



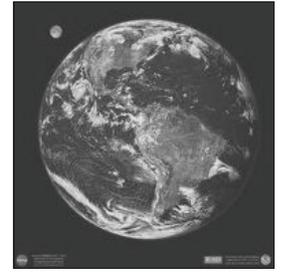
A PERSONAL HISTORY DEDICATED TO THE  
SOCIETY ON ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

*By*  
*James A. French*  
*Honourary President*

# Introduction

*"An intricate web of interaction connects all life into one vast, self-maintaining system. Each part is related to every other part and we are all part of the whole".*

*Dr. Lyall Watson, SUPERNATURE*



In 1984, a small group of field naturalists with a special interest in native plants started the



*Culvers root and Queen of the Prairie  
Photo Tim Dyson*

Canadian Wildflower Society. They chose January 1985 as the official founding date to coincide with the publication of the premier issue of their new magazine, WILDFLOWER.

The Society was later renamed the North American Native Plant

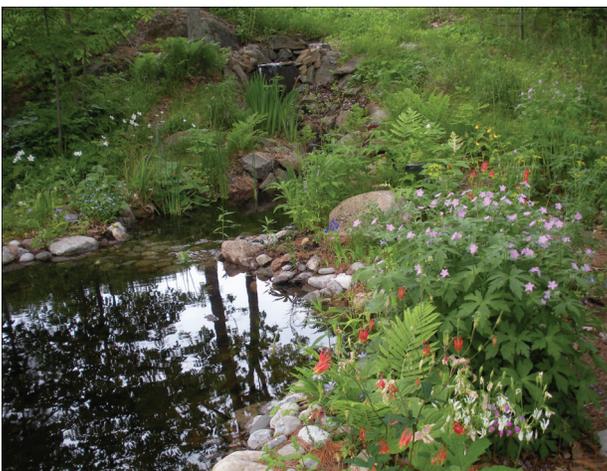
Society (NANPS) to recognize its continental mandate.



*Summer Prairie, Stoney Lake Native Plant Reserve (SLNPR)  
Photo JAF*

In 2010 the Society celebrates a quarter of a century of dedication to "The Study, Conservation, Cultivation and Restoration of North America's Native Flora".

This unique Canadian Society has earned an international reputation for its contributions to the conservation movement.



*Gaia water feature Photo JAF*

I am proud to record some of them in this memoir.

*James A. French*

Founder & Honourary President  
December 2010

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

Margaret Mead

## Dedications and Thanks

From our earliest days we have proudly featured the name of Sir David Attenborough, OM CH FRS, as our Honourary Patron. To have one of the world's most renowned environmentalists lend his name to our Society gave us immediate credibility and status. We owe him a great debt for giving us his confidence and trust.



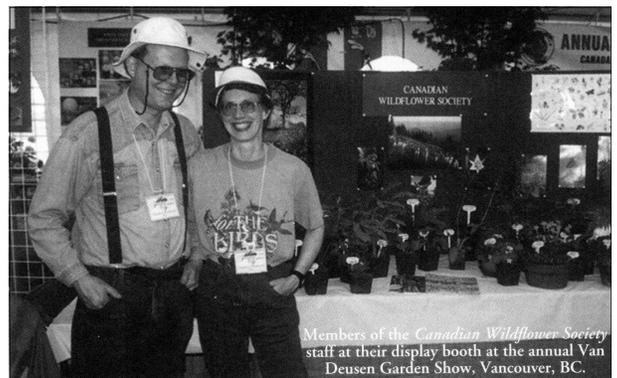
Our Honourary Directors, all with significant conservation reputations, have continued to support our activities and we thank them.



*Judith Tenebaum, director, at the membership desk*

No group can succeed as we did without the strong leadership of a Board of Directors. Our results show what a magnificent job they have done for so many years. We give an extra tip of the hat to the presidents who carried so effectively, an extra load of responsibility.

Volunteers are a very important group. They dig plants on rescue operations; set up displays, take them down and serve at the tables at numerous events; they sell plants, books and T-shirts and carry out many other tasks behind the scenes. In the very early days, my neighbour Janice Rock stood in long lines at the post office, her arms laden with WILDFLOWER magazines to be weighed and mailed to new members. Her calligraphy talents provided the title for our WILDFLOWER magazine and, she did both, just as a favour to me! Her brother-in-law, Larry Wiggans, saved the day with a computer generated membership list and labeling system before Janice had a heart attack!



*Members of the Canadian Wildflower Society staff at their display booth at the annual Van Deusen Garden Show, Vancouver, BC.*



The Prudential Insurance Co. of America provided generous support early on when it was most needed. Others should be thanked like Trotter and Associates who provided free auditing service for many years.

The Toronto law firm of Osler, Hoskins and Harcourt handled our incorporation and secured our charitable status – both pro bono.

We thank the various conservation foundations and individuals who contributed funds to fill various needs of the Society. A special “thank you” to the two people who gave us over \$60,000 to purchase our Shining Tree Woods property. And, they chose to remain anonymous. Magnificent!



*Spruce and milkweeds*  
Wood engraving /  
Gerard Brender à Brandis

I must also pay tribute to Jim Hodgins and Zile Zichmanis for their truly outstanding work over twenty years in publishing WILDFLOWER. (I'll write more in a later chapter.) Its quality and botanical accuracy drew thousands of readers and subscriptions from such organizations as the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, Kew Gardens in London, England and others. High praise, indeed.

The magazine was only made possible too by the freely given contributions of authors, artists and others. My thanks to them.

Many thanks as well to these people who contributed to the contents of this memoir: Deborah Dale, Irene Fedun, Jim Hodgins, Pamela Meacher and Zile Zichmanis and all artists whose work was used in this memoir (see page 42 for a complete listing).

I am indebted to my wife Natalie and my son Cameron, an excellent writer himself, for their many editing suggestions. My good friend Tim Dyson has contributed some of his outstanding photographs and often worked his keyboard magic in editing the illustrations.



*Calopogon barbatus*  
Photo S.Johnson

Finally, Shelagh Landsmann, my guiding light throughout did all of the typing, final text and illustration editing and publishing (Bulletins Plus). Thank you, my dear friend. I could not have done this without you.

*All articles are by James A. French unless otherwise noted. The Stoney Lake Native Plant Reserve shown as SLNPR.*

*From Sir David Attenborough OM CH FRS*

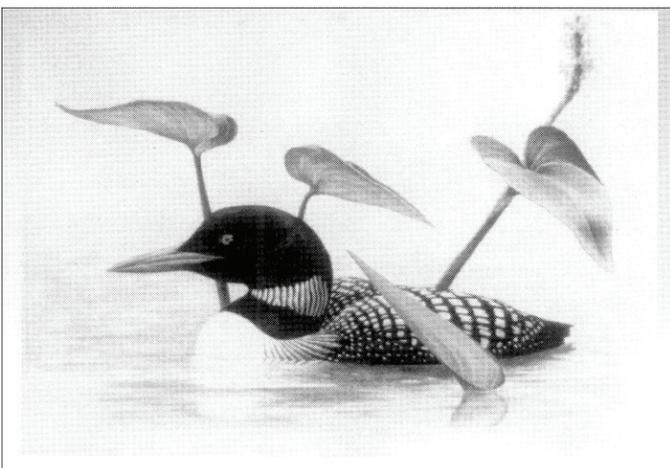
*5 Park Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6NS*

17.10.10

Dear James Franch,  
Thank you for your letter.

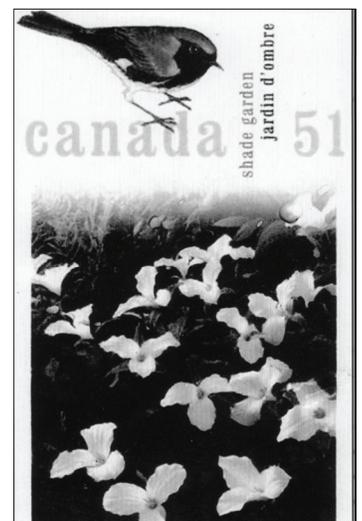
Congratulations on your 25<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary and all you have  
done to conserve the flora of  
your great country.

With best wishes  
David Attenborough



*Loon & pickerelweed / watercolour / Robert Smith*

*Canadian  
Stamp, 2006.  
Great white  
trillium at the  
SLNPR  
Photo by  
Andrew Leyerle*



## Getting Started



*Pamela Meacher*

Isn't it interesting how sometimes a casual action can have profound and unexpected results. So it was for me and the founding of the Canadian Wildflower Society (CWS).

In June 1984, I replied to a request in a gardening column for information on where to buy native plants and seeds. A few weeks later, the columnist, Marilyn Dawson of the Globe and Mail, sent me about a dozen letters from other readers who wanted the same information. I was just beginning my involvement with native plants and saw this as an opportunity to join with others who shared my passion.

I wrote to these folks and with a hubris that makes me blush now, I suggested we join forces and form the CWS. Imagine, this greenhorn joining others who probably didn't know any more than he did (which wasn't much) suggesting we form a national native plant society. Get a life, Jim!

Even so, I wrote to these folks along this line, with a copy to the columnist who promptly headlined her next column as shown below. She went on to describe what I was proposing and how to contact me.

## Wildflower aficionados sought



*Zile Zichmanis*



To my amazement, the responses were overwhelming. The respondents included many people with botanical training, photographers, artists, nursery staff, farmers, city folk, professors, authors and some who just loved wildflowers. It was quite inspiring and exhilarating.

Now I had to figure out how to line up all this talent to form a board and get the show underway.

A cheese and wine party at our home proved the perfect choice. About fifty enthusiasts mixed, mingled and talked about (what else). By evening's end I had asked a number of people to serve and all accepted immediately.

We had a formidable "to do" list but the new board had the talent and enthusiasm to begin laying the cornerstones for the Society. I don't think any of us had any experience in putting together the infra-structure for any group like ours. WILDFLOWER needed no attention but how about: by-laws, a mission statement, incorporation, securing charitable status, our aims and objectives – both short and longer term? What were the things we should be doing as a Society? What about finances? The list goes on, but one by one we stroked them off as we gathered momentum. Our membership had climbed to almost 900 in less than a year. We were well on our way now.

**ALASKAN Wildflowers**  
**and Wild Berries**  
**CALIFORNIAN**  
**Wildflowers**

- coloured charts
- boxed sets cards/envelopes



**R.W. Tyler**

PO Box 1281  
Homer  
Alaska 99603



*Lindsay Grater*

What follows are my memories of the 20 years I served on the Board. We can all be extremely proud of what our Society has contributed to the conservation movement.

And now ... a trip down memory lane.

8 First Board—February 1985

NANPS Honourary Directors

(as of 2010)

Bill Aimers  
Tom Atkinson (\*)  
Bob Dorney  
Jim French (\*)  
Jim Hodgins (\*)  
Frank Kershaw  
Larry Lamb (\*)  
Pamela Meacher  
Charlotte Mudge  
Ted Mosquin  
Gayle Rhynard  
Vicki Strong  
Judith Tenenbaum  
Gordon Wick  
Faye Whiklo

Sir David Attenborough  
Robert Bateman  
Frederick W. Case, Jr.  
The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson  
Mary Ferguson  
Dr. Adrian Forsyth  
Glen Loates  
Farley Mowat  
Freeman Patterson  
Carol Rykert

(\*) also served as President



*Robert Bateman*

*Red-tailed Hawk on Mt. Nemo 1980 / oil*

## Some Background

### Sir David Attenborough, OM CH FRS

I arrived at the cottage one afternoon in time to tune in on a radio call-in show. The guest was Sir David Attenborough. I had read his books and watched his T.V. shows and knew he was among the best known conservationists in the world.

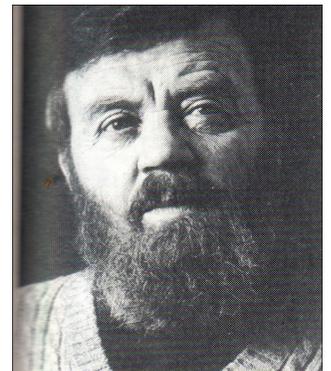


*Sir David Attenborough*

In a flash, I grabbed the phone and called in as the host explained they only had a few minutes left. Lucky me – I was the last caller. Speaking faster than a tobacco auctioneer, I explained about the Society and closed with, “And I wondered if Sir David would be our Honourary Patron”. To my delight he promptly accepted. As the host closed out the show, I practically shouted into the telephone: “How do I get in touch with you?” “Write in care of the BBC London”, he replied. And so that casually, the Society now had attained instant credibility. We are indebted to him for such unqualified endorsement when he knew so little about us. I am proud to say, we have fully earned that support.

### Farley Mowat

I first met Farley at the opening of Sir Oliver Mowat Collegiate in Scarborough, when I was the School Board chairman. The first thing he said when he addressed the assembly was: “My father slipped me a note to remind me to keep my legs crossed because I’m wearing a kilt tonight.”



*Farley Mowat*

Later we drank rum with Ontario’s Lieutenant Governor, the door guarded by an aide, with sword drawn. Wonderful memories.

Our Honourary Directors all have outstanding credentials as conservationists and we are extremely proud of their support for our cause.

Did you know? *“The hyphae under a single tree would wrap around the equator five times, about 200,000 km.”*

Norris Denman  
Grazers of the Forest Floor, WILDFLOWER Winter 1998



## 10 Plant Sales

One of the pleasures I found in the early years was being a part of new projects launched by the Society. When we decided to have our first



plant sale, in 1988, none of us had ever been involved in such a venture as we planned. So, we tried to think about all the tasks that needed to be done or decisions that had to be made. Here are some of them: how many plants should we order, what species and what should we charge for them. What other items should we sell (we decided on back issues of WILDFLOWER, packages of seed, members' note cards featuring native plants, relevant books and of course new memberships). Later, we added T-shirts and CWS lapel pins. Should we have refreshments (we did-tea coffee and cookies). How were going to handle taking in the money and how to safe keep it until it was banked. Who would handle advance publicity.

We were delighted when we opened the doors to the customers who arrived in great numbers and fell on our offerings like hungry people at a banquet. Here was more proof that native plants were in demand and people were waiting for something like this to fill their needs.

Before the day of the sale we had picked up the plants from the only large nursery in the area. There were few staff to help us so we often walked up and down the narrow, wet and slippery aisles of the Quonset huts picking up plants including some we hadn't ordered. It was great fun. Some members donated plants to the sale they had grown from seed or dug from their gardens. We put all these at one table and charged less than the others and they sold like the proverbial hot cakes.

Small trees and shrubs were popular and sold well. Our expert on "woodies" Tom Atkinson was of great help to people in describing their cultivation needs. We found people often needed help in selecting the proper plants for their gardens. We always kept a field guide or two nearby.



Later we found it better to group the plants by habitat preference like: woodland/shade; open/sunny; dry or moist etc. We also learned that attractive photos helped sales. Large overhead signs helped direct people to the proper location.

Initially, we always ordered more plants than we could sell (forever the optimists). We usually gave the surplus to locals doing restoration work. Today, folks can place advance orders on line. Yes, we made mistakes, over ordered or under estimated but each year we got sharper and wiser. I expect today it is still our single biggest fund raiser.

The annual sale was always one of my favourite events. I enjoyed circulating, answering questions and particularly making a sale to a doubtful customer. I always tried to sell three plants to enhance cross pollination and allow an extra in case one died. I sold a lot of plants that way!

One year Alan Anderson sold Lady's slipper orchids he had grown from seed. He used a special gel in Petri dishes to get them started and in time transplanted them outside to insure their viability. They sold out very quickly (another "First" for the Society?). Occasionally we would have plants "rescued" from development, like trilliums, which sold out immediately even though we charged top dollar for them (yes, supply and demand applies even for charities).



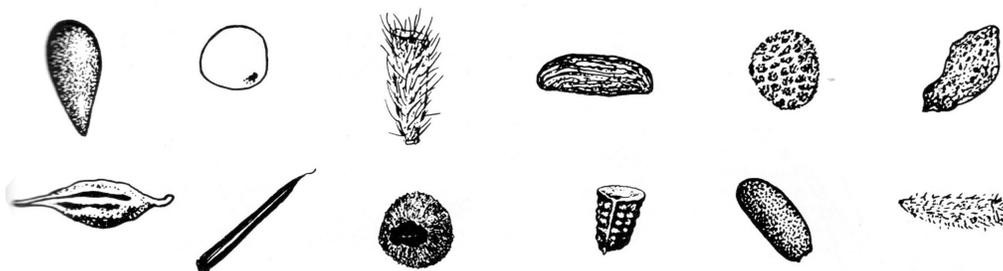
**Showy lady's slipper**  
*Cypripedium regina*  
*Richard Moore*

In the years following our first plant sale, we saw a steady growth in the number of native plant nurseries. As well, conservation authorities and local governments became much more active in restorations and using native plants. Did our early leadership play a part in this? I like to think so.

Again, as with so many things, we needed the hard work of many volunteers to make the sales the outstanding success they were and continue to be. We are very grateful.



More than anything,  
I must have flowers,  
always, always.  
CLAUDE MONET



*Zile Zichmanis*

North American  
Native Seed  
AVAILABLE SPRING  
1993



Compiled by Gail Rhynard

If there was ever a perfect plan to help sustain and expand our native flora, this was it. Members harvest seed (using the Society's guidelines of course) from the wild or from their own plants. These are sent in to the Society which re-circulates them to other members. It's easy, fun and ecologically correct. It's also a low cost way to acquire new species, many of which are not sold in nurseries.

For many years, I was very active in both growing plants from seed and sending seed back. I had good success in growing many species and failed totally with others. In these latter cases, there is more disappointment than harm. Some, like Cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis* and her close relatives, posed another problem- what to do with the dozens of seedlings which sprouted like dandelions on an untended lawn. I never succeeded with woody species in spite of following the instructions of our resident expert, Tom Atkinson.

My most pleasurable and enduring success was in growing Small's penstemon, which is native to the Appalachians in the U.S. A US seed exchange was the source. This 30 cm tall, perennial beauty happily reseeds itself throughout the gardens at my native plant reserve. The lovely mauve and white, trumpet-shaped flowers always attract the eye of visitors to whom I give them to help spread her kind. Long may she prosper!

There is some disagreement among growers over whether the seeds of non local plants should be used. Some prefer that only seeds of plants growing in your bio-region should be sown. Of course this helps insure that the resulting plants should be genetically adapted to one's climate, etc. but based on many years of growing experience, I think this is an unnecessary restriction.



*Asclepias tuberosa*

*Zile Zichmanis*

My problem has always been with the dreaded aliens that love to grow in my gardens, especially where I don't want them!

We need to be very cautious about using "wildflower" seed mixes. There was a study a few years ago by The New England Wildflower Society that found most mixes contained aliens and exotic annuals, with perhaps the occasional native thrown in. Buy only from known reputable sources and check the label for contents.

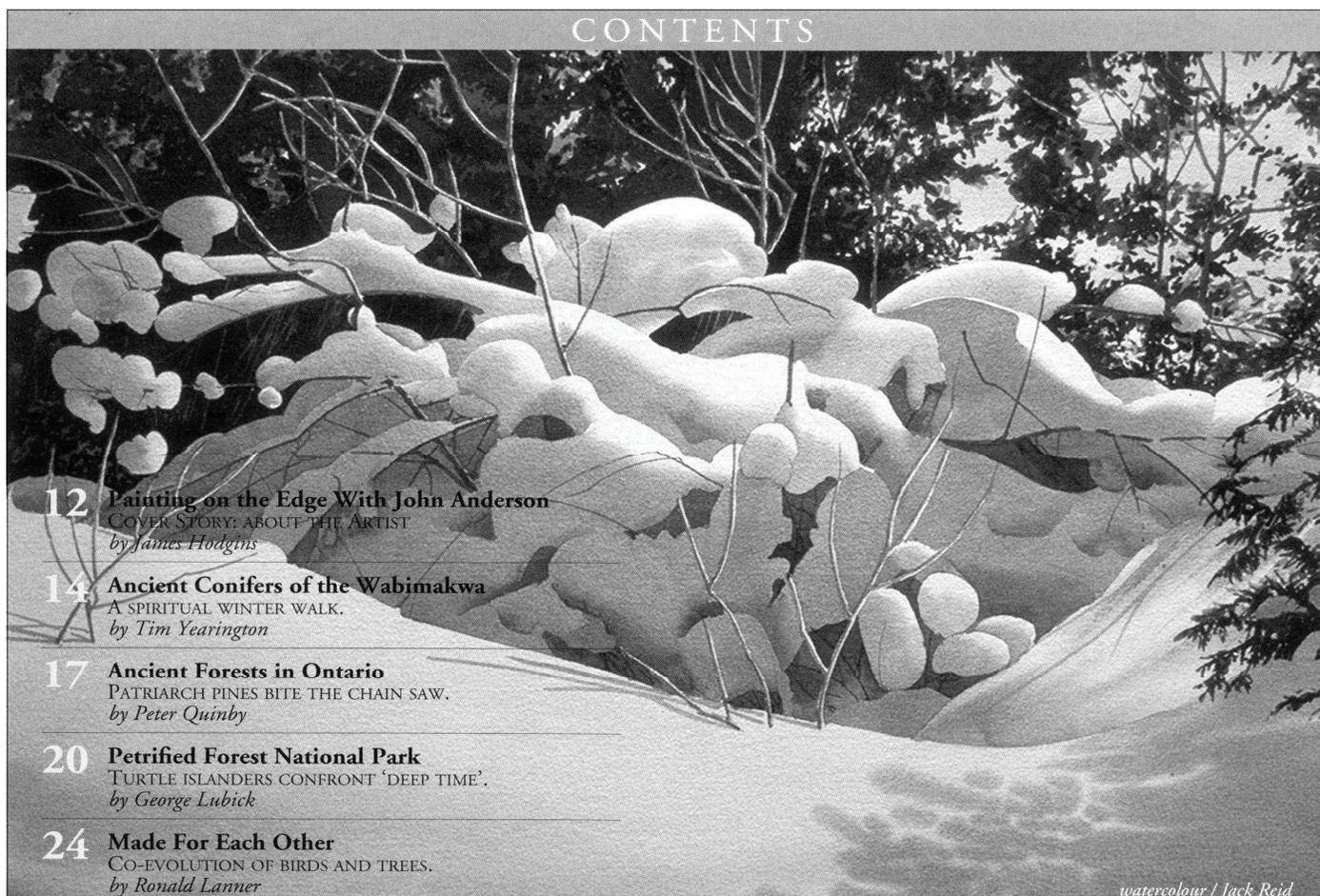
The Society has supported growing plants from seed in many ways. Numerous articles have been written in our publications covering not only forbs (flowering plants) but, as well, grasses, ferns, trees and shrubs. We held seminars where experts explained their tricks of the trade. I have a small library of books and articles on the subject so anyone who wants to get started can find lots of material. Libraries are a great source.



*Pamela Meacher*

If any readers of this article have never grown native plants from seed, I hope you will give it a try.

Good luck.



*Watercolour—Jack Reid*

## 14 The Paul McGaw Conservation Award



*Photo—Paul McGaw*

Paul was an elementary school teacher who spent his retirement years communing with nature. He was justly proud of the (native-always) gardens surrounding his city home. He even planted the berm between the sidewalk and the road with tall forbs and grasses. For once the city bureaucrats did not intervene!

He was in demand as a leader of field trips because he was well informed on many aspects of nature. Paul served for many years as a Board member and took responsibility for many projects. For two years he and I were responsible for the pick up and delivery of the plants for our annual plant sale. Paul rented a huge truck which he then fitted with plywood sheets to make several layers of storage space and away we would go. We had some interesting chats on those long trips of about 200 kilometres there and back, usually about the wonderful world of Nature. After we had unloaded the plants at the sale site, Paul still had to unload the plywood at home, return the truck and then, probably, collapse in bed.



*Larry Lamb is presented with the CWS annual Conservation Award by CWS President Lorraine Johnston, in Guelph, ON  
Photo—Erika Thimm*

We decided to keep the criteria for receiving an award straightforward—recipients had only to have demonstrated a strong commitment to the aims and objectives of the Society. Over the years we gave the award to an eclectic group: botanical writers and artists, native plant gardeners and conservation groups of all kinds. We even gave one to the City of Toronto for their restoration of the tall grass prairie which at one time dominated what is now High Park. (It is a bitter irony that city officials have since waged war on native plant gardens of several members. It is enough to make one weep.) We also gave an award to the federal government to recognize the opening of several national parks.

The original award was an enlargement of the first CWS logo painted by Pamela Meacher, matted, framed and suitably inscribed. It was a very handsome piece that one would be proud to display.

When the Society renamed the award after Paul, it was a fitting tribute to a wonderful member and true conservationist.

# WILDFLOWER 1985-2004: A Full and Worthy Life

By Jim Hodgins



1985 was a watershed year for native plant enthusiasts in the Greater Toronto Region. The traditional style of gardening began to be challenged by individuals and groups. For almost half a century the petrochemical industry which manufactures herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and synthetic fertilizers, in cooperation with the nursery industry which created and flogged anything which would sell such as plant freaks in size, colour, double flower parts, and out-of-region genetic stock, had a stranglehold on the minds and pocketbooks of North American gardeners.



*White trilliums*  
pen & ink / Elmay Kirkpatrick

At this time almost every yard from Vancouver to Houston, Halifax to San Diego, had some cookie-cutter variation of lawn and production – line shrubs and annuals. From within this continental culture of garden sterility, arose a few gardeners, (who were often naturalists as well), a few seed companies, botanical gardens and garden clubs that believed that nature, especially native plants and wildlife, should be an integral part of all landscaping. The rallying cry was “Garden with Nature, not against Nature!”



*Dicentra Canadensis*  
*squirrel corn*  
pen & ink / Diana Banville

From this climate of change, there arose like an overnight puffball, WILDFLOWER magazine and two months later, the Canadian Wildflower Society. Jim French of Unionville, Ontario and I of Toronto, Ontario were the prime movers behind this new Canada-wide gardening movement.

Our goal was firstly to publish a popular quarterly magazine devoted to Canada's native flora. Its intended audience was primarily the neophyte native plant gardening community and the long-established field botany community. The two groups would be united by a magazine and formal society.



*Witch hazel / Hamamelis virginiana / Zile Zichmanis*

The mandate of WILDFLOWER was to promote Canada's native botany in all its glorious facets including art, photography, literature, horticulture and poetry. The style was to be highly visual, the content was intended to be meaty ... no dumbing-down of articles to appear trendy. The content was designed to appeal to your average high school graduate. At first the articles were only Canadian content, but this soon expanded to North America.

To give us the visual edge in recruiting members for the Society and maintaining store sales, our intrepid Art Director, Zile Zichmanis, selected and commissioned original botanical art for all 78 issues of WILDFLOWER including the cover. For 20 years, hundreds of artists and poets were given first-time exposure in our pages.

Our skyrocketing membership and environmentally radical message encouraged numerous visionary writers to contribute to WILDFLOWER, including: Alice Munroe, David Suzuki, Dame Miriam Rothschild, Michael Pollan, Edward Abbey, Pierre Trudeau, Robert Bateman, Sally and Andy Wasowski, Sigurd Olsen, Gary Snyder, Lorrie Otto, Jack Sanders and Professors Richard Howard and Peter Wild.



*Field Editors*

*Newfoundland:* Todd Boland

*Upper St. Lawrence:* Norris Denman

*Northeast:* Jack Sanders

*Florida & West Indies:* Penelope Honychurch

*Texas:* Sally & Andy Wasowski

*Great Lakes North:* Eva Hoepfner

*Great Lakes South:* Perry Peskin

*Prairies North:* Lorrie Otto

*Central Coast Range:* Chris Czajkowski

*Pacific Northwest:* Prof. Arthur Kruckeberg,

James Rainer

*Rocky Mountains South:* Evan Cantor

*Southwest:* Carolyn Dodson,

Prof. Peter Wild

Much of WILDFLOWER's high-voltage creative input came from our carefully chosen roster of 30 field editors from all corners of North America. They included professional writers, authors, landscape architects, ecologists, botanists, librarians, artists, gardeners, photographers, lawyers, teachers, historians and biologists. These visionaries were a never-ending source of news, ideas, support, articles and direction.

Similar praise can be given our artists who supplied thousands of graphics and were never paid a cent, as we never had surplus funds beyond printing and mailing costs.

Our popularity and influence spread to diverse corners as our database revealed that seniors' homes, convents, monasteries, museums, nurseries, botanical gardens and prisons were among our peak-year 3000 subscribers.

Perhaps our success spawned the seeds of our demise? The Board of Directors of CWS and later NANPS had to spend more and more time dealing with the basic and complex business issues of running a magazine and, therefore, less time on gardening and field botany planning. In the winter of 2000, the Board voted to cease publishing WILDFLOWER and to commence publishing the less demanding BLAZING STAR, which has successfully carried on the mandate of the Society. At this juncture, I purchased WILDFLOWER from NANPS for \$2.00 CAN and published it myself for the next five years, when I decided it was time for me to move on to other projects. An extensive search for a new publisher yielded no takers and WILDFLOWER expired, having led a full and worthy life.

Possibly the highest praise for WILDFLOWER came from the International Association for Plant Taxonomy, TAXON 49(3):611., in which Professor Rudolf Schmid wrote, "WILDFLOWER is on the endangered serials list. To my knowledge only one library in California, the University of California at Davis, gets WILDFLOWER, and that is not only a pity, but also part of the problem – lack of institutional support." As Professor Richard Howard remarked in 2000, "The magazine is too good to wither away. I sincerely hope that this engaging and fine 16-year old serial does not



*Waxcap mushroom Hygrophorus sp.*  
wood engraving / Charles Joslin

become extinct and that it manages to avoid indexing in this column under 'serials deceased'."

*Jim Hodgins was editor of WILDFLOWER for 20 years.*



*Winter Solstice*  
End grain boxwood engraving  
Gerard Brender à Brandis

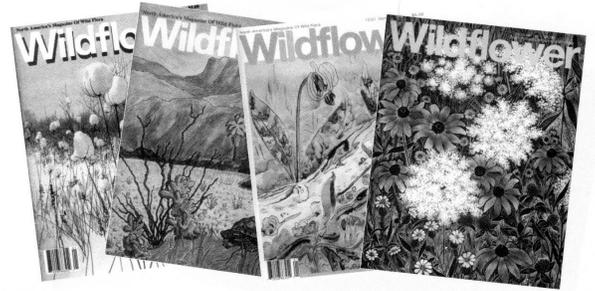


*Freehand scissor cuttings /*  
*Lini Grol*

## WILDFLOWER:

### My Thoughts

Few things merit the description “unique” but WILDFLOWER was surely one of them. I consider it the finest field botany and gardening magazine ever published. While Jim Hodgins has provided an excellent description of its contents, etc., here are a few personal observations.



*Symbiosis for Survival*  
The importance of “farming ants” to plants like violets was confirmed in 2001 by Caroline E. Christian, a student at the Centre for Population Biology at the University of California, Davis. She studied shrubland in South Africa, where a third of the thousand plant species rely on ants to disperse their seeds underground. An Argentine ant that does not collect seeds has invaded the territory, pushing out some natives that do, and, as a result, certain plant species are now declining in numbers.  
Source:

Jim brought many special talents to his role as editor. His writing skills are excellent, covering a wide range of interesting subjects with ease and always with a touch of passion. A collection of his editorials would make an interesting publication. His botany articles in WILDFLOWER were always a delight to read and so informative. (Who knew there was a special word (myrmecochory) to describe the harvesting by ants of the soft seeds of plants like trillium and bloodroot?)

He had no patience with those who criticized our North American botanical coverage. One reader was upset that we were “selling out” to U.S. interests (we were still the CWS at the time) and demanded to know why we were including articles on Trinidadian orchids.

Here is Jim’s reply: *“I’m sorry that your intellectual horizons haven’t expanded along with us. WILDFLOWER is North American to the end. Our bailiwick is from the Panama Canal to the North Pole and that includes Trinidad.”* Well, that pretty much says it all, Jim!

His idea to recruit regional editors across North America was brilliant. We now had on-site resources for articles and information on local native flora across the continent.

WILDFLOWER featured a dazzling array of authors on a wide variety of topics. Just browse a few of the back issues and you will see what I mean.

Two of my favourite contributing authors were the peripatetic Perry Peskin and Jack Sanders. Perry, a retired teacher, has travelled the world observing, photographing and writing about native flora.



His latest article (Ohio's Invisible Prairies) in our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue of BLAZING STAR is another example of his wonderful writing ability. He has just published *The Search for Lost Habitats*.

Jack Sanders, editor of a community newspaper, has spent over 25 years studying and writing about wildflowers. In reviewing Jack's book *Hedgemaids and Fairy Candles*, Jim



*Sullivan's Milkweed*  
Photo Perry Peskin

Hodgins wrote: "Rooted in personal experience and scientific fact, Sander's writing is riveting". I treasure my copy of the book with a personal note from the author. One of the many great perks that came my way over the years. Jack was also a regional field editor for WILDFLOWER.

One of Jim Hodgins' most loyal and creative writers was Alice Hayek of Cobourg, ON. During the years 1985 - 1990, she wrote eight articles for our journal in which her fulgent, reverential prose gave us intimate insights into the lives of children in Nature, especially trees, toads, crows, weeds, gardens and wildflowers. Alice was a life-long naturalist, gardener, poet, photographer and writer.



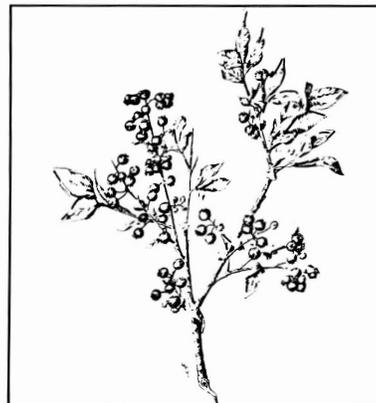
Perhaps the most amazing aspect of WILDFLOWER's history is that it was put together for more than 20 years by just two people: the incomparable husband and wife team of Jim Hodgins and Zile Zichmanis. What an incredible job they did. As if publishing were not enough, Jim and Zile raised funds and brought 22 artists to paint scenes from the Temagami, Ontario old growth forests. Outstanding.

I worked closely with both Jim and Zile for many years and I am proud to claim them as treasured friends. Their devotion and contributions to the cause of North America's native flora are truly remarkable.

Let's go back now and take a look at the first issue of WILDFLOWER.



*high-bush black-berry Rubus nigrobaccus*

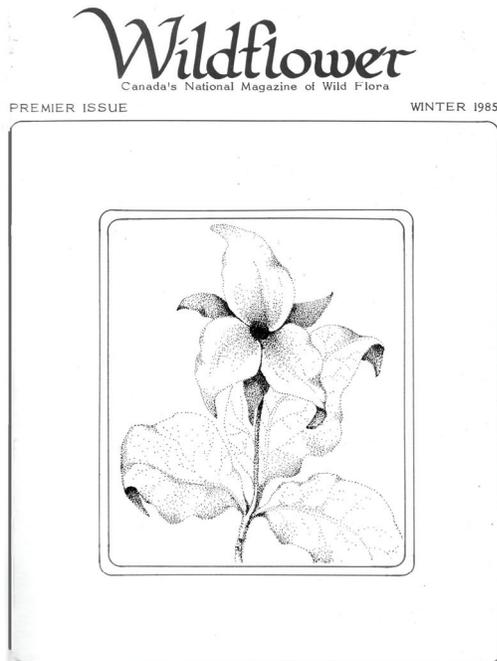


*high-bush blueberry Vaccinium corymbosum*



*choke-cherry Prunus virginiana*  
Pen & ink / Mary Herbert

# WILDFLOWER—The Premier Issue—January 1985



Jim Hodgins insisted we needed a magazine, even when we were barely organized. I visualized a modest newsletter, black and white and stapled in the corner. No, no, Jim explained, somewhat irate. A real magazine he went on; 48 pages, essays, photographs and art, on Canadian botany and who knows, some day, maybe even colour. So, I agreed we would give it a shot.

The fact that neither of us had any experience whatsoever in publishing a magazine did not seem to occur to us as a problem. Jim generously offered to be the Contributing Editor and I would be the Managing Editor and Publisher. Well, everyone knows that the Contributing Editor does all the work and I would be in on only the big decisions and

make sure we had enough money to print and distribute. Wrong! It was a shock to learn that Jim would indeed "contribute" his articles and "edit" all the other material. But then I was to be responsible for getting all the articles in the first place and other pieces to be included: layout and design, printing and finally, distribution to the members. I felt like Stan Laurel when Oliver would complain "this is another fine mess you've gotten us into".

In our first 1984 brochure we had stated that a magazine would be published (\$15 and four issues). There was no turning back now.

We called on future board members like Frank Kershaw and other friends to write articles. They came through as requested and many contributed numerous other articles over the years.

Okay, Jim, what's next? I realized all this material had to be put together somehow. Who better to seek help from than Prudential's Director, Communications. Among other things, his department produced two different company magazines. Surely it wouldn't be difficult to slip my project in. When I posed the idea to him, he was quick to give me all the usual excuses: understaffed, overworked and over budget. I might have guessed. He did, however, offer the name of a person who could do the job for a small fee. How much, I asked, thinking of our very modest bank balance. Oh, he replied, perhaps \$300 to \$400. The young lady did an excellent job for us.

We had some fun moments when various secretaries were helping out by typing articles prior to editing and printing. I explained how the scientific names had to be typed with a capital letter, than a small letter and both in italics. Their eyes rolled and shaking their heads went on with the typing. One day, my long-time secretary Mary Mumford came into my office with a grimace on her face that meant I was about to get it. "I can't make any sense out of this," she complained. "It looks like Tara's been there again." Puzzled, I peered closely at Larry Lamb's spidery script, illegible enough to qualify him as a doctor. "Aha," I shouted triumphantly, "It's *terebinthinaceum*." Mary gave me a look that I clearly recognized. She was not amused.

Finally, all was ready for printing by Prudential people. I do not recall what I felt when I held in my hand the first copy of WILDFLOWER. But, I'm sure it would have been a mix of pride and amazement. We had done it! It had been a wonderful team effort.

### Distribution

I now had the magazine, but they had to be sent to the members. They were all hand addressed, sealed in an envelope and delivered to the post office for mailing. Trust me, that's a lot of work.



*Silphium terebinthinaceum*—Photo JAF

My neighbour, Janice Rock, had already entered our hall of fame by providing the elegant calligraphy rendering of the name "WILDFLOWER" on the cover. It emblazoned the magazine for many years. Now, she took on the task of making many trips to the post office delivering the magazines. She was invaluable.

By now I was getting quite used to recruiting volunteers to help with all the tasks. Larry Wiggins, Janice's brother-in-law, was the next to step up and design a computer system to provide a membership list. We could use this for various mailings with labels and a mail forwarding company. None too soon. By June 1985, less than a year from the earliest beginnings, we had just under 900 members. You can imagine the pressure we were under to manage that growth.

I hung in there with my exalted title and through the many contributions of others, WILDFLOWER kept getting better and better. After the fourth issue, I turned over all my responsibilities to Jim H. and Zile, who then took the magazine to world class status. At last, I could lean back, put my feet up and tell them: "Don't hesitate to give me a call if I can be of any help".

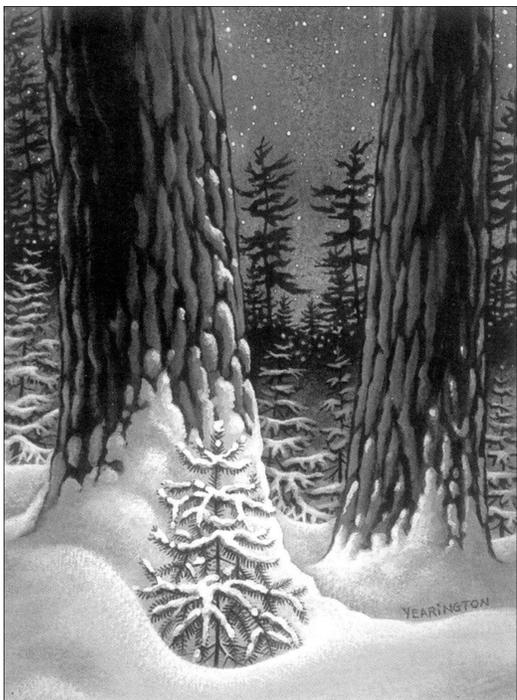


## Shining Tree Woods (Cultus, Ontario)



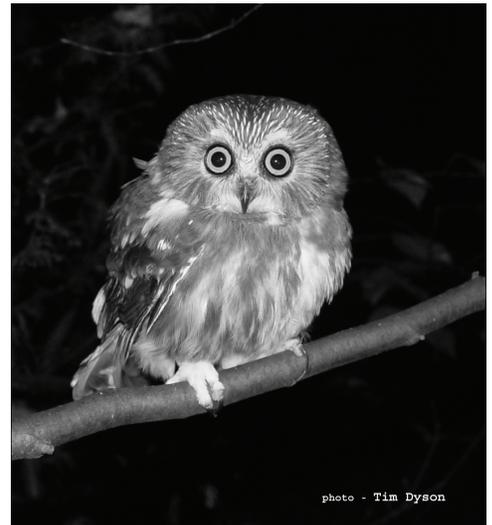
This beautiful property, located in Canada's Carolinian zone, became ours in 1993 through generous donations of \$75,000 from two individuals who asked to remain anonymous.

Its 20 hectares contain over 300 species of vascular plants, many found only in this warmer zone and therefore rare in Canada. It contains many species of trees, including uncommon ones such as pignut and shag bark hickory, paw paw, American chestnut, tulip tree, black gum and flowering dogwood. But, there is one other very special tree growing in relative abundance - the cucumber magnolia (*Magnolia acuminata*). Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources had been aware of this and was keeping a wary eye on them. Some re-planting has taken place in the former corn field in front of the property.



*"Silent Night" / acrylic - Tim Yearington*

In early May, dozens of different species of spring ephemerals blanket the understory with a large variety of ferns and sedges intermingled. It is truly a magnificent sight.



*Saw-whet owl  
Photo—Tim Dyson*

In the next article Irene Fedun describes the Zinkan Cove property, purchased by the Society with its own funds.

By Irene Fedun

The “cultivation and restoration of North America’s native flora” are aspects of NANPS mission statement that are well served by such high profile events as our Seed Exchange and Plant Sale. The conservation part of our mandate is done behind the scenes, mostly through the purchase of ecologically significant parcels of land.

Almost a decade ago NANPS acquired its first unspoiled gem – Shining Tree Woods in Norfolk County – in order to preserve an old-growth moist forest, one of only a handful left in southern Ontario. In 2003

NANPS Board of Directors chose to preserve another property, a five-hectare (13-acre) parcel of Zinkan Island Cover, a provincially designated ANSI (Area of Natural and Scientific Interest) on the Bruce Peninsula.



The entire ANSI covers 415 hectares (1,025 acres) of relatively unspoiled land (with a great density of rare species) on the west side of the Bruce. NANPS hopes to be in a position in the not-too-distant future to acquire more properties in order to enlarge its conservation holding. In the meantime, the Biosphere Escarpment Conservancy is busy accumulating funding pledges to protect this last vestige of Huron shoreline wilderness.

The parcel belonging to NANPS includes 360 metres (almost 1,200 feet) of provincially significant shoreline. However, most of our property is densely wooded. Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) is the dominant tree species with quaking aspens (*Populus tremuloides*), white cedars (*Thuja occidentalis*) and white birches (*Betula papyrifera*) are also very common. One provincially rare species, roundleaf ragwort (*Senecio obovatus*), was found in the woodland along with many sedges, mosses, grasses, woody plants, forbs and two species of ferns, lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) and spinulose wood fern (*Dryopteris spinulosa*). Menzies’ rattlesnake-plantain (*Goodyera oblogifolia*), an indigenous white-flowered orchid once considered rare in Ontario, also grows in the forest.

The ecologically important shore consists of dolostone limestone bedrock, mostly mantled by a thin layer of rubble. It harbors two plants that are unusual on the Bruce Peninsula – larger Canadian St. John’s-wort (*Hypericum majus*) and large-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton amplifolius*). The dominant plants on the shore, which has surprisingly lush plant growth, are twig rush (*Cladium mariscoides*), blue joint grass (*Calamagrostis Canadensis*), hard-stemmed bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*), slender sedge (*Carex lasiocarpa*) and sweet gale (*Myrica gale*). The shoreline also provides habitat for a pleasant-smelling orchid known as hooded ladies’ tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*).



*Pamela Meacher*

Joe Johnson, a local botanist who did the plant inventory of Zinkan Island Cove, noted that the NSNPS parcel is “in good condition, not significantly altered by man”. He found only six species of biota not native to the peninsula, among them dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*) and an alien orchid, helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*).

My visit to Zinkan Cove came this October. I was not there in time to see the pretty blooms of gaywings (*Polygala paucifolia*) or starflower (*Trientalis borealis*) or blue flag (*Iris versicolor*). Still, it was so peaceful and lovely in the secluded cove on a warm fall day. The deep red of high-bush cranberry leaves (*Viburnum trilobum*) contrasted with dark green cedars and balsams while tiny burst of flowers – smaller fringed gentian (*Gentianopsis virgata*) and harebells (*Campanula torundifolia*) – lead the way.



*Pamela Meacher*

*Irene Fedun is the editor of the BLAZING STAR. BLAZING STAR Volume One.*



*Top: Christmas fern Polystichum acrostichoides  
Middle: ostrich fern Matteuccia struthiopteris  
Bottom: maidenhair fern Adiantum pedatum  
fern prints / Nelson Maher*

# The Temagami Art Camp

Near the northern Ontario town of Temagami, 150 kilometres inland from the north shore of Lake Huron, exists one of the few remaining stands of old growth red and white pine. It is estimated that perhaps 1% of the "virgin" (uncut) population of these treasures still remains. The largest white pine reached a height of 200 feet. If undisturbed by humans or natural disasters it can commonly survive for 140 years and a few for 400 to 500 years.



THE **TEMAGAMI** 22

Today, the culling and cutting are unabated in spite of numerous organized protests. There is no sign that the federal government of Canada will protect the forests with a national park.

At one of our annual general meetings, a member asked what the Society was doing to help in the preservation of Ontario's old growth forest. Jim Hodgins volunteered to come up with a unique approach on behalf of the Society and what an unusual and remarkable project it was.

He began his program with a brilliant acerbic editorial in *WILDFLOWER* 13.1 (Winter 1987). He compared our destruction of this incomparable wilderness to dismantling the pyramids of Egypt to make table tops and patio stones to provide short-term employment to a lucky few. In Canada, he went on, why not remove the stones of the old walls around Quebec City to serve the same ends. Unthinkable? Of course. But an incomparable virgin forest – no problem.

But Jim and Zile had a bigger dream. They decided to bring 22 artists, whose art had graced the cover of *WILDFLOWER*, to capture the splendor and dark beauty of this area before it was gone. They arranged private funding and spent six months working out all the necessary arrangements for the group's visit.



*Former Premier of Ontario, Bob Rae, arrested for protecting ancient pine forest at Temagami, in 1989*

*Photo by Earthroots*

While visiting Temagami, they had to make full arrangements for lodging, meals, guides, etc. A considerable undertaking, to say the least.

Each artist donated at least one painting to the Society which gave us \$10,000 on their sale. An exhibition was arranged in Toronto, a commemorative booklet printed and a video was produced which played on Canada's national TV network, CBC.

Quite a contribution to the cause, I'm sure you would agree.

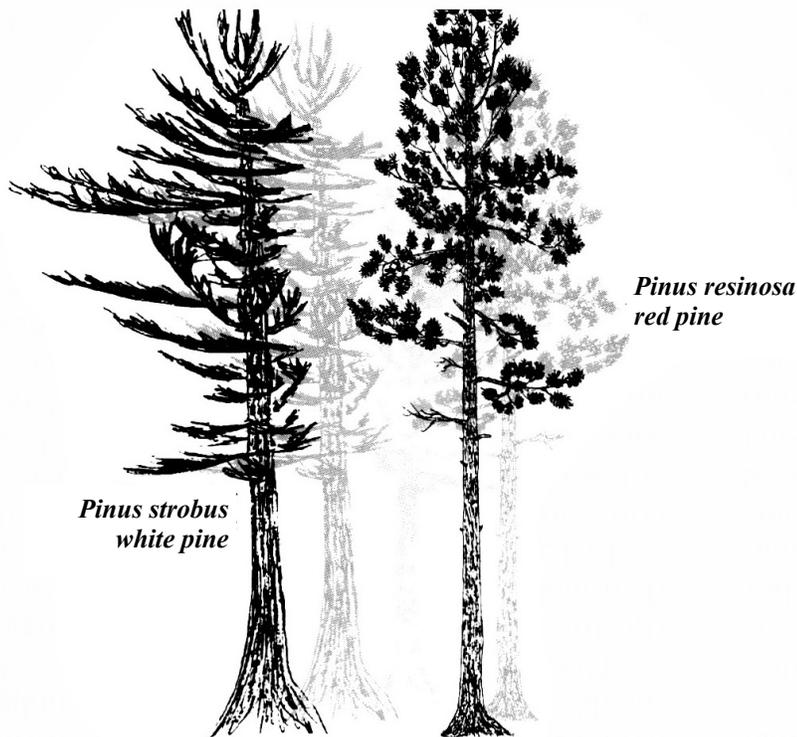
*"But home is where we find it and in Nature we find our one true, essential home, that great beating heart of the home planet."*

Evan Cantor,

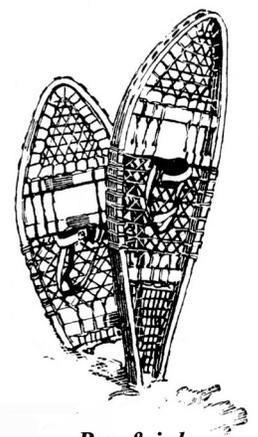
The Temagami 22, WILDFLOWER, Vol. 13.4



*Evan Cantor*



*Michael Henry*



*Pen & ink  
Francis Lee Jaques*

Those who wish to grow natural plants on their properties have often been harassed by local authorities. One of the Society's earliest involvements was in the interesting case of Steven Kenney of Kenmore, New York. He was fined \$50 a day for violating a local bylaw for growing native plants in lieu of a front lawn. The Society donated \$50.00 to his defense fund.



On appeal, a judge upheld the original conviction for violating a local bylaw, but reduced the fine to \$100 from the cumulative fine now at \$30,000! I should certainly think so. To imagine we would threaten a citizen with a \$30,000 fine for growing native plants on his property is an outrage and should never be accepted. It would be more appropriate for municipalities to pay citizens for the cost of buying native plants.

Steven wrote to thank us for our financial and moral support. His feelings about his treatment are quite touching:

*"I never asked for attention in the first place. I tried hard to avoid both the confrontation with the legal system and the hatred of my ex-neighbours. All I wanted and still want, is quite simply to be left alone to pursue a peaceful, productive and constructive life, and to interact with like-minded individuals. ... As it often happens though, the ignorant majority demands conformity and threatens to crush anything less than a full participating in their life-hating, life-destroying insanity.*

*My case then is simply the refusal to conform and the determination not to be crushed."*

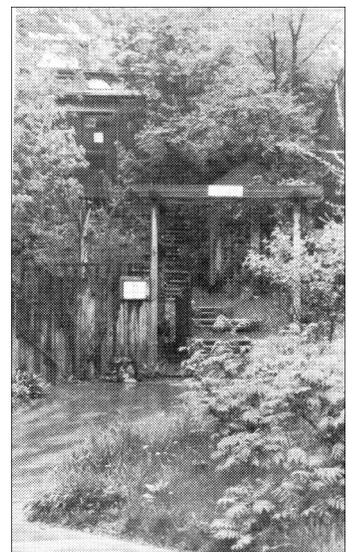
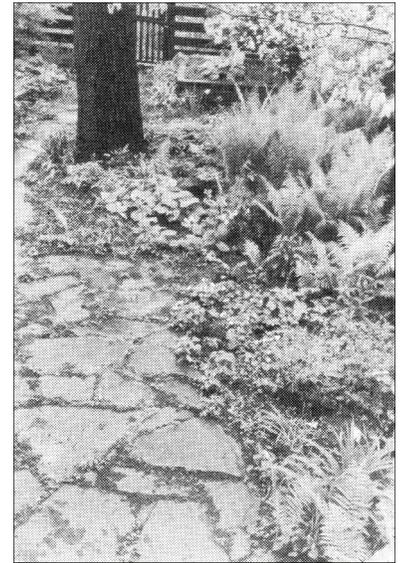


*Jim Hodgins' front yard*

*photo- Zile Zichmanis*

Still the battle between those who want to grow native plants on their property or the municipal buffer zone can find themselves in a nasty battle with municipal watchdogs – ever on the alert to stop any native plant garden because it didn't fit with someone's idea of what should be growing on private property. I am currently trying to engage Toronto officials in discussions to halt their continued assault on native plant gardens in the city. So far, I cannot get them to meet with me nor provide information on their routines. I intend to keep after them.

The following article by Deb Dale, a long serving board member and past president of NANPS tells her story of her fight with the City of Toronto.

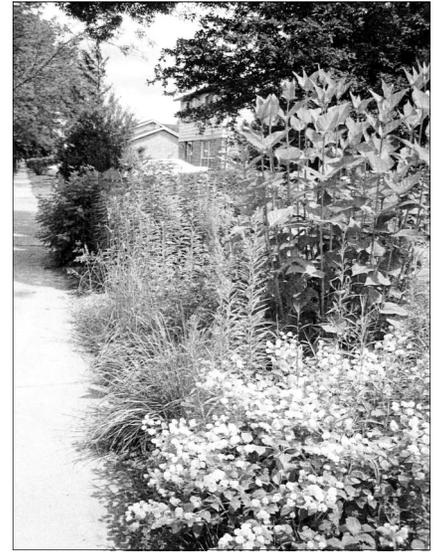


# It's Not Easy Being Green

By Deborah Dale

Over 40 years ago, the Bayside, Wisconsin wildflower garden of Lorrie Otto was mown down by city officials. Since then, numerous ecologically oriented gardeners have followed her example and sought legal protection in order to be allowed to improve the environment. Today, the benefits of native plant gardens are recognized worldwide by environmentalists, biologists, scientists, politicians and a growing proportion of the general public...yet resistance persists.

In the early days of this gardening movement, officials cited concerns about "natural" gardens attracting rats, fueling fires, or breeding mosquitoes. Since these arguments were proven in every instance to be false, some people now attempt to disparage the gardeners by stating that "there is a difference between neglected and natural gardens"... leaving the impression that the disputed garden is, of course, in the former category.



*Deborah Dale's "miscreant garden"*  
*Photo—Deborah Dale*



Amazingly, four Directors of the North American Native Plant Society have been among the thousands continent wide receiving official complaints about their choice of plant materials or design.



*Pamela Meacher*

Larry Lamb (University of Waterloo professor, Director and President of NANPS under its former name, the Canadian Wildflower Society) received a complaint in the 1980's about his famous prairie garden in Kitchener, Ontario. In that instance, the bylaw officer investigating the complaint toured the property with Larry and no further action was taken.

Sandy Bell was not so fortunate. In 1996 she was forced to defend a tiny biodiverse front yard garden in the courts. The Ontario Superior Court found that "the objective of creating neat, conventionally pleasant yards did not warrant a complete denial of the right to express the values and beliefs reflected by naturalistic gardens". In an attempt to clarify its position, the City altered its bylaw during the course of the trial, moving from the unduly vague "excessive growth of weeds and grass" to seeing a height limit of 20 centimetres (eight inches).

According to Jim Hodgins, who gave evidence at the trial, a 20-centimetre height restriction would be “bizarre, incomprehensible and arbitrary” and would “sterilize and devastate naturalized gardens, both aesthetically and ecologically”.

Justice Fairgrieve agreed, stating, “It is apparent that the effect of s. 7(c) {of the offending bylaw} is to impose a total ban on wild or naturalized gardens in private residential yards.”

“Since there appears to be no obvious correlation between a height restriction for plants and any health, safety or environmental hazards posed by them, I think the new bylaw makes it even clearer that the City’s concern with weed control is primarily motivated by aesthetic considerations.” (Justice Fairgrieve, *Bell vs. Toronto*)

Douglas Counter took his battle to protect his widely celebrated front yard prairie and swale garden to the Ontario Superior Court in 2001 winning an



*The “ditch garden” segment between the street and the sidewalk.*

important admission that residents have the right to tend the City-owned medians adjacent to their homes. Today, his garden and swale continue to flourish.

“The City can and ought to avoid problems of this sort by developing and implementing coherent plans with specific guidelines to deal with the critical issue of natural gardens and their enormous environmental significance.” (Justice Pitt, *Counter vs. Etobicoke* 2001)

I am the fourth – and hope to be the last – NANPS Director charged. Moving into a neighbourhood of weedy short grass lawns in 1992, I slowly chipped away at my own turf, gradually transforming it into a mixed meadow of over 200 species of wildflowers, grasses, ferns, sedges, shrubs and saplings. By 2003 over one half of the front yard was meadow, including the median between the sidewalk and roadway. At that time, the City had distributed a brochure – designed by none other than Doug Counter – encouraging residents to plant native flora on their boulevards. Seeing a variety of full native plant gardens in other areas of the City, I enthusiastically joined them. My new neighbours apparently did not share my zeal. On August 21, 2007 the City of Toronto cut my front yard mixed meadow to the ground. That case is now before the courts.



*Sorghastrum nutans*  
Photo / S. Johnson

Despite the difficulties, native plants are gaining footholds in urban and suburban areas across the continent. In 1994, Bill Clinton issued a Presidential Executive Memorandum on landscaping practices requiring that native plants of local origin be used where possible by all Federal Agencies and in all federally funded projects. Native flora is now proudly displayed around post offices, highway rest stops, prisons and demonstration projects across the United States.



*Pamela Meacher*

Canada has been slower to embrace this movement, although long-time NANPS member and Honourary Director the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson added a native plant garden to the Official Residence of the Governor General in Ottawa, Ontario during her tenure.

As a whole, the country takes pride in its diversity and its principle of pluralism, a system whereby people holding differing beliefs are able to co-exist. Somehow, that principle, which reaches into virtually every other aspect of our society, has not yet reached into our gardens.

*"John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed) brought with him the seeds of a dozen different medicine plants, including mullein motherwort, dandelion, wintergreen, pennyroyal and may weed and he was expert in their use."*

Michael Pollan  
The Botany of Desire

Many bylaws relating to private properties across North America share the mistaken idea that municipalities have the right to dictate the appearance of our gardens. That assumption generally has not extended to the appearance of our homes, beyond designated historical districts, although some areas do face an additional layer of restrictions from homeowner associations. Painting your home with purple polka-dots or gluing bottle caps over the siding, may raise eyebrows, but seldom the ire of the City bylaw inspector.



*Pamela Meacher*

Most often, these regulations take the form of height limitations. Nominally these restrictions are geared toward the lawns that have dominated our yards since the end of World War II's Victory Garden vegetable patches. For the most part, the restrictions fail to take into account the growing unpopularity of the lawn as residents increasingly opt to plant perennial gardens, good crops or – for those not environmentally predisposed – asphalt parking pads.

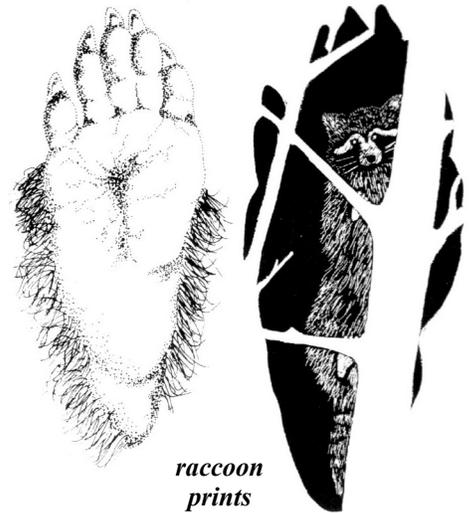
Under these regulations, plants as common as petunias could be found to be in violation. Nevertheless, these ordinances tend not to be enforced against petunias or the other alien species that typify “traditional” gardens. Usually, in order for the wheels of municipal standards departments to begin to turn, a complaint must be lodged. In other cases, the inspector may choose to act based on his or her own observations.

Brett Rappaport, a Chicago area defender of native plant gardens, insists that traditional weed ordinances are enforced out of ignorance. “It’s not really surprising,” he says, “We all grew up with the conventional lawn landscape. It never occurs to most people to try anything else.”

What is it about native plants that arouses such passion on both sides? Unusual yards have been around since gardens began. People have tut-tutted the appearance of new gardening styles such as vegetable gardens, raised gardens, “big fat Greek wedding” gardens or colour-cacophony gardens for decades. Yet, only native plant or “natural” gardens appear to invite open hostility and seemingly socially acceptable retaliation.

Aesthetic appeal? Gardens are supposed to be beautiful, but the idea of beauty is not universal, particularly in today’s world. Our cultures are too intermingled, our individuality too entrenched to hold a single ideal of beauty... yet Ozzie and Harriet’s garden still seems to have the strongest influence over North American yards.

Some of the key ideas that permeate planning principles are usually counter to “natural” garden ideologies. Hard edges, defined boundaries, symmetrical designs, tightly trimmed and manicured sculptures of greenery are seldom found in nature and, consequently, are rarely part of “natural” gardens. Without these visual cues, the casual observer may have difficulty understanding the purpose and inherent beauty of the landscape, especially in a space where “natural” is unexpected... our yards.



*raccoon  
prints  
Procyon lotor  
ink & scratchboard  
Tom Todd*

## The Purple Coneheads

BRIAN  
ROTH ©



Still, different styles of gardening have come to be accepted, if not universally admired. Vegetable plots had some historical help via wartime Victory Gardens and the sharing of bountiful crops between neighbours. Statuary, sometimes viewed with disdain or chuckles, is allowed by virtue of the obvious expense of the installation. The presence of invasive species is tolerated or even enjoyed as they conjure memories of overseas childhoods or visits to the local nursery where the plants are all-too-readily available. Shrubs trimmed into shapes that make their species almost unidentifiable are respected because of the work that went into their creation. Dominion over the space is the one unifying concept.

None of this is readily apparent in a successful “natural” garden. The idea is to make the space appear almost unaltered by human hands, a suggestion that is anathema to some urban dwellers. When locally obtained, ethically propagated, native species are used, the concept faces additional difficulties. These plants aren’t usually found “landscape-sized” at the corner nursery. Sometimes, it may take years to obtain a particular species, the searcher thrilled with the discovery of a few seeds or tiny specimens. Growing to “fit” the design plan can take many more years. Gardening with natives can try the patience of even the most dedicated gardener...but the rewards are well worth the time and effort.



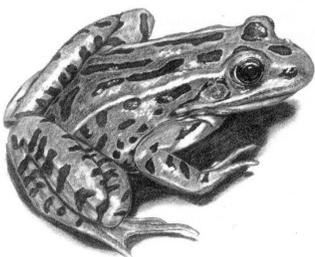
*Platanthera obtusata*

*Cypripedium passerinum*

*Pen & ink—Richard Tyler*

What can we do to heal that rift? The Internet Age has made gathering opinions from a wider audience easy. Each article that appears in online media coverage garners dozens or even hundreds of positive and negative comments. Surprisingly, whether the disputed garden is in Toronto, Ottawa or Orange County, California, the observations are similar.

The basic arguments centre around the right to express ourselves freely, especially on our own property, versus the rights of others to impose standards. Freedom of expression is covered under the First Amendment to the US Constitution and under Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The right to garden according to one’s environmental beliefs has been upheld by Courts on both sides of the border.



*Leopard frog / Charcoal—  
Robert Smith*

Some feel that “natural” gardens must be hidden away in backyards to be acceptable, an idea echoed in the “Backyard Habitat” signs offered by several environmental associations. But, even backyard habitats have run afoul of municipal ordinances.

It’s not about aesthetics. It is about misunderstandings, fear of change or of the unfamiliar, and perhaps a sense of righteousness.

Some people legitimately see the elimination of lawn or the appearance of strange vegetation as neglect. Some people see bees or rabbits visiting a garden and assume that the garden is responsible for every errant raccoon or squirrel or wasp in the neighbourhood. Some people assume that their way of doing things is the only right and proper method and feel it their personal duty to retain the status quo. Some have learned their way around municipal ordinances to the extent that the City becomes an essential part of their arsenal based on complaints beyond a desire to change the neighbour's garden. Some people just need a chance to experience and understand nature, and given time and exposure to naturalistic landscapes may come to appreciate them... if they are allowed to co-exist.



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It is incumbent upon municipalities and other levels of government to protect and celebrate these miniature re-creations of nature. Rather than encouraging neighbourhood discord by aiding specious claims against native plant gardens, government resources would be better spent in educating the public about the tremendous value of these remarkable spaces.

"Ecosystems are critical to human well-being – to our health, our prosperity, our security, and to our social and cultural identity." (UN Ecosystem Assessment 2005)

Native plant gardens, like other gardens, are as varied as their owners. Native plant enthusiasts encompass an increasingly broad range of personalities, age groups and occupations from retirees to young urban professionals, botanists, lawyers, school children and even municipal officials. (In 2009 Councillor Vicki Beard of Guelph, Ontario won a NANPS Garden Award.) Garden styles include mini re-creations of deciduous forests, prairies, meadows, wetlands and deserts. Some match conventional styles, some are more natural. Some are professionally designed. Some are not.



*SLNPR Prairie—Photo JAF*

Like our gardens, our strength is in our diversity and, like our gardens, our numbers are growing. It does take time for the unusual to become the familiar, but there is no question that native plant gardens are essential to the health of our communities and our planet. Let's work together to encourage our elected officials to actively promote rather than discourage these vital components of our urban ecosystems.

Acceptance will come with exposure. Share your gardens by bringing them up front.

*Deborah Dale, biologist and former President of the North American Native Plant Society, continues to try to share her views of nature with her neighbours in Scarborough, Ontario. (THE BLAZING STAR, 25<sup>TH</sup> anniversary issue, Spring 2010.)*

## NANPS Board of Directors 2010



In 2005, we began conducting regular seminars around Ontario. Our talks this year include seminars at the Toronto Botanical Gardens and a longer series on invasive flora in partnership with the Town of Markham. Three years ago we initiated native plant garden awards to celebrate gardens that create or restore natural habitats. Prairie and woodland restorations and plant rescues figure among our activities, the conservation award thrives and the plant sale and seed exchange continue to provide plants and seeds for newly converted gardeners and old hands.

The more modest BLAZING STAR has taken over from WILDFLOWER as our society's quarterly. In 2008, we started sending out an e-newsletter, THE LOCAL SCOOP, which has a refreshingly chatty and often "digging" approach to goings-on in the native plant world. ([thelocalscoop.org](http://thelocalscoop.org)). Most recently we landed on Facebook ([facebook.com/group.php?v=wall%ref=nf&gid=371308547931](https://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall%ref=nf&gid=371308547931)) and on Twitter ([twitter.com/tnanps](https://twitter.com/tnanps)).

Our influence has reached many corners of society. Founding Director Larry Lamb points to the number of native plant nurseries that have sprung up over the years and gives examples where even governments have "gone native": Ontario's Waterloo Region has stipulated in its official plan that native plants must be used in all regional initiatives such as roadways plantings and landscaping around government buildings. Native plants are almost mainstream today.



*The Local Scoop staff takes time out to work in the garden.  
Photo—Janet Harrison & Charles Iscove*

And despite the setbacks (some municipal governments are still causing grief for naturalized gardeners), the trend has been firmly established.



*NANPS restoration crew installing native plants on Sheppard Avenue in Toronto*  
Photo—Deborah Dale

Our original mission statement, written 25 years ago, recognized the need to conserve and restore indigenous plants. Today, as climate change escalates, habitat continues to be lost, biodiversity diminishes and alien invasive species increase at an alarming rate, we can easily become overwhelmed. But we cannot lose hope. Our mission has not changed, nor should it, but it will require a focused effort to make headway in

preserving and restoring native habitats. The Canadian Wildflower Society was launched by individuals passionate about the beauty and wonder of nature, and concerned for the future of our environment. NANPS is fortunate that the passion and concern are as strong as ever! Let's bring that passion for protecting nature onto NANPS Board of Directors and committees, to our existing projects and to new ones.

In our 25<sup>th</sup> year, NANPS looks forward to its future roles. In the promotion of indigenous flora, public outreach will be increasingly important. Our annual plant sale and displays are great opportunities to connect with the public and encourage them to request indigenous plants when making nursery purchases – this will help shape changes in the horticultural industry.

Awareness of invasive plants is increasing – and none too soon. NANPS is working with the Ontario Invasive Plant Council and the nursery trade to recognize and limit the growing, sale and distribution of invasive plants. This is the year we take a stand on this issue, raising public

awareness with our print resources, presentations, excursions and hands-on learning opportunities for the control of aliens and restoration of native habitat.



*NANPS excursion to Arthur Langford Reserve*

Frequently, political decisions have influenced the acceptance (or lack thereof) of native plants in urbanscaping and habitat conservation. Connecting with different levels of government (especially municipal) and helping them see the value and beauty of native plant gardens is crucial for habitat expansion. This continues to be a prime area of focus for NANPS.

Many communities are developing Sustainability Plans (they are a requirement in British Columbia). They are invaluable for municipalities that want to promote their involvement in environmental sustainability...and they are an opportunity for NANPS and our members – wherever you live – to request policies that identify, protect and enhance natural areas and include native plants in new developments. By promoting NANPS idea of The 100-Mile Garden, which means growing plants that area indigenous to within 160 kilometres of your home, we'll be expanding public awareness even more.

For our continent-wide membership, we are expanding our speakers' database so that groups from across North America can contact local speakers (or put their own names on the list!), and we are recruiting garden locations and restoration projects so that people can experience native plants more readily.

It doesn't matter where you live in North America – all these ideas and initiatives have relevance. And the work that you do, contributing to the health of your corner of the plant, is important for all of us.

NANPS is positioned to build on its achievements of the past 25 years. But we need all our members to get involved, whether planting their own indigenous gardens, giving presentations, exchanging seeds and plants or writing about gardening experiences ... The key is involvement.

Help us make the next 25 years prolific for NANPS and Nature!

The Board of Directors, 2010, Anniversary Issue BLAZING STAR

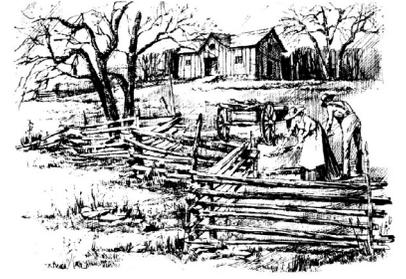
*"God Almighty, first planted a garden; and indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures."*  
Francis Bacon (1561-1626) Of Gardens



*by Kenneth Ingram*



*Kingfisher / Michiel Oudemans,  
woodengraving 11 x 15 cm*



*Early settlers on a Manitoulin farm  
with Split-rail cedar fence  
Pen & ink / Bonna Rouse*

"I have fond memories of a trip to Manitoulin Island with other members of the Society, organized by Jim Hodgins and Zile Zichmanis. We saw a dazzling variety of plants in locales from lakeside, deep woods and open country side. Returning from one of these visits, some wanted to stop and see some Calypso orchids but Jim French (who was driving) insisted we would be late for dinner if we did. When we went to drive back, Jim discovered he had locked the keys in the car. Only after we had seen and photographed the orchids did a passerby stop and unlock the car. And, we still had our dinner!"

Perry Peskin



"One of my first outings as a member of the North American Native Plant Society was a visit to Tom Atkinson's garden. "Wow!" was my response. How does he manage to grow so many native trees so successfully in Toronto, of all places? And how does he remember so much about each one? It was a wildly informative visit but one that I would have to repeat several times before I could remember all the information Tom so generously shared.

At the same time, I became editor of *The Blazing Star*, NANPS quarterly newsletter, and I've been learning about native plants ever since!"

Irene Fedun



"The **WILDFLOWER** magazine **was** an awesome accomplishment. A few of the 'ahead of the game' insane preservationists became solid friends and that you cannot beat. My time with the Canadian Wildflower society shall rest with a deep warmth and appreciation of who they are, their unbending efforts, what they accomplished plus their timeless legacy."

In mindfulness,  
Pamela Meacher



"The plant sales were always the highlight of the year for me: the planning, the camaraderie as we planned, the fetching of the plants—initially from Hortico, later from small native plant nurseries—and then the day of the sale when we'd make a truckload of both money and new converts to the cause we were espousing. Many wonderful plants, unknown to the buying public before the sale day, made their way into the gardens and the consciousness of those who came to these sales. The enthusiasm of the people as they lined up, then selected, their plants was a joy to witness. There would be questions, and all of them would be answered by one or more of us. And at least in the early days we managed to sell out, clean up, and make it to a lunch at a local restaurant, which was the fitting climax to the day."

Tom Atkinson

Long-time Board Member and Past-President



"It was in the spring of '96 when, after a lifetime pretty much consumed by studying bird life, I discovered plants. I was walking in a boggy coniferous forest near Lakefield, Ontario looking for Saw-whet Owls that had nested nearby, when I found Yellow and Showy lady's slippers in dazzling abundance! "What a wonderful sight", I thought! I quickly forgot about my search for the owl fledglings and continued searching for more orchids and other plants of the habitat. Upon my return home I called to tell my friend Doug Sadler about my walk and the orchids I saw. Doug was a well known Peterborough area naturalist, who had written a weekly nature column in a local newspaper for several decades. He told me that if I was going to continue with my new-found fascination with plants, that I must meet Jim French on Stoney Lake.



Well, on an early summer morning a few weeks later, I showed up at Jim's place. I was delighted with Jim's approach to strangers, as he greeted me as if we had been friends for years! Now, at the time of writing this, I'm happy to say that this has come true - we have now been friends for years, indeed. Wildflower Willy, (as he is known as to just a handful of kindred spirits), gave me my first tour of The Stoney Lake Native Plant Reserve, (his beautiful cottage property). I will not attempt to list the species I saw on that day, as there were hundreds and most of them were obviously new introductions to me. Jim was so versed in the scientific names of them all, that I remember wondering if he knew many of them by their common names. As it turns out, he did. I would visit a few times per season over the next few years, and was always met with a smile and a handshake. In 2005, I had the good fortune to move to Stoney Lake, and only three km from Jim's cottage! I stayed in my rental cabin for nearly three years and visited with Jim nearly every weekend from April to December each year. It didn't take long before he began putting shovels, watering cans and potted plants in my hands, and so began my passion for growing and caring for

native plants, shrubs, and trees, and even rescuing some in danger of being destroyed by road and property development projects. I had learned from Jim of how he began the Canadian Wildflower Society, which as it grew, evolved into the North American Native Plant Society. I sometimes wonder if he had ever thought that an idea such as finding others with a love of native botany, would grow into what the society is today. Well, here it is, 25 years and what a fine tree that seed has grown up to be!!

Thank you, Jim, it is a good dream!!!

Tim Dyson



"One of my many fond NANPS memories was my first plant sale as a volunteer. Tom Atkinson had somehow convinced me to help out in the trees & shrubs section. Boy, I was nervous not being a trees & shrubs "expert". What if someone asked me something I couldn't answer? Tom, being an old hand at the plant sale biz, calmly said I could either ask him or refer to books if a question came up that I didn't know. The doors opened and the crowds rushed in. The nerves went away as great conversations with fellow native plant enthusiasts ensued. It was an exciting, gratifying day. I did ask Tom, and refer to the books, many times. Even ten years later I still do both!"

Monica Dennis

Monica, is a long serving volunteer who has been recognized by the Society for her continuing contributions.



In the 1980s, WILDFLOWER, the only magazine in North America that was devoted to our native flora and aimed at the layman, quickly drew my interest. As a writer who was completing a book on wildflowers, WILDFLOWER was both a source of information and a place to publish excerpts from the book I was working on. It especially offered the chance to put my work before natural history editors and before a public that would be interested in the subject. Editor Jim Hodgins provided much encouragement and support — I still have many of his hand-written messages — and the magazine always displayed the work well. Although I've been a newspaper editor for more than 40 years, I was always proud of the title Jim and the Canadian Wildflower Society gave me, Northeast Field Editor — though the only work I edited was my own! Those pieces published in WILDFLOWER became parts of two books, *Hedgemaids and Fairy Candles: The Lives and Lore of North American Wildflowers* (McGraw-Hill, 1993) and *The Secrets of Wildflowers* (Globe Pequot, 2003). The latter is still in print, with a new edition out in 2010 and together they have sold more than 15,000 copies. But WILDFLOWER readers were the first to sample and critique the work, for which I have always been grateful. I am grateful, too, for the 1989 Conservation Award from CWS, and regret that I was not able to attend the event at which it was to be presented. In those days, my ability to travel was limited, but in recent years I've been able to explore the nation whose wildflower society provided so much support. We have crossed Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific on Via Rail and we have explored your cities and your countryside by bicycle — including cycling the wonderful 125-mile L'Petit Train du Nord rail trail in Quebec. We love Canada — and its wildflowers!

Jack Sanders, Connecticut, USA



**Dionysus: Greek god of wine, agriculture and fertility of nature**



#### THE WILDFLOWER REVOLUTION AND GRILLED KALAMARI

From 1985 to 1999, I served on the Board of Directors of the North American Native Plant Society. The experiences were legion: new friends and contacts, new ideas and challenges. We all worked with a missionary zeal to educate the public on the need and benefits of native plant gardens versus the ubiquitous and traditional, corporate, monotonous, monopolistic, gardens fuelled by industrial horticulture and landscaping. Every Spring at either the Toronto Botanical Gardens or the Don Valley Brickworks, the Society organized a gargantuan native plant sale. The offerings consisted of thousands of native trees, shrubs, vines, herbaceous wildflowers and ferns. As well, to further our mission, we offered memberships, books, our journal *Wildflower*, seeds, posters, future trips and tours, and free expert advice. We indeed were the 'new kids on the block'.

After an exhausting day of labour and talking to the public, our volunteer Directors would head over to Toronto's Greek Village on the Danforth where we celebrated the day's success and profits in the thousands. Over the years, we gathered at either the Pantheon, Philoxenia, Astoria or Pappas, and here we sat down for the first time that day. Our first order of business was to order several bottles of Kourtakis retsina wine and toast the rewards and success of the day. Next, as the exotic menu of Hellenic cuisine was perused, we exchanged notes on the light side of the day's happenings, such as the omnipresent



40 cottager who wants to know the name of the "little white flowers behind my outhouse". Or the never resolved debate as to whether one of our reputable suppliers actually propagated their yellow lady's slipper orchids at their nursery or plundered them from the wild.



Now to appetizers: saganaki (flaming goat's cheese) and a rousing collective shout of OPA! as it bursts into flame before our eyes and eyebrows. Then came the dips of beans, eggplant, caviar and hot peppers to compliment the pita bread and retsina wine made from Mediterranean white grapes and pine resin. We were now all airborne and it was soon time to order entrees.

The motley crew assembled here were indeed the pioneers of the native landscaping revolution in Canada. Our talents pooled under one roof and united in one Society were unstoppable. Consider the experts around this one dining table (seats 12 or more):



Larry Lamb: grew his own tall grass native prairie garden, complete with a buffalo rubbing boulder, in Kitchener, ON. Probably the first in eastern Canada.

Gail Rhynard: established eastern Canada's first commercial native plant nursery at Eden, ON.

Tom Atkinson: a master propagator of native trees from seed, in his garden in north Toronto, which included fruit bearing paw paws.



Ah! Here's the main course. The Greek specialties on the Danforth: grilled kalamari (in my youth we called it squid), grilled red snapper (to die for), rabbit stew (only here), shrimps, mussels, smelts, atherina (tiny fishes), Greek salad with feta cheese (by definition) and the incomparable egg-lemon soup. And now we were all delirious with hunger. The evening's table talk is in full swing.



Bill Granger extols his successes and set backs in naturalizing large areas of North York's formerly sterile parks, ie. grass and Norway maples.

Eva Hoepfner relates rollicking tales of her cacti and cabbages front garden in class and real-estate sensitive Oakville. Years later her neighbours are on board.

Henny Markus fills us in on the progress of Toronto's first 'Ecology Park', which she manages, beside the Spadina subway station.



Now we are all in gourmet nirvana and our bodies are aglow. But our minds are throbbing with all these visionary ideas and projects. Perhaps we have achieved the ancient Grecian ideal of mind /body balance?

As our Bacchanalia of wildflower glory moves on, more retsina is ordered with no objections, nor abstentions:

Ken Parker recounts his work in establishing Canada's first, First Nations, native plant nursery near Brantford, ON and later stories of his service with the US Marine Corp in Operation Desert Storm. Lorraine Johnson, if prodded, will always give you a few juicy details of her next book. A former professional editor for a top book publisher, she has authored numerous books on native plant gardening and the environment.



Victor Federov perks up our ears as he relates his latest experiments with the technology and techniques of composting almost anything organic. His native garden designs are well known in Toronto gardens.

Pen & ink—  
Celia Godkin

And now the wildflower revolutionaries order desert: creme bruleé, galaktaboureko, baclava, honeycake or yogurt with quince. And of course the de rigueur Greek coffee is welcomed by all. One of our pioneers proposes a toast to our Art and Everything Director of Wildflower, Zile Zichmanis. Her layout, covers and overall tone of our journal was an effective recruiting tool for new members and an inspiration to contributors and members.



Sylvia Hahn

The pioneer revolutionaries conclude the day with a post prandial of ouzo, metaxa or sambuca. Such are my most cherished memories of my days with CWS /NANPS. And that's how it was. Vive la Revolution! Vive la Kalamari! Vive les Fleurs Sauvages!

Jim Hodgins was a founding Director of NANPS and former Editor of WILDFLOWER.

The **North American Native Plant Society** (NANPS) was founded in 1985 in Toronto, Canada. For almost a quarter of a century it has been actively promoting the study, conservation, restoration and cultivation of the native flora of North America. From 1985 until 1998 it was the **Canadian Wildflower Society** (CWS). In 1998 it changed its name to the **North American Native Plant Society** to more accurately reflect its membership distribution and continental mandate. As the following chronology attests, the Society has pioneered numerous firsts in its bid to fulfill its mandate:

*Compiled by James L. Hodgins 14.11.2008*

- 1985 First national native plant gardening and field botany society in Canada, CWS is formed (WF 1:(1):5)
- 1985 First North American native plant gardening and field botany quarterly magazine called *WILDFLOWER* is published by CWS. (WF vol.1)
- 1985 CWS is the first native plant society to set up a continental native seed exchange. (WF 1(3):14)
- 1985 CWS is the first native plant society in Canada to establish a gardening *Code of Ethics* for its members. (WF 1(4):47)
- 1986 CWS sponsors its first public annual native plant sale. (WF 2(3):10)
- 1988 CWS sponsors Canada's first native plant propagation workshop. (WF 3(4):7)
- 1988 CWS establishes its first wildflower gardens tour in Guelph / Waterloo, ON (WF 4(2):40)
- 1988 CWS sponsors Canada's first *Garden Alert* poster warning against the practice of digging and purchasing plants from the wild. (WF 4(2):45)
- 1990 CWS establishes its first chapter in Kitchener / Waterloo / Guelph (Dogtooth newsletter, DT (1):1)
- 1993 CWS purchases a 50 acre Carolinian woodlot to primarily conserve the onsite population of the rare native cucumber tree *Magnolia acuminata*, near Cultus, ON. This is a first for Canada. (WF 10(1):11)
- 1994 CWS / FON co-publish the first booklet on the native plants of Carolinian Canada with conservation and horticultural advice. (WF 10(4):5)
- 1996 CWS hosts the first conference in Canada for the **Eastern Native Plant Alliance** at the University of Waterloo. (WF 12(3):7)
- 1997 CWS, London Chapter sponsors the first tour in Canada of 8 native plant nurseries in Carolinian Canada. (WF 13(3):4)
- 1998 CWS becomes the first native plant society with a continental mandate and changes its name to the **North American Native Plant Society**. (WF 15(2):3)
- 2000 NANPS is the first native plant society in Canada to go on the web: [www.nanps.org](http://www.nanps.org) (BS 1 (2):10)
- 2008 NANPS is the first Canadian society to program a *Speakers Series* on nature, environment and native plant gardening (BS 9(3):2)

**WF** - WILDFLOWER magazine; **BS** - BLAZING STAR newsletter; **DT** - DOGTOOTH Chapter, CWS newsletter

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## Contributing Artists and Photographers

Diana Banville  
Robert Bateman  
Gerard Brender à Brandis

CWS Poster  
Evan Cantor

Deborah Dale  
Patrick Dengate  
Norris Denman  
Tim Dyson

Earthroots  
Bob Ellis

Celia Godkin  
Lindsay Grater  
Lini Grol

Sylvia Hahn  
Janet Harrison  
Michael Henry  
Mary Herbert

Kenneth Ingram  
Charles Iscove

Francis Lee Jaques  
S. Johnson  
Charles Joslin

Elmay Kirkpatrick

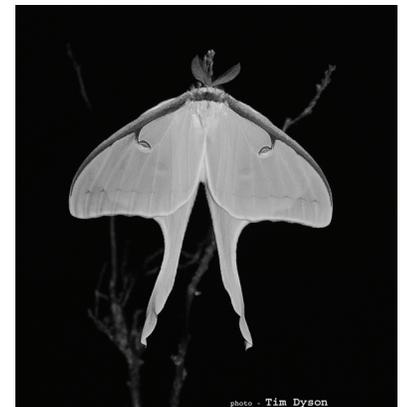
Andrew Leyerle

Nelson Maher  
Paul McGaw (d.)  
Pamela Meacher  
Richard Moore  
Robert Muma

Michiel Oudemans

Perry Peskin

Jack Reid  
Gail Rhynard



*Luna moth—Photo Tim Dyson*

Bonna Rouse

Robert Smith

Erika Thimm  
Les Tibbles  
Tom Todd  
R.W. Tyler

Tim Yearington

Zile Zichmanis

## Closing Remarks

Ours is the inspiring story of a small group of nature lovers, who, with dedication and enthusiasm, achieved some remarkable results. Twenty-five years later we are still seeking converts to our cause.

It has been a wondrous journey for me. There have been so many new experiences: friends, places visited, knowledge gained, good times and fun. And the beat goes on.



*Delphinium ajacis*  
Photo JAF

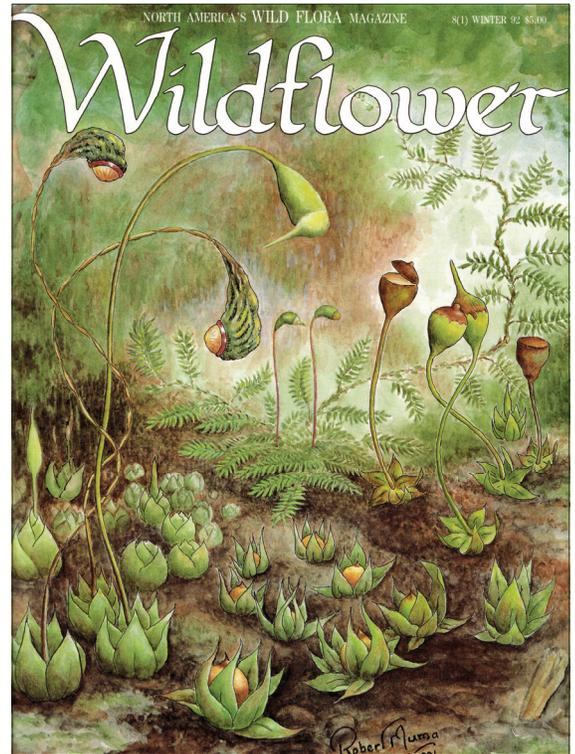
Working with friends in the Society, I have been inspired to convert the former lawns and scrubby, alien understory at our cottage into numerous native plant gardens as well as a small woodlot with over three dozen species of trees and shrubs (Tom Atkinson would be proud of me).

Our rewards as native plant gardeners are many but even with the enchanting beauty and other benefits they offer, we are at the same time, reconnected with nature and ourselves.

*Jim French*



*Bumblebee moth*—Photo Tim Dyson



*Watercolour—Robert Muma*



*Jim French (l) and Jim Hodgins cutting the 25th anniversary cake at 2010 annual general meeting*

## About the Author



Jim French retired from the Prudential Insurance Company of America as a senior vice-president after 30 year's service.

He continues his heavy involvement with native plants at his Stoney Lake Native Plant Reserve and with related NANPS activities. Jim welcomes visitors for guided tours of the gardens.

Jim continues to be active in writing articles for various publications. He particularly enjoys presenting his DVDs featuring his native plant gardens when he speaks to groups.

Jim has also found time to write an autobiography: *Growing Up on Glengrove Avenue* (Toronto); *The French Family History* and *The Pilgrimage*—an illustrated story of a golf trip to Scotland. Jim and wife Natalie live in Markham. They are avid bridge players on the local scene. Four children (Jane, Cameron, Sandy, Ian and spouses) and three grandchildren (Matisse, Graeme and Satchel) live close by in Toronto.

If you have any comments on this publication or any other matter related to native plants, Jim would be happy to hear from you at: [goldenarm1@sympatico.ca](mailto:goldenarm1@sympatico.ca).