would be to plan around the colony by digging on the other side of the stream or to adjust the location of structures and levees to avoid the impact. The second, least attractive option, would be to relocate the plants.

The Delta National Forest has developed a program for monitoring and management of its colony. The Arkansas National Heritage program has contacted the landowners in that state about site protection. In Georgia, a fence has been constructed around a site threatened by domestic hogs.

Lindera melissaefolia

Courtesy of
Dr. Charles Bryson



Editors Note: This article was taken from a news release put out by the Vicksburg District US Army Corps of Engineers.

Native Floral Displays Limp and Lifeless? Try This Technique



For years I have tried unsuccessfully to include cut stems of native black-eyed susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.) and sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp) in the floral displays that I carry with me to talks. Regardless of when they were picked the results were always the same. By the time I arrived to give the presentation all I had were limp, lifeless representations of what once were proud upright flower stalks. What's a person to do?

Be ruthless was the advice floral designer Dot Meeks of Greenville, MS gave me. To successfully use *Rudbeckia* and *Helianthus* as cuts in her arrangements she does what the English floral designers have been doing for generations. Place the freshly cut stems into very hot or boiling water (removed from heat source) for 10-15 seconds. Then place them in a container of cool water deep enough so that the stems are submerged by at least half their length. While this may be old hat to those of you who regularly do flower arrangements it was a revelation to me. Sealing the cut stem by passing it through a flame works as well.

When I asked how long I might expect the treated flowers to last, Dot said that sunflowers treated this way have last for well over two weeks. Then certainly, I surmised, I can make it from my yard to a talk an hour away without losing a single stem to limp. Will utilizing this technique improve my talks? Probably not. But it will give the audience something attractive to focus on should they find my presentation otherwise 'lifeless'!

- Lynn Libous-Bailey

Coming to terms with...



A majority of plants produce flowers that have both male and female parts (perfect flower). Some plants, however, bear flowers that are either male (staminate) or female (pistillate). If staminate and pistillate flowers are produced on the same plant, the plant is **monoecious**. Plants which bear staminate and pistillate flowers on separate plants are known as **dioecious**. If fruit production is important and the plant is dioecious you need to make sure you purchase a female. In addition it's a good idea to have a male close enough to ensure pollination for optimal fruit set.

Plants which are dioecious include:



Spicebush : *Lindera benzoin*
Sumac : *Sumac* sp.
Mistletoe : *Phoradendron* sp.



Plants which are monoecious include:

River Birch : *Betula nigra*
Beech : *Fagus* sp.
Oak : *Quercus* sp.
Pecan : *Carya* sp.



Plant Mississippi Gold

There were several guest speakers at a meeting I attended earlier this year and among them was Pat Fordice, Mississippi's First Lady. Mrs. Fordice told us that the French Splendors of Versailles Exhibit will be arriving in Jackson in the spring of 1998 and remain through the fall. Since Louis XIV has long been known as the 'Sun King' Mrs. Fordice is hoping that the highway entrances into the State of Mississippi and especially those leading into and from Jackson be blanketed in bright yellow flowers in honor of the exhibit.

'Plant Mississippi Gold'. Given the fact that the native wildflower of the state is the *Coreopsis*, having some-thing yellow in bloom from the months of April - August shouldn't be that difficult. And if the coreopsis is kept company with black-eyed susans (*Rudbeckia*) and sunflowers (*Helianthus*) and you might even need a welders shield to drive through the state! Combined, these groups of plants can provide color from February until the first killing frost if the right species selection is made.



Mrs. Fordice stated that the Mississippi Transportation Commission has authorized the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) to plant coreopsis at 17 highway entrances into Mississippi. In addition, the MDOT will issue permits to citizens to plant wildflowers along non-inter-state and non-controlled access highways.

If you're interested in applying for a permit the following is a list of MDOT district offices across the state. Contact the one nearest you for further information.
 - Lynn Libous-Bailey

District 1: Tupelo - (601) 842-1122
 District 2: Batesville - (601) 563-4541
 District 3: Yazoo City - (601) 746-2513

District 4: N/A

District 5: Newton - (601) 683-3341
 District 6: Hattiesburg - (601) 544-6511
 District 7: McComb - (601) 684-2111

Plant Mississippi Poles

Several years ago on my trip home to Upstate New York I saw a sight which has stuck with me. In the area where my sister lived the Neighborhood Watch Organization had encouraged homeowners to plant a three foot square area around the base of the electric/telephone poles in front of their houses. Although the plantings varied tremendously from house to house, the one plant which was present in each 'pole planting' was the large annual sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*). There were usually two or three of the six foot tall towering beauties in each planting accompanied by a vast array of the annuals and perennials planted at their feet. It was truly a fun and memorable sight and one which always drew me down

those streets even though they were a bit out of the way. The plantings made me smile. And after two weeks of living out of suitcases I needed to smile.

For a simple and easy to maintain planting along the public streets, sunflowers at the poles is an idea to consider. Besides being attractive to the neighbors across the street, it might bring a smile to other who see them each day on the way to and from work. A little homework would turn up a list of native plants that would survive at the feet of the sunflowers next to light poles, telephone poles or even mailbox poles.

Plant Mississippi Poles. Yes indeed. I bet it would even make Louis XIV smile.

- Lynn Libous-Bailey

**Mississippi Native Plant Society
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_____ Student.....\$5.00
 _____ Individual or Family.....\$7.50
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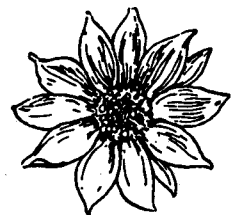
County _____

Telephone _____

_____ I prefer not to have my name appear on the membership list.

Return this form along with a check made payable to Mississippi Native Plant Society to:

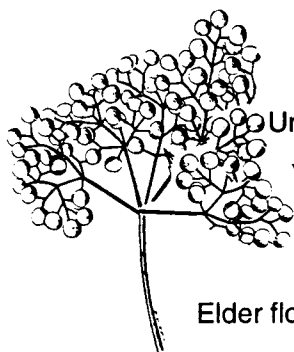
Mississippi Native Plant Society
 C/O Ron Wieland
 MS. Museum of Natural Science
 111 N. Jefferson St.
 Jackson, MS 39202



All members receive Mississippi Native Plants. Life members also receive Wildflowers of Mississippi by S. Lee Timme



This is the time of year when you find yourself wondering just how many of those tiny elderberry fruits a bird has to eat to leave a mess that big on the hood of your car! Although I don't have an answer to that, I can provide you with the following information about elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)



100 grams of ripe elderberries contain 72 calories, 2.6 g protein,
16.4 g carbohydrate, 0.5 g fat and 36 mg of vitamin C

Unopened flower buds are pickled and used as a substitute for capers.

Young shoots from which the pith has been removed is used for an Italian musical instrument called the Zampogna.

Pith from the stems is used in soups as a thickening agent.

Elder flowers, also known as elder blow, are used in making wine and herbal teas.

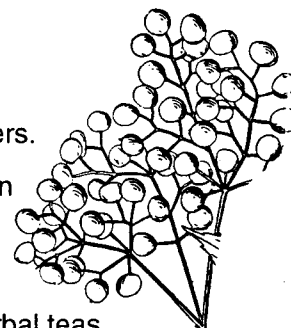
Flower extracts are used in perfumery.

Elderberry flowers and ripe fruits may be added to pancake, waffle or muffin batter before baking.

Ripe fruits may be used as a substitute in any recipe calling for blackberries.

Dried berries simmered in water with sugar and lemon makes an excellent summer drink.

Newly emerged shoots may be cooked and served like asparagus, although older green parts are reported to be poisonous.



Gleaned from pg. 423 of CRC Handbook of Medicinal Herbs, James A. Duke PhD., 1987. At the time of publication Dr. Duke was Chief, Germplasm Resources Laboratory, USDA, Beltsville, Maryland.



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