

The Blazing Star



NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Native Plant to Know

American Ginseng

Panax quinquefolius, Family: Araliaceae (Ginseng)

by Janice Stiefel

Other Names: Plant of Life, Man's Health, Man Root, Root of Immortality, Tartar Root, Five-Finger, Red Berry, and Sang

Range: Minnesota to Quebec and south

Habitat: Humus-rich woodland soil, does not tolerate high-acid soil. Prefers a north-facing hillside with little or no sunlight.

Description: Rising from the centre of three, large compound leaves, arranged in a circle, is an umbel of small, greenish-white or yellowish-green flowers that are scented like Lily-of-the-Valley (and almost camouflaged by the foliage). The flowers are about 1/12-inch wide, with five petals. The leaves are 5–12 inches long, each with five pointed, toothed leaflets. The two leaflets closest to the stem are smaller than the other three. A cluster of red berries forms the fruit after the plant blooms. Height: 8-24 inches. Flowering: May to August.

Comments: In 1704, a French explorer returned to Paris with a sample of what turned out to be Wild American Ginseng from southern Canada. Jesuits in France alerted their brethren in Canada to its enormous value in



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY JANICE STIEFEL

American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*)

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THE BLAZING STAR IS...

The Blazing Star is published quarterly (April, August, November, February) by the North American Native Plant Society. Contact editor@nanps.org for editorial deadlines and for advertising rates. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of NANPS.

The North American Native Plant Society is dedicated to the study, conservation, cultivation and restoration of North America's native flora.

Spring 2002
Volume 3, Issue 2

Editor: Lorraine Johnson
Production: Linda Gustafson

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NANPS Membership: CAN \$10/year within Canada, US \$10 year outside Canada

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American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*)

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY JANICE STIEFEL

China. Some time later, Jesuits in Montreal shipped many boatloads to Canton, where other Jesuits sold it to the Chinese for what was then a king's ransom – \$5 a pound. By the end of the 19th century, Ginseng was so heavily collected that today it is very rare in its natural wild habitat. Ginseng requires about seven years to develop roots to optimum potential for harvest.

Medicinal Use: Because the root is shaped like a human, it has always been considered “good for the whole man” and revered for its medicinal value. Few wildflowers have been studied so extensively or searched for so diligently. It is said that Ginseng roots give “uncommon warmth and vigor to the blood; they frisk the spirits, cheer the heart even of a man who has a bad wife, and they help the memory. They will make a man live a great while and very well while he does live.”

Early pioneers and Native Americans used the root to treat stomach and bronchial disorders, sore gums, asthma, neck pain, and much more. Of all the claims made for this gnarled root, probably the most interesting one is that it is said to help the brain retrieve a learned skill that hasn't been used for a long time. Besides improving memory, it increases concentration and hand coordination. Ginseng seems to act as a kind of shock absorber, protecting the body from stress and allowing the system to bounce back more quickly.

There is also evidence that it will steadily build the body's resistance to disease and enhance athletic performance. Its medicinal uses are vast and worthy of further study. This column is only touching the tip-of-the-iceberg, because volumes have been written on Ginseng.

Name Origin: The genus name, *Panax* (PAY-nacks), is taken from the Greek word, *panakas*, meaning “a panacea,” in reference to the plant's remarkable medicinal properties. The species name, *quinquefolius* (kwin-kwe-FO-li-us), means “with five leaves.” The family name, Araliaceae, is pronounced a-ray-li-AY-see-ee.

Author's Note: The only place I have ever found Ginseng growing naturally, in the wild, was along one of the trails in the Northern Kettle Moraine State Forest in Wisconsin. One early July morning, as mountain bikers were whizzing past us, oblivious to the luxurious habitat they were passing, my husband and I saw a robust specimen of a Wild American Ginseng in full bloom. We couldn't believe our eyes! Risking the danger of getting hit by a speeding mountain bike, I set up my tripod and camera and was able to photograph it.

I tried growing Ginseng plants on our north-facing hill along the valley of the Mullet River north of Plymouth, WI (Sheboygan County). They thrived for a time, but slugs relished the plants and would not allow them to survive. After the fourth year of sprouting, growing 1-2 inches and getting chewed off, the plants no longer came back, except for one.

When we moved to Door County, WI, I brought that one survivor with us. It flourished for two years and in 2001 did not return. In this case, I'm not sure if slugs killed it.

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CULTIVATION INFORMATION

According to William Cullina's *Growing and Propagating Wildflowers of the United States and Canada*, “The roots require a moist but well-drained soil. ... The plant also needs the dappled shade of deciduous trees to flower and fruit.”

Janice Stiefel is a naturalist, writer and photographer who lives in Door County, Wisconsin. She is the editor of *Wisconsin Flora*, published by the Botanical Club of Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Entomological Society Newsletter.

NANPS News

Again this year, NANPS participated in Canada Blooms, a large garden show held in Toronto from March 13–17. Thanks to our many volunteers, NANPS was able to spread the word about native plants and reach many interested gardeners.

The theme of Canada Blooms was “A Walk in the Park,” and the NANPS booth, designed by Trish Murphy, echoed this theme with the title “A Wildflower Walk in Toronto’s Waterfront Parks,” which saluted the natural regeneration and native plant restoration of Toronto’s waterfront parks. A water feature, surrounded by a rocky shore, represented Lake Ontario; Toronto’s shoreline (complete with CN Tower) was represented with lights. A display garden full of native species, many in bloom, completed the enticing design.

NANPS would like to thank all those dedicated volunteers and contributors who helped make the event a success. For the design, thanks to Trish Murphy. For the installation, thanks to Don Morton, Trish Murphy and Colin Hinz. For the donation of plants, all of which were nursery propagated, thanks to Mary Gartshore of Pterophylla Nursery (see ad on page 8), Richard Woolger, Catherine Crockett of Taddle Creek Nursery, and Trish Murphy. For the donation of gift certificates for our special membership promotion, thanks to Charles Kinsley of the Ontario Native Plant Company (see ad on page 9). For the donation of tools to our membership raffle, thanks to Lee Valley Tools. For organizing the booth, thanks to Trish Murphy, Deb Dale and Catherine Crockett, and for coordinating the volunteers, thanks to Jackie Ramo. And, finally, thanks to all the tireless volunteers who staffed the NANPS booth: Pat Agnew, Dagmar Baur, Catherine Crockett, Doug Counter, Grif Cunningham, Deb Dale, Irene Der, Eugene Furguele, Scott Guthrie, Greg Hagan, Carol Howlett, Jean Johnson, Lorraine Johnson, Shirley Joy, Allen and Margaret Kelly, Bill Kilburn, Myrla Kilburn, Betty Lloyd, Sharon Lovette, Lori MacLaren, Anne Mazatko, Donna McGlone, Darcie McKelvey, Howard Meadd, Emily Mitchell, Chris Mouseau, Trish Murphy, Jo Nelson, Barb O’Malley, Jackie Ramo, Erika Thimm, Cora Thomson, Isik Zeytinegla, Judy Zinni.

Congratulations to Suzanne Craig of Mabou, Nova Scotia, who won NANPS’ Canada Blooms membership raffle. Thanks to Lee Valley Tools for generously donating a garden fork and shovel for the raffle.

Member’s Questions



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY LORRAINE JOHNSON

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

“I’ve seen *Rudbeckia hirta* ‘Goldstrum’ for sale at the nursery. Is this black-eyed Susan still native when it’s a named variety?”

– an Ontario member

We asked John Ambrose, a botanist, to respond:

Rudbeckia hirta ‘Goldstrum’ is derived from a native species but there are reasons why garden varieties, cultivars or hybrids of natives aren’t appropriate for our attempts to restore or create native meadows or prairies.

First, let’s look at what the different terms mean. A hybrid is the result of crossing two different kinds of organisms (such as different species, distinct subspecies or even genera). This can happen in nature, such as between red and silver maples in maple swamps, or between oaks, which sometimes hybridize freely when they occur in the same habitat. Hybridizing can also be done artificially, usually with the hope of combining desirable characteristics of both parent plants. But the undesirable characteristics of both can also show up in the progeny; thus the plant breeder must do rigorous selection and discarding before arriving at the desired outcome.

After a selection is tested and found suitable for gardens, whether from hybridization or from nature, it is often given a cultivar name, such as ‘Goldstrum’ in the case of the *Rudbeckia hirta* selection. The plant is then cloned (vegetatively propagated) by the nursery to ensure its characteristics remain true in newly produced plants. (A somewhat different process is followed in annuals: an inbred line is developed, or two inbred lines are crossed, to create uniform progeny with a similar outcome to cloning.)

Cultivar names can also be applied to plants with unusual forms that show up in nature, such as a dwarf form of spruce, a maple with variegated leaves, a pink-flowered aster that is typically blue flowered, or a short-stemmed coreopsis.

It is likely becoming clear why the above categories are not very suitable for creating or restoring a native plant community as part of a matrix of our natural landscape. First, there is the concern that stock is of unknown origin, likely not genetically matched to the local conditions; as well, inbred or cloned stock has low genetic diversity; and finally, such stock tends to have peculiar traits that are not common in nature. Thus, knowing the source of the seeds, and that they were from a genetically diverse population, is important for a healthy plant community in which wildflowers can fend for themselves and not require the continuing aid of the gardener’s hand.

On the other hand, if you’re not trying to restore a strictly natural habitat but rather are gardening ornamentally, then cultivars of native species are another choice, like garden roses or statues, that have their place as a cultural expression. Just keep in mind that such cultivars won’t necessarily have the traits that the species has in nature. For example, before local stock was available, I bought some New England aster seeds for a project; they all developed into plants with pink flowers. Yes, they were New England asters, but a narrow selection that did not represent the species well. So be sure to ask questions at the nursery – about where their planting stock comes from, and other details such as whether the plant has been narrowly selected for specific traits – so you’ll know what you’re getting.

On a Bog Garden



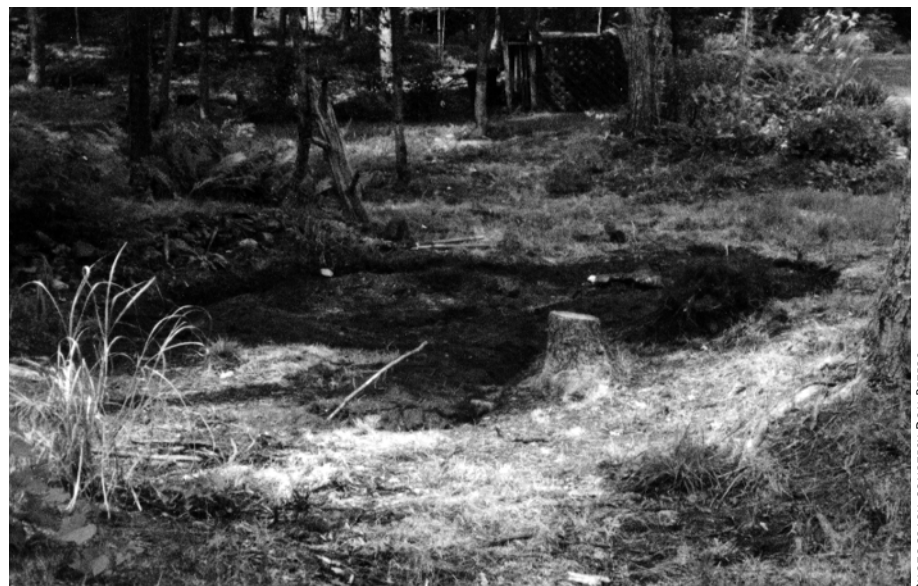
The arbor entrance to the Peters' bog, October 2000.

by Don Peters

About two-and-a-half years ago, my wife and I decided that we would turn a wet area of our property into a bog garden. In preparation we went searching for a book on the subject. Much to our dismay we discovered that there doesn't seem to be one dedicated to bog gardens. We did find information and guidance, but it was in bits and pieces, normally in a chapter or section of a book on water gardens. These sources usually contain information concerning where to locate a bog garden, how to construct one, soil and acidity, the requirement for drainage and plant material; they are useful tools, and anyone starting down this road should refer to at least one. But there is nothing like the experience of actually creating a bog, especially with respect to construction and drainage, so some reflections and considerations arising from our very satisfying endeavour, follow. They come from our efforts and limited experience, not from any expertise, and I hope they will be of some assistance to other bog gardeners.

The literature is unanimous as to where to put in a bog garden. Not surprisingly, experts recommend a low area, ideally the lowest place available, so that water can accumulate. If the bog can be adjacent to, or almost an

extension of, another water feature where it will be close to a water source and appear more natural, so much the better. We utilized the lowest portion of a large swale that Mother Nature provided for us. (Lois Addison and Dorothy Richardson, who run Bedrock Gardeners, a nursery in eastern Ontario, have a bog in a swale that was the initial inspiration and model for ours.)



A portion of the planned bog area, cleared of plant material.

Most of the literature suggests that the bog be 15 to 18 inches deep. When we started to dig, we hit almost solid rock at about 3 inches down. Using pry-bars and a large hand sledge, we attacked the rock and probably removed about 3 tons from an area 12 feet by 24 feet. We eventually dug down about 18 inches all over.

The hole can be lined to hold water in a number of ways. The use of a prefabricated pool or pond form, a child's wading pool form or a plastic liner of some sort is recommended. Because they are easy to work with and because we had a used one available, we went with a plastic pool liner cut so that it was about 2 feet larger on all sides than the hole. To protect the liner from the exposed rock at the bottom of the hole, we spread a 1-inch layer of soil over the rock surface, tamped it down and added another thin covering of soil.

Once we had the liner positioned in the hole, we put in a shallow layer (1 to 2 inches) of small rocks to provide a drainage layer for excess water. (This is probably not necessary if you punch holes in the liner or have sub-soil that is very water-retentive.) We then added 3 to 4 inches of soil, on top of which we laid a length of soaker hose (with the female end plugged and above ground level) to enable us to keep water in very dry seasons. We filled the hole with soil almost to the level of the surrounding ground, cut the excess liner off at the fill level and then added another 3 to 4

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY DON PETERS

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY DON PETERS



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY DON PETERS

The bog in September 2001 – flourishing despite a very dry summer.

inches of soil. You may find, as we did, that the soil compacts during the first season, so be prepared to add more, either initially or at a later date.

One of the problems with a bog, especially one the size of ours, is getting into it to plant and weed, etc. Small bogs, which can be reached from the edges, do not require special consideration. For large bogs it is suggested that access paths be created by putting down a base of rock or heavy material, which will not retain the water and will stay relatively dry and solid, before the bog is filled with soil. We did not do this, opting instead to use a couple of long 2 by 8 pieces of lumber which we can put down where required and thus get into any area we choose when necessary. One of the benefits of not putting in a path is that its existence does not inhibit future planting arrangements.

The issue of drainage was not covered adequately in the literature we read. Most experts advise the gardener to punch a few holes in the bottom of the liner, but how does one know how many holes are needed? We didn't know, so we didn't punch, our reasoning being that if we needed more drainage we could punch holes in the liner later.

Since the first season was something of a testing period, we didn't mound up our initial

plantings, as many experts recommend. We paid for it as our first season was a disaster. We were inundated with water and we lost almost everything, including our sense of humour. To our rescue came Gillian Boyd, a member of the Ottawa-Carlton Master Gardeners Society. She advised us that yes, a bog was supposed to be *wet, not dry, but too dry was much better than too wet*. So we dug down to the liner and cut four holes in the bottom. Only then did we come across an article in the October/November 2000 issue of *Canadian Gardening* concerning Dianne Dietrich's gardens and her approach to bogs – put the drain holes one-third to half-way up the sides, 4 to 5 inches apart, all the way around the liner. How logical, the bottom part can be waterlogged while the top part is dry – one's plants can have a choice about where they send their roots. If we were to do it all over again, we'd use Dianne's drainage system initially, give the bog a one- or two-year test period and then put holes in the bottom if required. We've also started planting in little hillocks.

The bog-gardener-to-be doesn't face much of a problem finding out which plants to grow. The books we referred to had extensive listings, usually in sections devoted to "moisture-loving" or "marginal" plants, or indicated them using keys such as "moist soil" or

"plants for moist areas." These lists usually contain native plants that grow in wet swampy areas.

Although you won't have any problems finding out which plants to put in your bog, actually finding them at nurseries is a different story. But keep at it – the bog, in its final form, will be worth your efforts.

Cat-tail (*Typha latifolia*) is one of the commonest of all bog plants. It grows wild everywhere and should not be shunned just because of that. It is a very handsome plant and can add a great deal of vertical interest to a bog. It does, however, spread rapidly and you must be on top of it at all times. The problem is exacerbated by the depth at which its rhizomes run and their thickness. You will have to dig down 12 to 15 inches to get them. We found it necessary to use a flat-bladed spade and ignore the fact that we disturbed the mother plant. You can bet it will recover.

Don and Nan Peters live and garden near Franktown in eastern Ontario.

The Last Meal

by Maryann Whitman

We were scouting the woods for wildflowers to rescue. Our heads were bowed as we peered intently into the brown-leaf underbrush, trying to spot greenery. It was still too early in the year for many plants to have broken dormancy. I raised my head to ease a kink at just the instant to see the young oak, thirty feet ahead of me, shimmer. It was a shimmer that I had seen just once before, when a flock of cedar waxwings had landed in the hawthorn outside my kitchen window. And there they were again! They took my breath away! I wanted to exclaim to my friends, "Look!" but something stopped me. It was one of those moments of awareness, when several realizations flash simultaneously in one's brain.

There were smaller ones and older, larger ones – an extended family. All were silent and motionless, except for the momentary shimmer when several of them would shift position slightly – the shimmer that had caught my eye so unexpectedly. They would move



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY ANDREW LEYERLE

Sharp-lobed Hepatica (*Hepatica acutiloba*)

closer to the tree trunk, or huddle behind a branch or each other.

They were trying to make themselves invisible! Though aware of us and frightened, they wouldn't leave because they wanted the berries in the native junipers that were scattered about in this clearing.

I would not betray their presence. I groped for inspiration to lead my group to any place

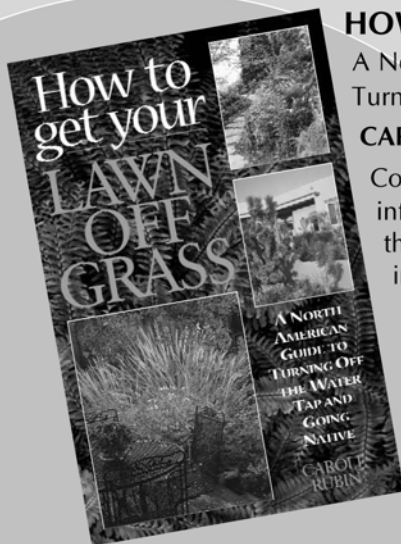
away from here: "I don't think we'll find much among these junipers, let me show you a blooming hepatica I spotted up on the hill, when we first arrived."

As we moved away, a sadness swept over me. The bulldozers were coming; the waxwings would be unable to find this feeding spot next year. Humans were domesticating yet another piece of wilderness, with little awareness of the life-spaces encroached upon and irrevocably altered. We were the summoned Rescue Team: did our rescue extend far enough? I felt impotent and ashamed of my evolutionary group, heartsick for the waxwings.

Let them take this last meal while they might.

© Maryann Whitman

Maryann Whitman is an avid promoter of the use of regionally native plants in our landscapes, in the interest of ecologically sound practices. She is a member of Wild Ones in Michigan, feature editor of the Wild Ones Journal, and has participated in plant rescues with the Cranbrook team.



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On the Road: Focus on Pennsylvania

by Lorraine Johnson

There are wonderful native plant gardens and wilderness areas to visit across North America. In what we hope will be a regular *Blazing Star* feature, we'd like to introduce you to some destinations of choice for native plant enthusiasts. The focus of this first column is Pennsylvania. We encourage readers to contribute their own favourite native plant places in North America; send your suggestions to editor@nanps.org or mail to *The Blazing Star*, P.O. Box 84, Station D, Etobicoke, Ontario M9A 4X1.

NATIVE PLANTS IN THE LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE

Every year for more than a decade, an inspiring and information-packed conference, Native Plants in the Landscape, is held at Millersville University in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, between Philadelphia and Harrisburg. This year's conference is being held June 6-8 and includes renowned speakers such as Rick Drake (author of *The Color Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses*) and John Cronin (a *Time* magazine "Hero for the Planet" in 1999 and

co-author, with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of *The Riverkeepers*). Conference topics include establishing native plants in tough urban places, aboriginal uses of native plants, bog and water gardens, ferns, attracting wildlife, and much more. For information about the conference, phone (717) 872-3030 or write Department of Professional Training and Education, Millersville University, P.O. Box 1002, Millersville, Pennsylvania 17551-0302.

Not only is the conference a great chance to meet native plant enthusiasts in Pennsylvania, but there are numerous public gardens in the surrounding area that are well worth a visit. A selection of must-see attractions include:

LONGWOOD GARDENS

Longwood Gardens is a magnificent horticultural showcase encompassing 1,050 acres of gardens, woodlands and meadows, including 20 outdoor gardens and 20 indoor gardens within four acres of greenhouses. Of particular interest is Pierce's Woods, a native woodland garden at its peak in May, with stunning displays of native azaleas and sweeps of native shrubs and groundcovers under the branches



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY LORRAINE JOHNSON

This cucumber magnolia tree (*Magnolia acuminata* var. *cordata*), at Longwood Gardens, is reputed to be the largest cucumber magnolia in the United States. It was planted in 1800 and now has a height of 97 feet and a circumference of 13 feet.

of towering oaks, ash, maple and tulip trees.

For more information about Longwood Gardens, write P.O. Box 501, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania 19348-0501, phone

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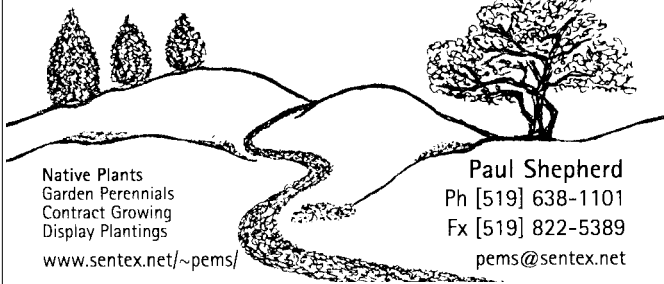
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BOWMAN'S HILL WILDFLOWER PRESERVE
Founded in 1937, the mission of Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve is to lead people to a greater appreciation of native plants. With more than a dozen trails and 100 acres, the Preserve features more than a thousand species of native herbaceous and woody plants in naturalistic settings. The woodland ephemerals in spring are particularly stunning, though a visit in any season is worthwhile. For more information, write P.O. Box

685, New Hope, Pennsylvania 18938-0685, phone (215) 862-2924, or see their website, www.bhwp.org.

BRANDYWINE CONSERVANCY WILDFLOWER
AND NATIVE PLANT GARDENS

Begun in 1974, the gardens at the Brandywine River Museum feature indigenous and some naturalized plants of the Greater Brandywine region, southwest of Philadelphia. The gardens were originally designed by horticulturist F.M. Mooberry as demonstration gardens using wildflowers, trees and shrubs to recreate natural habitats. For more information, write P.O. Box 141, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania 19317, phone (610) 388-2700, or see their website, www.brandywinemuseum.org.



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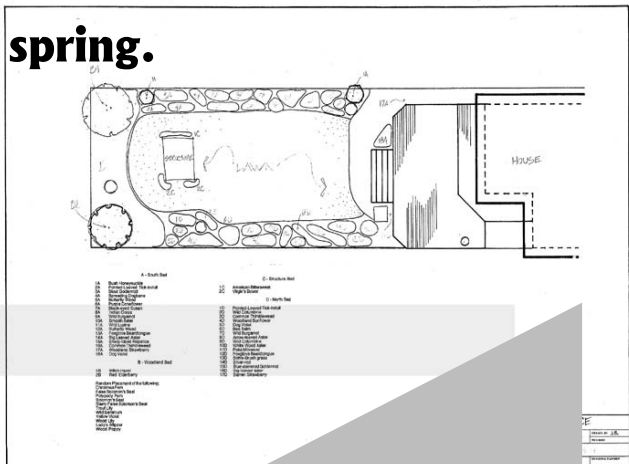
1400; www.rodaleinstitute.org
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WINTERTHUR MUSEUM, Garden and Library, Winterthur, Delaware 19735; 800-448-3883; www.winterthur.org
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THE SCOTT ARBORETUM OF SWARTHMORE COLLEGE, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081; (610) 328-8025; www.scottarboretum.org



And finally, if you're thinking of visiting Pennsylvania, be sure to contact the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society, a non-profit educational organization that promotes the conservation of Pennsylvania's native plants and habitats through education, research and cultivation. Write 1001 East College Avenue, State College, Pennsylvania 16801, or see their website, www.pawildflower.org.

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New & Noted

Wildflowers of the Canadian Erie Islands

By Mary Celestino (Windsor, Ontario: Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, 2002. 281 pages, ISBN 0-9689917-0-x)

Reviewed by Lorraine Johnson

In the western basin of Lake Erie, six islands comprise the Canadian Erie Islands. The best known, Pelee Island, has long been a destination of choice for botanists, birders and those interested in natural history. With a latitude equivalent to that of northern California and Rome, the climate of the Erie Islands is warmer than anywhere else in Ontario. The favourable growing conditions have ensured a high diversity of plant life – 845 vascular plant species have been found to date on the islands, 107 of them provincially rare.

More than 420 of the plant species found on the Canadian Erie Islands are documented in Mary Celestino's thoroughly engaging book, *Wildflowers of the Canadian Erie Islands*. Sketched from life, in the field, Celestino's drawings are accompanied with brief descriptions of the plants, arranged by flowering season and colour, which makes this book a very handy reference guide for anyone visiting the islands.

Along with the field-guide usefulness of the book and beauty of the illustrations, though, is the fascinating text Celestino has compiled on the natural and cultural history of each of the islands. Anyone interested in Carolinian forests, savannahs or alvars will thrill to her descriptions of the 300-year-old red cedars on Pelee Island's Stone Road Alvar or the wild hyacinths covering the forest floor of Hen Island with blue spikes in spring. Likewise, Celestino includes a useful history of botanical exploration of the islands, beginning with Canadian Dominion Botanist John Macoun in 1892. Present-day botanical investigation of the islands is represented by the inclusion of Michael J. Oldham's *Checklist of the Vascular Plants of the Canadian Erie Islands*, making this book indispensable to professional and amateur alike – in short, to anyone with an interest in the fascinating flora and natural heritage of the Canadian Erie Islands.



Insects and Gardens

By Eric Grissell (Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 2001. 345 pages, h.c., \$29.95 US, ISBN 0-88192-504-7)

Reviewed by Lorraine Johnson

Encounters with insects are enough to send many of us into an irrational frenzy, even to the point of resorting to a chemical arsenal. Gardeners would know better, so we think, but even they sometimes harbour a strong dislike for and misunderstanding of insects. Eric Grissell's book, *Insects and Gardens: In Pursuit of a Garden Ecology*, challenges our deeply ingrained intolerance of insects, especially in the garden. This introduction to entomology is filled with scientific information about the role and function of insects.

Starting with basic science, Grissell describes what insects are, the species we are likely to find in our own backyards (there are some 400,000 species of beetles alone), their development and survival (yes, some insects do eat each other during courtship. Who said life was fair?). Grissell does not distinguish between "good bugs" and "bad bugs" or cast judgment on which ones should be allowed to inhabit our gardens. In nature, there are no good or bad insects, only the high drama of survival.

Grissell explains why insects are a missing link in our gardens. We curse them, trap them, step on them and poison them. We relegate them to the sidelines of our floral mosaic, with the exception of adult butterflies. This is to our detriment, according to Grissell, for if gardeners hope to live up to the ideal of a garden ecology, we must move beyond our repugnance and realize how vital insects are to plants. Insects break down plant material, preventing us from wandering around neck deep in garden debris, or "frass," to use Grissell's term. They also pollinate flowers and provide numerous other services free of charge. Left to their own devices, insects reach a population balance, and most insect activity goes unnoticed by us. Our desire for control not only leaves our gardens devoid of much-needed diversity and health, but could also be sending us down the road to ecological disaster. Encouraging interaction between insects and plants, as well as other insects, is the next step in the progression of garden

ecology. The question is: will gardeners set aside their hatred for bugs in order to accept the challenge of incorporating insects into our landscape plans?

Insects and Gardens is filled with stunning colour photographs, taken by Carll Goodpasture, that should make everyone (well, almost everyone) change their view from disgust to awe. Gardeners everywhere, especially native plant gardeners, would be wise to consider Grissell's message, for it is gardeners who are in the best position to be ambassadors for these maligned creatures.

Gail McCormack is Chair of the Guelph Environment Network (www.bbc.guelph.org/gen), a not-for-profit education and advocacy group for pesticide-free gardening.



Gardening with Prairie Plants: How to Create Beautiful Native Landscapes

By Sally Wasowski, photography by Andy Wasowski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. pages, p.b., \$29.95 US, ISBN 0-8166-3087-9)

Reviewed by Lorraine Johnson

Sally and Andy Wasowski's new book, *Gardening with Prairie Plants*, is one of the best gardening books I've ever read. The astounding amount of information they've managed to include – all of it presented with careful attention to detail and subtlety – is testament to the fact that they spent four-and-a-half years working on this labour of love. Everything – and I do mean *everything* – you need to know about prairie gardening is here, in this luscious and inspiring book.

The descriptions of prairie ecology and various prairie types across North America serve as the perfect introduction to the gardening advice and plant profiles that make up the bulk of the book. Dozens of home prairie gardens are featured in detail (with photographs and plan drawings), offering the reader illuminating stories of how the gardens were designed, installed and are now maintained. One of the most useful (and unusual) aspects of these stories is that in many cases the gardeners fess up to mistakes they've made and things they'd now do differently; readers thus know they're in the hands of honest, humble and, above all, generous guides.

The exhaustive plant profiles, along with

providing thorough descriptions and interesting tidbits, also include a range map for each species. (The author acknowledges that some species have naturalized beyond their original range, and although the naturalized range is included on the map, details – if known – about original range are included in the text descriptions.) Many species are illustrated with Andy Wasowski's stunning photographs, each of which is captioned with the date on which the photo was taken (an unusual but eminently sensible detail for a gardening book). Graphs and charts cross-referencing species and habitat requirements in different prairie regions mean that plant selection couldn't be easier.

The eight books on native landscaping that the Wasowskis have co-authored are all excellent works full of passion, vision and keen intelligence. With their latest, they've produced *the* essential guide to prairie gardening – a stunning book.



The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World

By Michael Pollan (New York: Random House, 2001. 271 pages, h.c., \$37.95 CDN, \$24.95 US, ISBN 0-375-50129-0)

Reviewed by Lorraine Johnson

Michael Pollan has both fame and notoriety in the native plant world – fame for writing the brilliant and immensely popular book *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*, and notoriety for denouncing the native plant gardening movement in a *New York Times Magazine* article many years ago (he implied that the movement was akin to eco-fascism at worst and naïve nostalgia at best).

In his new book, *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World*, Pollan has an equally explosive thesis: he turns conventional wisdom on its head and argues that instead of viewing certain plants as having been domesticated by humans, we should perhaps consider that these plants have been most effective at domesticating *us*. Weaving the stories of four familiar species – the apple, the tulip, marijuana and the potato – into a narrative that blends history, memoir and science, Pollan synthesizes an enormous range of fascinating information and personal anecdote into a compelling read. Highly recommended.

Calendar of Events

The NANPS on-line Message Board (www.nanps.org) now lists events. Please e-mail (nanps@nanps.org) information about any native plant events you're involved with; we'd be happy to include your listing on the Message Board.

April 24–May 29, 2002
WILDFLOWER HABITAT GARDENING WORKSHOPS
Oxford Station, Ontario
On Wednesday afternoons, learn about hands-on habitat gardening. For more information, call (613) 258-7945 or e-mail oldfieldgarden@sympatico.ca.

May 11, 2002
NANPS NATIVE PLANT SALE
Toronto, Ontario
Hundreds of native species available at this annual NANPS fundraiser held at the Civic Garden Centre in Toronto. See ad on page 12.

May 17–19, 2002
NATIVE ORCHID CONFERENCE
Greensboro, North Carolina
For more information, phone (336) 656-7991 or e-mail nativeorchids@yahoo.com.

May 25, 2002
NATIVE PLANT SALE
Guelph, Ontario
Organized by the Waterloo-Wellington Wildflower Society. For info, call (519) 824-3807 or see www.uoguelph.ca/~botcal.

May 31–June 2, 2002
TAKING FLIGHT: FROM THE HEART OF CAROLINIAN CANADA
Port Rowan, Ontario
The Federation of Ontario Naturalists holds its 2002 AGM and conference in the heart of Carolinian Canada. For information, call 1-800-440-2366 or e-mail jenniferb@ontarionature.org.

June 1, 2002
ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE
Ottawa, Ontario
A fundraiser for the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. For info, see <http://home.achilles.net/~ofnc/fletcher/news.html>

July 4, 2002
FERN IDENTIFICATION AND PROPAGATION
Guelph, Ontario
Join Allan Andersen at the University of Guelph Arboretum for a workshop on ferns. For more info, call (519) 824-4120, ext. 4110 or e-mail arboretu@uoguelph.ca.

August 5–9, 2002
SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION CONFERENCE
Tucson, Arizona
For info, call (520) 622-5485 or e-mail info@ser.org.

October 1–2, 2002
EASTERN NATIVE GRASS SYMPOSIUM
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
For more information, see www.unc.edu/depts/ncbg or e-mail tflora@email.unc.edu

NANPS Seed Exchange

The NANPS Seed Exchange is grateful to receive seeds of native plants – and we're always looking for seeds of spring-blooming species in particular! When seeds are ripe, please put each species in an envelope, and write on the envelope as much of the following information as you can: botanical name, common name, place seed was collected (if wild), source of parent plants (if garden source), date collected, and your name. Please clean the seeds if possible; a certain amount of chaff is fine, if the seeds are difficult to clean completely. If you want to put the seeds into small envelopes ready to send out, that

would be appreciated. If the seeds are very small, folding them up in a piece of paper or aluminum foil before putting them in an envelope helps.

Send seeds to NANPS Seed Exchange, P.O. Box 84, Station D, Etobicoke, Ontario M9A 4X1. Many of the seeds from the 2001/2002 Seed Exchange are still available (a list of seeds available was published in the Winter 2002 issue of *The Blazing Star* and is also on the NANPS website, www.nanps.org). Send requests to NANPS Seed Exchange, P.O. Box 84, Station D, Etobicoke, Ontario M9A 4X1.

In The News

A new resource designed to assist Canadian municipalities in incorporating naturalization in their official plans, policies, environmental programs and operating procedures is now available from Evergreen. *Urban Naturalization in Canada: A Policy and Program Guidebook* explores the benefits of urban naturalization, outlines common barriers and obstacles and how to overcome them, and provides six case studies from municipalities across North America. It is invaluable for land-use planners, park managers, landscape architects, ecologists and other professionals working at the municipal level. To order a copy (\$15 plus shipping and tax), contact Evergreen, 355 Adelaide Street West, 5th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5V 1S2; 416-596-1495 ph; 416-596-1443 fax; info@evergreen.ca. The document can also be downloaded at no cost from the Evergreen website, www.evergreen.ca.



A recently published field guide celebrates the wildflowers of Door County, Wisconsin. At 210 pages, *Wildflowers of Door County: Wisconsin's Unique Floral Preserve* (Indiana University Press, \$18.95 U.S.) by Paul G. Mahlberg and Marilyn Waite Mahlberg includes more than 350 original watercolours accompanied by description. Profits from sales of the book are dedicated to the Door County Land Trust to further its mission of protecting and preserving ecologically significant lands in that county. The book is available in bookstores, direct from Indiana University Press (800-842-6796) or can be ordered online (<http://iupress.indiana.edu>).



The Cascades Conservation Partnership is an unprecedented three-year campaign to purchase and protect more than 75,000 acres of privately owned forests that link the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area to Mt. Rainier National Park in Washington state. This effort will protect 15,000 acres of remaining old-growth forests, valuable riparian areas and wetlands, and mountain meadows. The lands targeted for protection connect a wildlife corridor from the North to South Cascades. These areas are threatened with logging within the next year.

To date, the Cascades Conservation Partnership has raised more than \$12 million in private funds, which helped leverage more than \$32 million in public funds in just a year and a half. This fundraising effort has helped purchase and protect more than 18,500 acres. If you'd like to find out more about the Cascades Conservation Partnership, contact Jen Watkins at (206) 675-9747, ext. 208, e-mail jwatkins@ecosystem.org, website www.cascadespartners.org.



National Wildlife Federation's new interactive Backyard Wildlife Habitat website is now live at www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat/. Some highlights of the site include an online habitat planner, tips and projects, a native plant guide and wildlife finder, and regional information.

Spring 2002 NANPS Plant Sale

Saturday, May 11, 2002, 10 AM to 4 PM
Civic Garden Centre, 777 Lawrence Avenue East
(at Leslie Street), North York, Ontario

Spring woodland flowers, summer meadow and prairie plants, wetland plants, vines, sedges, ferns, shrubs and trees. Hundreds of species, thousands of plants.

For information, to donate plants, or to help out at the sale,
please call NANPS at (416) 631-4438.

Is your garden getting crowded? Please consider dividing some of your native plants and donating extras to the nanps sale!

A list of plants available at the sale is posted on the NANPS website (www.nanps.org).

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- Lorraine Johnson

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and mail to Box 84, Station D, Etobicoke,
Ontario M9A 4X1. For info, call (416) 631-
4438; e-mail nanps@nanps.org.