



Mississippi Native Plants

Newsletter of The Mississippi Native Plant Society

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Remembering Dr. Sidney McDaniel

Spring 2018

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

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Spring has Arrived!

Now that we have moved to Starkville, Peggy and I are really missing watching the passing of the seasons in our Mayhew yard! The Spring Beauties just seemed to get thicker every year! We find ourselves detouring by the old house just to see the yard! We did take bulbs and red buckeye seedlings to plant in our new city yard. And we waited to mow to see what would come up and are delighted that we have spring beauties in our Starkville yard! --John G.



Conference Notes:

May 19-20, 2018 Starkville & Mississippi State

Remember to bring plants for a plant swap or to give away!

Saturday: We will begin in the Tombigbee National Forest: (for directions see page 8)

9:00 am Meet at the Noxubee Hills Trail with a hike. On the hike we will collect materials under Robin Whitfield's guidance and do some art.

Plans are still in flux but at press time they are as follows...

12:00 – 2:00 pm Lunch on your own en route to MSU Clay Entomology Building at MSU possibly stopping for lunch along the way.

2:00 pm Developing Standard Herbaceous Vegetation Monitoring Protocols with Brook Herman, Research Ecologist.

3:00 pm Plant Conservation Alliances with Dr. Toby Gray, Geosystems Research Institute, MSU

4:00 pm Tour of Osborn Prairie
See page 8 for abstracts of talks.

Sunday:

9:30 am Convene at the Clay Lyle Entomology building for a business meeting, a couple of talks (TBA) and a tour of the Arthropod Zoo and Carnivorous Plant Exhibit before lunch.

Afternoon Field Trip: Caravan to the Old Cove (Webster County)

Watch our website mississippinativeplantsociety.org for updates.

Greetings Fellow MNPS Members!

President's Notes

Dear Society members,

I hope you fellow native plant enthusiasts are enjoying spring and have been able spend some time outside viewing some of our lovely spring blooming native plants. Here in the Black Belt Prairie of Mississippi, I have been enjoying the blooms of blue-eyed grass and hoary puccoon, eastern redbud, Ohio buckeye, red buckeye and several species of sedge.

I have several ongoing Black Belt Prairie restoration projects that have kept me quite busy over the last few weeks. As part of these, I have been planting plugs of little bluestem, Indian grass, stiff goldenrod and prairie dock, sown seeds of purple coneflower and Carolina larkspur, and conducted several small prescribed burns. My student, Brady Dunaway, and I have also been planning a field trial examining germination rate, bloom time, and pollinator preferences of local genotype seeds versus seeds of the same species purchased from out of the region.

Dr. Guyton and I are actively working on the schedule for the upcoming MNPS meeting and we have some exciting speakers and field trips planned. If you would like to give a presentation or have any suggestions please let us know soon, as slots are filling up. I believe this will be a great meeting, and urge all members to please attend.

Wishing all the Society members the best,
JoVonn Hill.

Editor's Notes

Our "Remembering Sidney" edition would not be complete without mentioning he was editor of this newsletter from 1987-1989.

MNPS and the Mississippi Garden Clubs have lost another Life Member and an influential Mississippian, Mrs. Halla Jo Ellis. Mississippi is a more beautiful state for her having lived here.

Upcoming Events

"Cooper-Young Goes Native" Garden Walk, held May 19-20, 2018, in Memphis, TN.

Keynote speakers: "Dr. Doug Tallamy" and former Memphis Botanical Gardens horticulturist, Chris Cosby, discussing how to use native plants in urban gardens.

Remembering Dr. Sidney McDaniel

Conversation between Dr. Wayne Morris (Assoc. Prof. of Biology, Troy University) and Pat Drackett, Director, Crosby Arboretum about Sidney McDaniel's Contributions

Transcribed by Pat Drackett, 8/18/14 (Editor's note – preserved in the time and tense recorded)

Editor's note:

Dr. McDaniel first appears in the 2nd MNPS newsletter (Feb. 1981) as the Botanical authority on a September canoe trip on the Strong River and a March trip to the Crosby Arboretum being developed under the guidance of McDaniel.



Dr. Sidney McDaniel



Dr. Wayne Morris



Gail Barton and Pat Drackett accepting an award at the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference on behalf of Sidney

In 1986, Dr. Morris worked under Dr. Sidney McDaniel as a graduate student at the Arboretum

Pat: What would a day with Dr. McDaniel be like in the field, what do you remember?

Wayne: Dr. McDaniel is a brilliant individual, and he inspired me to pursue botany. He would lead Mississippi Native Plant Society field trips in the mid-80's and he would have a group of maybe 30 people, sometimes less, he just seemed to know everything about every plant we ran across. There were some individuals who would purposefully try to stump him and they couldn't do it. I gained a tremendous amount of respect for Dr. McDaniel because of his extensive knowledge, and his way of making something that might be hard to understand... making it more concrete, as opposed to something that was abstract.

Pat: And would he know they were trying to stump him?

Wayne: I think he did sometimes, but it wasn't that they were doing it to be... they were just that enthusiastic about what they were studying and just wanted to be sure about what they had, so they would somewhat "test the teacher" as they say, but they had a tremendous amount of respect, knowing that he had an answer for them.

Pat: You were saying that if he found a plant (recalling a herbarium specimen) he would remember exactly who he was with when he had seen (collected) it... and the date, he had a photographic memory?

Wayne: He has a photographic memory, and when we as graduate students were studying under him at Mississippi State and we would browse through the herbarium learning the different species of grasses, or legumes, or other large plant families like that, that were taxonomically difficult, and we would pull the specimens out without showing them to him – with all the label information – we would ask him about it and he would say, "Oh, yeah, I collected that on such-and-such date", and that would be the date, the year, what was growing with it, everything about it.

Pat: Was he one of the founding members of the Mississippi Native Plant Society, or just led a lot of the field trips?

Wayne: He was definitely a past president of the Native Plant Society and he – from what I remember – coordinated and wrote articles for the newsletter, quite a bit. As I recall, Fay Swan, who also lived in Starkville, was also a past president of the Mississippi Native Plant Society and she worked closely with Sidney to bridge the gap between strict academics and the lay public as the field trips were being organized and articles were being written for the newsletter, and he contributed to that as well.

Pat: Those would be some nice newsletters to get...

Wayne: Fay Swan, she's originally from Louisiana, actually, and I haven't seen her since I was in Starkville, but she would be a good person to contact now that I think about it...

Pat: Could you recap the story you were telling about how you came to be here (at the Crosby Arboretum) with Dr. McDaniel?

Wayne: I was an undergraduate student at Delta State in 1984, and Travis Salley – who is also a big pillar of the Mississippi Native Plant society, a self-trained botanist who would grow numerous plants in Cleveland and make the public aware of the value of native plants and how beautiful they could be – he said that he and his wife were traveling down to Picayune to go to some areas around the city that were "savanna habitats" and I had never been to any savanna habitats. I had only read about them at that point, had read about the tremendous amount of diversity and I didn't know about the Crosby Arboretum at the time. Some of the sites we visited are now natural areas of the Crosby Arboretum, and through those field trips, with the Mississippi Native Plant Society and with Dr. Sidney McDaniel being the field trip leader, that is what convinced me to, instead of pursuing an allied health profession, to pursue botany as a career. That was one of the biggest influences on me that just really solidified my decision, seeing his ability, and just seeing him being an inspiration like that - not that anyone can reach his level, and I don't reach his level either – but to try to do that, to have that kind of knowledge, and the whole world that it opened up... There's this whole world that people are not aware of that's just fascinating – so many connections that plants have with other organisms, with other people, how they shape society – and Sidney brought that out and made me want to pursue it.

Pat: What was Dr. McDaniel like in the field? Was he animated, was he a jokester?

Wayne: He could joke from time to time, he had a dry wit, I would say, about him, but he was serious by nature. He enjoyed getting out in the field more than anything – he was in his element when we went out on field trips and when we were together as grad students, or if it was a combination of graduate student-undergraduate student class. He truly enjoyed what he did, and it showed, that certainly showed through. He had this tremendous passion for what he did and that alone – in addition to his vast knowledge – inspired a lot of people.

Pat: Do you know where he grew up, and whether he spent a lot of time outside when he was young, what his influences were?

Wayne: Sidney and I would talk about that from time to time, when I was his grad student at MS State. He was originally from Forrest City, Arkansas, which is in the Crowley's Ridge region of Arkansas, and that's where there's loess bluff and as it just so happened, the county that I wound up studying under him, doing a floristic survey of for my master's thesis, also had the loess bluff physiographic region in it.

NOTE: Crowley's Ridge is the smallest geographical region in the lowlands. It is in the **eastern part** of Arkansas and completely surrounded by the Delta, but it differs from the Delta in many ways. It rises up to 200 feet higher than the Delta and can be seen for miles around in the flat fields of **eastern** Arkansas. Source: www.arkansawheritage.com. So, whenever I would look through the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas or these other manuals to see when does this plant bloom, what habitat does it grow in, is it possible to be in my study area, could I find it – I would ask Sidney, is this over in Forrest City, Arkansas, where he grew up in the bluffs, and sometimes he would say, "Oh, yes, it's in this kind of habitat within that physiographic region", and he would say, "I anticipate it's probably in Granada County, Mississippi, as well". And almost every time he was right. So he would motivate me to want to find the same kinds of plants that he grew up with, and would also motivate me to find some things that were unexpected, to just have that drive to go out there and want to explore, and to see what's over the next ridge, what's down in that ravine, you know. He had that ability to make people want to do that.

Pat: Talk about when you came here and you would go out – did you do Crosby properties, here, at the Headquarters, or did you go out mostly to the natural areas, and what would a day in the field be like, identifying and gathering information?

Wayne: Okay, it was the summer of 1986, when I'd just finished one semester of grad school at Mississippi State with Dr. McDaniel – oh, here's another piece I need to let you know, too – I started grad school at Mississippi State in January of 1986, because I'd finished a semester early at Delta State, not on purpose, it just happened that way, and I didn't have any financial support, and guess who came to the rescue? I got a fellowship from the Crosby Arboretum! It was \$1,600, which went a long way. It paid my tuition back then. So, I wasn't on a GTA. And, in return for that – this was money, I think, set aside for inventorying the Crosby Arboretum natural areas, but Sidney went ahead and gave it to me in January to complete my first semester in grad school and then I agreed at the same time for this to be a win-win for everybody and to then come down to Picayune and inventory as many of the natural areas as I could in return for receiving that financial support. And of course, I wanted to do that because the whole thing that got me into botany was seeing the Coastal Plain communities, way down here around Picayune, getting me into botany.

In the summer of 1986, the Crosby Arboretum was really just forming. There were really, as I recall, no buildings except for maybe a trailer that Ed Blake had, I had a few conversations with Ed Blake, and with Chris Wells, but as I recall, the office used to be on Goodyear Boulevard. That's where it was in 1986, and so I remember going there. The Pavilion was being discussed, as I recall, but it was not built yet. In the summer of 1986, I made a total of about seven trips, something like that, when I wasn't up in north Mississippi or taking classes and I would systematically visit, say, these two natural areas one day, and these two natural areas the next day, and try to plan it out that way, but the areas that I looked at were Hillside Bog, Dead Tiger Creek Hammock, Dead Tiger Creek Savanna, Red Bluff, the Crane Pond Bog, and the Phillips Swamp. Those were the natural areas that Sidney wanted me to go out and supplement the inventory. He had already done all of the work and shared that with me, but he said there are these other species – he gave me a working list of plants to go by, "okay, I've got these already, work from this and add on to the list if you see anything that's not on the list, you need to collect and document it", so that's what I did. We're all about preserving the biodiversity that is in these natural areas, we don't want to over collect. If it had already been collected and documented, we didn't want to go ahead and do that, if there's something that hasn't been documented that's present, that's what we need to voucher. I learned when I was in grad school there with him that if you're an ethical field botanist you don't want to ever go and collect over 20 percent of the population that we see, if the population's not large enough. If it's a really rare plant, just photograph it and let that be the voucher. So, unnecessary collecting we didn't do, but if it was something above and beyond that wasn't documented yet that's what I was going for.

While I was doing this work, Miss Katherine Furr, who's also an inspiration, actually, because these were long-distance trips for me, gave me lodging accommodations, and was just very helpful in so many different practical ways – being an example of organization, and work ethic – to work hard at whatever you do.

And so, I would bring these plants back in from the field to the headquarters at the time, which were on Goodyear Boulevard, and I'd be rinsing off all the mud and everything from the roots, and everything and I'd be hot – as you can imagine, like we were today – that's what I couldn't get over, Miss Furr was very accommodating, in those aspects,

giving me the lodging when I was coming in from the field like that, in the summer. But, anyway, I would document those plants, and make museum quality herbarium specimens out of them...

Pat: And that's what we have in the back (the herbarium)...

Wayne: And that's what you now have, and then Sidney McDaniel, he usually wanted me to collect two of each – if you have one collection number, there might be duplicate specimens with the same collection number, so that you can have one here and you can have one back up at Mississippi State, or in his Institute for Botanical Exploration Collection. And so my collections went in both places, from the Crosby Arboretum Natural Areas, and then Sidney would just have me give the data – and back in those days it wasn't GPS coordinates, it was township, range and section, and name the natural area and the specific habitat, and some associated species. And so that's the kind of information, and of course, the date that I had collected the plants, and that's the information that I gave to Sidney, and then he wanted to type his own labels, using my collections and the hand-written data and the field notes that I would give him. He did that part of it, and then had professional mounters, or at least students who were hired, who were artistic, and knew how to mount plants properly – they would then mount all the specimens and then attach the scientific labels – that was done at Mississippi State. So then, once all of that was done, the duplicates or original samples of own labels, using my collections and the hand-written data and the field notes that I would give him. So then, once all of that was done, the duplicates or original samples of those collections came back down here to be a part of the Crosby Arboretum collection for educational purposes, for increasing public awareness of the plants.

Pat: I ran out of questions!

Wayne: I've gotten off track talking about Miss Furr, but she's another pillar of this place.

Pat: It's amazing, she was part of everything, she came aboard and had so much to do with all of the people, and she's so humble...

Wayne: She is...

Pat: It's a wonderful mix of people...

Wayne: But, a quote from her, if you want something like that, if she doesn't mind my doing it, I know that she didn't want to do this (doesn't like being interviewed), but she said to me, way back in 1986, that "This arboretum is going to do great things", for this community.

Pat: She could see that then.

Wayne: She had a vision... and Sidney had a vision, and Ed Blake had a vision. Lynn Crosby Gammill had a vision. Everybody who's been associated with the Crosby Arboretum, those individuals, and some others who I've not met, definitely had their own role – and there's a connection between all these people – seeing the value in starting an arboretum here. And now, the reins have been taken over by you, and you're taking it to the next phase...

Pat: I'm just gathering the pieces...

Wayne: But I'm excited for the future of the Crosby Arboretum under your leadership, and forming partnerships with other organizations – I think there is a tremendous amount of potential here.

Pat: Well, Bob (Brzuszek) always reminds me when I say I feel like we're just a few people alone in the middle of the woods in a box, he reminds me that there are a lot of people out there that want to see this place get to the next level. (We are looking through the notebook of old Crosby Arboretum news journals now, looking photographs of the early Board, individuals in the early years etc.)

Wayne: I didn't know Dr. Giles personally, but I understand that he is a past president of Mississippi State University, and he was very supportive of Dr. McDaniel's work – no matter what he did – and as I also understand it, Dr. Giles was on the Board of Directors for the Crosby Arboretum, and I think that was a win-win for Mississippi State University for Dr. McDaniel's work promoting field botany, promoting conservation of natural resources, increasing public awareness – all of those things.

Pat: There was a lot of MSU involvement (in the early years)

Wayne: I knew of him, but didn't know him personally – Dr. Switzer, he was a well-known forestry professor there...

Pat: A thesis proposal...



Miss Katherine Furr, teacher in the Picayune School System and the Crosby Arboretum's first volunteer.

Wayne: This is probably Cary Nordquist... yes... so Cary Nordquist is now... she's an endangered species expert who covers the whole southeast region up at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife headquarters in Jackson, and she first was at Ole Miss and was a student of Dr. Pullens but then for her masters came to Mississippi State to study with Dr. Sidney McDaniel because she knew he was the best in the southeast – one of the best in the United States, really – to study field botany with. But, she's one of the people who first recorded over 40 species per square meter in savanna plots, and she was his grad student at the time she did that. His study sites stretched across the panhandle of Mississippi within generally 30 miles of the coast, because most of these savanna habitats are at their most developed within 30 miles of the coastline.

To see or print Color Versions of Mississippi Native Plant Society newsletters find them online at: Mississippinativeplantsociety.org

MNPS has Lost Another Good Friend: Halla Jo Ellis, Life member of the MNPS

Halla Jo, a Clarksdale native, was also a member of the Garden Clubs of Mississippi and in this capacity she nominated *Coreopsis* spp. as Mississippi's State Wildflowers. Hinds County's Senator and Representative sponsored the bill and the rest is history. Important in this story is the brilliant decision that all species of *Coreopsis* in Mississippi are the State's wildflowers; any blooming *Coreopsis* are Mississippi's wildflowers and there are *Coreopsis* blooming for the entire season! Halla Jo was 90!

Mississippi has 10 species of *Coreopsis*: *C. auriculata*, *C. nudata*, *C. lanceolata*, *C. grandiflora*, *C. major*, *C. verticillata*, *C. pubescens*, *C. tinctoria*, *C. tripteris* and *C. gladiata*.



Eating Nature, Naturally... Plantain (*Plantago major*) and Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) by Dr. John Guyton

There is a reason spring is the season of growth and rebirth. On the spring or vernal equinox our hemisphere is only going to get better! The sun is crossing the equator on its annual journey north. If you are on the equator you can witness the sun rising directly in the east, setting directly in the west and you will not have much of a shadow at noon – you will be standing on it! We are headed toward summer and enjoying earlier sunrises and later sunsets. Longer days encourage plants to flower, birds are becoming more active and we catch spring fever! Time for a festival or bonfire! If it has recently rained and the woods are wet, throw some Osage orange or bois d'arc on for showers of sparks!

Plantain (*Plantago major*) or buckhorn

Readers will recognize this is a favorite medicinal plant of ours. Its stems, leaves and flowers are also edible, and the lance leaf plantain gives a spinach salad a gentle bite. Don't wait too long in the season to enjoy. They get a little bitter when they begin putting up flower stems. Start dining on plantago early in the spring. Flowers have 4 translucent petals and adorn the top of the stem. The fruit containing seeds cluster along the stem. Leaves can be soaked in salt water (5 min) and boiled. Don't over boil. You can steep the leaves in hot water for a half hour to make a beverage that may be useful for sore throats. The seeds can be dried and ground to make plantago flour and used in pancakes. If you get a cut or burn, chew a few leaves and hold to the wound for a few minutes (3 or 4). It will stop the blood flow and speed healing.

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)

Spicebush twigs are fragrant and I have enjoyed them for toothpicks and to hold foods together when cooking. You can steep a handful of young leaves in the spring and/or twigs or bark anytime in boiling water for 15 minutes then strain and serve with honey and milk! Try 15 to 20 leaves. Dried ground fruit is a reasonable substitute for allspice.

Directions to MNPS Meeting Place: Noxubee Hills Trail System - South Trailhead.

Directions to the South Trailhead: **From Jackson** take Hwy 25 N to Louisville. Hwy 25 & Hwy 15 will split on the north side of the Louisville bypass. Continue ~2 miles on Hwy 25 then turn LEFT on Poplar Flat Rd. This turn is just before the Regional Prison. Travel 2.5 miles and turn LEFT on Sheep Ranch Rd (FS956). Continue for 1 mile and the parking area will be on the LEFT.

From Meridian take Hwy 19 N to Philadelphia then Hwy 15 to Louisville. Hwy 15 joins Hwy 25 in a bypass around Louisville. Continue on Hwy 25 for ~2 miles beyond where Hwy 25 splits from Hwy 15 and turn LEFT on Poplar Flat Rd. In 2.5 miles turn LEFT on Sheep Ranch Rd (fs 956). Continue for 1 mile and the parking area will be on the LEFT.

From Starkville take Hwy 25 S. Turn RIGHT on Poplar Flat Rd just past the Regional Prison. Travel 2.5 miles and turn LEFT on Sheep Ranch Rd (fs 956). Continue for 1 mile and the parking area will be on the LEFT.

From Memphis take I 55 S to Hwy 82 E to Hwy 9 S at Europa. In Ackerman take Hwy 15 S to Hwy 25 N on the northwest side of Louisville. In approx. 2 miles turn LEFT on Poplar Flat Rd and then in 2.5 miles turn LEFT on Sheep Ranch Rd. Parking is in 1 mile on the left. A shorter route (by about 5 miles) is available by using gravel roads. From Hwy. 15 turn left on Kugle Rd (gravel) which is 3.4 miles beyond the entrance to Choctaw Lake National Recreation Area. In 1.4 miles turn left on Sheep Ranch Rd (FS 956). Continue 5 miles to the parking area on the right.

Tentative Conference Agenda *See most recent on our website for most recent agenda*

May 19-20, 2018 Starkville & Mississippi State

Saturday

9:00 AM Art in the Tombigbee National Forest. We will meet at the Noxubee Hills Trail, with Robin Whitfield

12:00 Lunch on your own en route to MSU Clay Lyle Entomology Building.

2:00 Developing Standard Herbaceous Vegetation Monitoring Protocols with Brook Herman, Research Ecologist.

There is a need for standardized monitoring protocols for ecosystem restoration projects. As investment increases in ecosystem restoration projects to address environmental problems (e.g., invasive species, habitat fragmentation, etc.), so does the scrutiny of the results of restoration projects. In order to provide comparable and consistent results, standardization of monitoring protocols is needed. This presentation will cover the work being done within the U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers to develop a standard set of monitoring protocols for herbaceous vegetation.

3:00 PM Native Plant Conservation Alliances with Dr. Toby Gray

Plant Conservation Alliances are state and regional scale partnerships formed to coordinate efforts to conserve rare and endangered plants. The oldest and most successful PCA in the Southeastern United States is the Georgia PCA, organized in 1995 and currently involving about 40 partner organizations targeting about 100 species for conservation action. The GPCA is modeled after the New England National Plant Conservation Program (NEPCop), formed in 1991 to coordinate field research and conservation projects for rare plants in the six New England States. In recent years, PCAs have been initiated in several additional states in the Southeast. Southeastern PCAs typically work closely with their state Natural Heritage Programs. Other partners typically include government agencies, nonprofit organizations, universities, land trusts, state parks, environmental consulting companies, corporations, botanists, horticulturists, ecologists, and land managers. Typical PCA actions include selecting species for survey and seed collection, field research and surveys, habitat management, seed banking and propagation, reintroduction of plants into their habitats, and monitoring project results. This presentation will introduce the PCA concept and review the status of several PCAs of the Southeastern United States.

Following this talk Toby will led a discussion about a Mississippi partnership.

4:00 Tour of Osborn Prairie

Sunday

Morning Sessions

Business meeting

Tour of Extension Arthropod Zoo and Carnivorous Plant Collection

Mississippi Native Plant Society Membership Application

Renew or Join Today!

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Individual or Family \$10 Student \$7.50 Sustaining \$15

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Mississippi Native Plant Society

The MNPS is dedicated to the
study, appreciation and
preservation of native wildflowers,
grasses, shrubs and trees.



Sweet Betsy Trillium cuneatum

Sweet Betsy (*Trillium cuneatum*)
Artwork by Margaret Gratz

**MNPS Conference for the Starkville, Black Prairie & Mississippi State University Area
May 19-20, 2018**

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