

The Blazing Star



NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Native Plant to Know

Musclewood

Carpinus caroliniana

Meditations on Musclewood

by Catherine Siddall

My mother and father have always been interested in nature, and we often took family “woods walks” when I was a child. My mother in particular is a natural storyteller and passed to her children many of the stories she learned about the plants we encountered on these walks. Bloodroot, which we used to paint our faces, and wild ginger, which we nibbled, made a particularly strong impression. I also remember fondling the bulging “muscles” of a favourite small tree with smooth bark and an arching canopy. It was *Carpinus caroliniana* – also commonly known as blue beech because of its smooth, grey-blue bark resembling a beech’s bark. (The simple leaves are also somewhat similar to a beech, but there the similarities end.) Mother told us it was called musclewood because of its sinewy, elongated, fluted shapes resembling muscles, especially with its smooth bark. Because it has very hard wood, it is also called ironwood. However, confusion arises with this common name because another lovely, small native tree – *Ostrya virginiana* – is also known as ironwood. To add to the confusion, Guy Sternberg and Jim Wilson, in their important book, *Landscaping with*

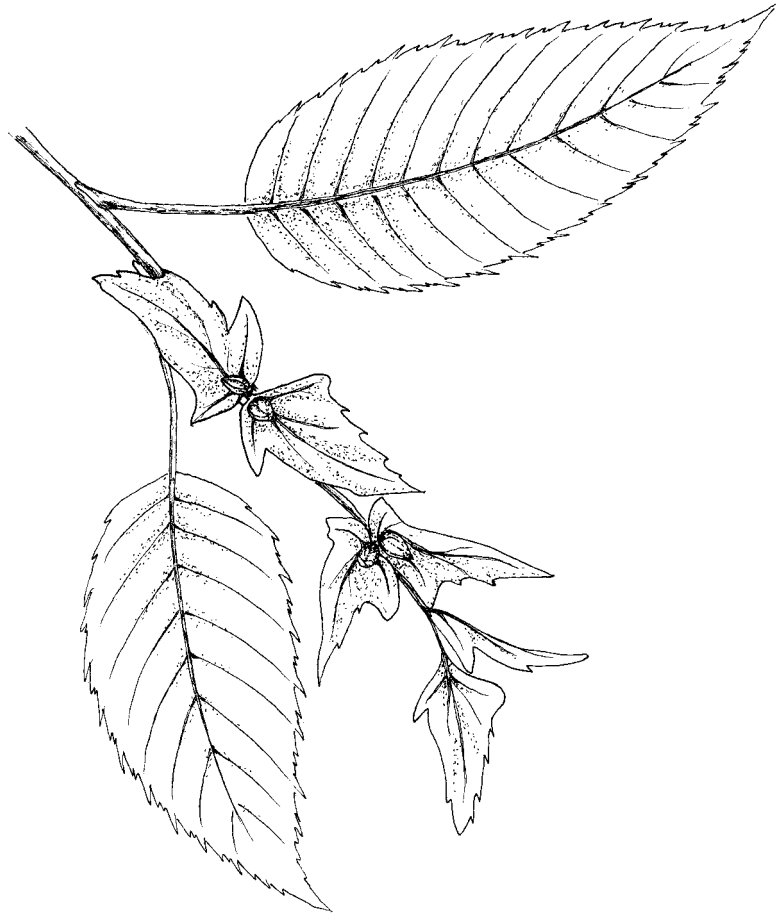


ILLUSTRATION BY BRIGITTE GRANTON

Continued on page 12

Musclewood fruit bract on leafy branch

THE BLAZING STAR IS...

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

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NANPS News

The NANPS Board of Directors is looking for volunteers to join the Board. Experience is not required; rather, we're looking for enthusiastic people who want to help preserve and restore native plants and their habitat. Board meetings are held once a month in Toronto. Please consider sharing your interests and abilities! Contact NANPS by phone (416-680-6289) or by e-mail (nanps@nanps.org).

As well, there are many opportunities for members to become active in various NANPS projects. In particular, we're looking for someone to become our Volunteer Coordinator in the Toronto area.

The NANPS Spring Plant Sale was a big success, made possible by the extraordinary volunteer effort put forth by the plant sale committee (Catherine Crockett, Erika Thimm and Richard Woolger) and many NANPS volunteers: Tom Atkinson, Douglas Counter, Catherine Crockett, Margaret Crockett, Grif Cunningham, Deborah Dale, Monica Dennis, Irene Der, Victor Feodorov, Martin Field, Jim French, Terry Gardener, Scott Guthrie, Carol Howlett, Lorraine Johnson, Bill Kilburn, Jen-

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NANPS has begun planning for Canada Blooms, the annual garden show held in Toronto in March. We are looking for volunteers to help organize the NANPS booth, and for donations of spring-flowering native plants for the booth. Contributions will be acknowledged in *The Blazing Star* and at Canada Blooms. If you're interested in helping out, please call NANPS at 416-680-6289.

Otter Valley Native Plant Nursery is having an end-of-season native plant sale in Toronto, Ontario, on September 15, 10 am to 2 pm. The sale will be held at One Thorndale Avenue (Humber River and Dundas Street). For species availability, see homepage.mac.com/ottervalley; for more information, contact otter.va@kanservu.ca.

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The NANPS Annual General Meeting

**WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 2, 10 AM TO 1:00 PM,**

*at the Civic Garden Centre
(777 Lawrence Avenue East), in Toronto, Ontario.*

*Along with the business portion of the meeting,
a special slide talk will be given by Mathis
Natvik of Orford Ridges Nursery in Muirkirk,
Ontario. His subject is the restoration of
Carolinian woodlands.*

*See the NANPS website, www.nanps.org, for
more details.*

*A native seed exchange will be held at the AGM;
please bring along native seeds to trade with
other NANPS members and to donate to the
NANPS Seed Exchange.*

Boulevard Beauty:

Native wildflowers turn a suburban drainage ditch into a verdant oasis

by Douglas Counter

The stories my elderly father would tell me of his exploits as a child were filled with the derring-do of young kids. Every chance he got, he would be down at Sunnyside – his neighbourhood beach – swimming in Lake Ontario, daring his chums to see who could swim out in the choppy water to the concrete breakwater and back. Those who were especially daring would dive down and swim between the narrowly spaced steel supports that held the breakwater against powerful storm-driven waves. For my dad, these stories evoked memories of a carefree time, when the entire summer could be spent at the beach – in downtown Toronto! – enjoying one of the world’s largest freshwater lakes.

Children swimming at that same beach today would indeed be taking their lives in their own hands. Not because swimming under the breakwater is any more dangerous now than it was sixty years ago, but because the water they would be swimming in is now a threat to human health.

More often than not, the beaches along Toronto’s degraded waterfront are closed because of unsafe levels of *E. coli* bacteria and other pollutants that flow directly into Lake Ontario – the source of Toronto’s drinking water. During heavy storms, the city’s sewer system is overburdened and huge volumes of storm water runoff mix with sanitary sewage; the rank mixture ends up flowing untreated directly into the lake. A series of massive, multi-million-dollar stormwater holding tanks have recently been built by city engineers under the very sands of Sunnyside Beach to deal with this recurring problem. Only time will tell if this costly infrastructure helps.

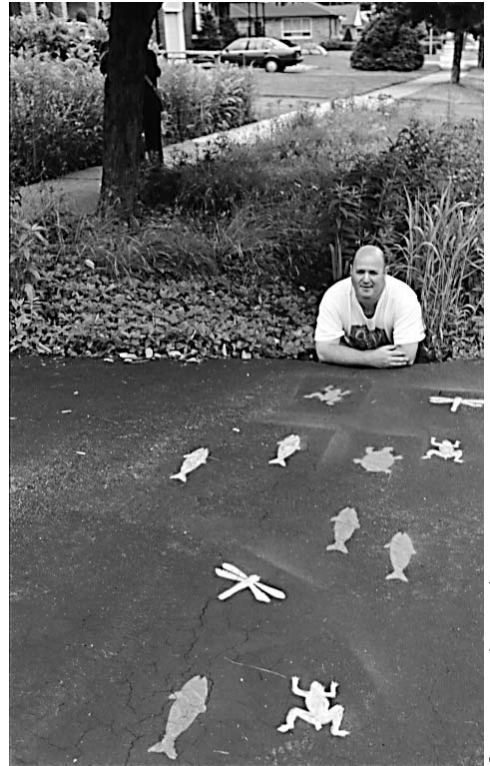
Out in Etobicoke, in the city’s west end, where my father and I share a small bungalow, the situation is equally grim. Stormwater flows directly into a local stream, carrying a toxic cocktail of road salt, oil, pesticides and pet waste directly into the lake. *Out of sight, out of mind* seems to be the collective opinion

when it comes to dealing with suburban stormwater runoff. Few people know or care where that polluted water goes once it disappears down the sewer grate.

I, for one, care. And that is why I decided to do something about it right in my own front garden.

Until 1999, the drainage ditch in front of our suburban home was just like all the others in the neighbourhood. Carpeted with turf grass and parched to a pale shade of brown much of the summer, it was a hazard to anyone attempting to mow it with a gas lawnmower, what with gravel shooting up into the paths of oncoming cars and the sides so steep it was difficult to keep a safe footing.

That was then. That once boring strip of cropped lawn is now a verdant oasis of native plants serving a host of equally important and meaningful functions. The wildflowers, grasses and sedges my “eco friends” and I planted there provide immeasurable beauty



PHOTOGRAPH BY LORRAINE JOHNSON

Douglas Counter

throughout the year. They provide vital habitat for countless insects, butterflies and birds. The plants slow the flow of stormwater runoff long enough that it can seep into the ground and be cleaned and filtered by that process, thus recharging the water table. This reduced peak flow reduces the erosion of local stream banks, and it lessens the strain on the city’s



PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUGLAS COUNTER

Douglas Counter's ditch garden



The ditch prior to planting

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUGLAS COUNTER



July 1999 just after planting

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUGLAS COUNTER

overburdened stormsewer system. The native groundcover requires no pesticides or lawnmowing or supplemental watering. The attending crickets provide a most welcome summer evening symphony; a surprise visit from a firefly this summer marked the first time I had seen a firefly in the city in my life.

When planning the ditch garden, I chose short species of native plants because I was planting next to a roadway. There are now more than forty species in the ditch garden, specifically adapted to such a site and carefully chosen to provide colour and interest throughout the growing season. Spring bloomers include field pussytoes (*Antennaria neglecta*), larval host plant of the Painted Lady

butterfly, prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*), wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), and golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*). Early summer brings the cool hues of blue flag iris (*Iris versicolor*), harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*), hairy beardtongue (*Penstemon hirsutus*) and nodding wild onion (*Allium cernuum*). This exquisite blue palette is complemented by the intense orange of butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), one of the host milkweeds of the Monarch butterfly caterpillar. Later in the summer, the intense red of cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) punctuates the ditch garden, and fall brings the yellow glow of the low-growing grey goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*).

A number of sedges provide a continuous

carpet of green: Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*), foxtail sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*) and the fascinating mace sedge (*Carex grayi*), whose seedhead resembles a medieval war club. On the drier slope nearer the sidewalk, I chose two of the shorter native grasses, side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) and little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*). Nothing can outdo the roots of native grasses both for holding the soil against erosion and for creating a spongy topsoil that encourages the effective infiltration of rain water. I planted some taller species at the base of the ditch: swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) and ironweed (*Vernonia altissima*). As autumn approaches, the grasses and wildflowers put on their finest wardrobe of bronzes and golds – a spectacular season finale. And in winter they provide seed and nesting materials for birds.

Before our ditch was planted with native wildflowers, it was a barren, unnoticed patch of turf. Just like the thousands of other patches of lawn in a monotonous urban landscape. But since the creation of our ditch garden, it has become an oasis visited both by butterflies on their annual migrations and neighbours on their evening strolls. It has linked the natural world to my community of neighbours.

My father and I now pay a lot more attention to the posted closings of local beaches. My dad often reflects on his childhood – on his trips to the beach and swimming in the lake. It is profoundly sad for him to realize that his own grandchildren cannot do the same. Perhaps more ditches will be transformed into natural filtration systems through the use of native plants, the result being cleaner, safer water entering our rivers and lake. And perhaps in the not too distant future, children will once again enjoy the legacy of safe, swimmable beaches in the heart of Canada's largest urban centre.

Douglas Counter is a graphic designer and a NANPS Board member. His infiltration garden is the subject of a lawsuit with the City of Toronto (see *The Blazing Star*, Volume 2, Issue 2; and Volume 2, Issue 3); tax-deductible donations in support of Counter's defence are being accepted by Environmental Defence Canada, 416-323-9521.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW LEYERLE

Douglas Counter's garden in June 2001

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On the Road: Focus on Eastern Ontario

by Lorraine Johnson

This instalment of On the Road was inspired by a trip I took to the Purdon Conservation Area (approximately 80 kilometres southwest of Ottawa, Ontario, and 25 kilometres west of Perth, Ontario) in June 2001. The purpose of the trip was to see the justifiably renowned native colony of showy lady's slipper orchids (*Cypripedium reginae*) that bloom between mid-June and early July in this spectacular natural setting. With more than 16,000 orchids growing in the 2.5-hectare fen habitat (the whole site is 24.5 hectares and includes swamp and marsh habitat), Purdon is surely one of the largest orchid colonies in Canada – a rare treat.

PURDON CONSERVATION AREA

The existence of this large orchid colony is due to the vision of Joe Purdon, who originally owned the land as part of his farm and who, in the late 1930s, discovered a few dozen showy lady's slipper orchids growing there. By controlling the water levels, thinning the brush and hand-pollinating the plants, he encouraged the colony to increase and thrive so that today there are more than 16,000 showy lady's slipper orchids on the site. In 1984, Mississippi Valley Conservation acquired the land and pledged to preserve it as a publicly accessible natural area.

Although the pink and white orchids, which bloom in mid-June to early July, are the showpiece of the Purdon Conservation Area,



Purdon Conservation Area

PHOTOGRAPH BY LORRAINE JOHNSON

there are many other interesting plants to see: northern green orchid (*Platanthera hyperborea*), leafy white bog orchid (*Platanthera dilatata*), tufted loosestrife (*Lysimachia thyrsiflora*), slender cotton-grass (*Eriophorum viridi-carinatum*), pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*). As well, at least 50 species of birds inhabit Purdon, including the swamp sparrow, veery and red-shouldered hawk. A 4-metre wooden boardwalk through the heart of the orchid colony allows easy access and protects the soil and plants from trampling.

If you're not able to visit Purdon Conservation Area but would like to help support and preserve this unique orchid colony, Missis-

sippi Valley Conservation Authority invites people to "Adopt an Orchid"; send \$50 to MVC, P.O. Box 268, Lanark, Ontario K0G 1K0, and you will be issued a Certificate of Adoption and a charitable tax receipt.

Directions to Purdon, from Lanark, Ontario: Take Highway 511 for 5 km north of Lanark; turn left onto County Road 8 and drive for 12 km; turn right onto Concession Road 8; Purdon Conservation Area is 2 km ahead on the right. Open to the public year-round. To confirm orchid blooming conditions, call the Mississippi Valley Conservation Foundation, (613) 259-2421; e-mail mississippi@superaje.com; www.wetlands.ca/exploring/purdon.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LORRAINE JOHNSON

Lady's slipper orchids (*Cypripedium reginae*)



PHOTOGRAPH BY LORRAINE JOHNSON

Pitcher plants at Purdon

FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN

A long-term project of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club, the 7-hectare Fletcher Wildlife Garden is designed as a series of connected habitats to show homeowners how to attract wildlife to backyards. Demonstration gardens include an amphibian pond, butterfly meadow, backyard garden, hedgerow, old field and new woodlot. Self-guided trail brochures allow visitors to tour the entire garden on the Bill Holland Nature Trail. There are also regular educational events, guided tours and a well-stocked Interpretive Centre. For more information, see the website www.achilles.net/ofnc/fletcher.htm, e-mail ofnc@achilles.net, or call (613) 722-3050.

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden is located off Prince of Wales Drive, south of the Dominion Arboretum, at Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, Ontario.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LORRAINE JOHNSON

Woodland walk at Fletcher Wildlife Garden



PHOTOGRAPH BY LORRAINE JOHNSON

Rosa virginiana at the Canadian Heritage Garden

THE CANADIAN HERITAGE GARDEN

To celebrate the 125th anniversary of Confederation in 1992, then Governor General of Canada Ramon John Hnatyshyn and his wife, Gerda Hnatyshyn, spearheaded a project to build a heritage rose garden on the grounds of Rideau Hall. Designed by A.D. Regehr, the garden uses roses to symbolize Canadian ancestral groups and historical events. Along with hybridized species developed by Canadian horticulturists and roses from around the world, the garden also includes indigenous Canadian rose species. For more information, see the website www.rjhf.com/garden.htm.

The Canadian Heritage Garden is located at Rideau Hall, Ottawa, Ontario.

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The Richelieu Forest is located beside Vanier City Hall, Ottawa, Ontario.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The following books are good sources of information:

Capital Woodlands: A Field and Armchair Guide to Ottawa's Urban Woodlands and Wooded Areas, by Seaton Findlay (Ottawa: Penumbra Press, 2001).

Nature and Natural Areas in Canada's Capital: An Introductory Guide for the Ottawa-Hull Area, by Daniel F. Brunton (Ottawa: The Ottawa Citizen in co-operation with the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, 1988).



The Editor invites readers to submit suggestions of places that native plant enthusiasts might find of interest. Send to Editor, NANPS, P.O. Box 84, Station D, Etobicoke, Ontario M9A 4X1; or e-mail editor@nanps.org.

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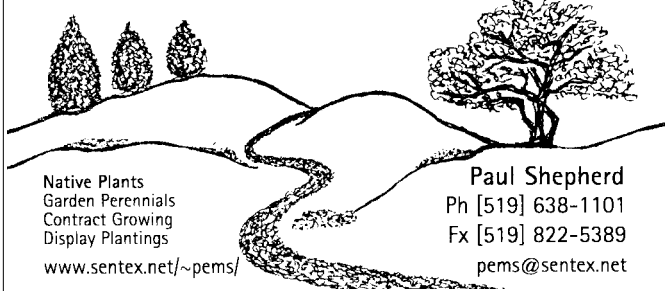
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New & Noted

How to Get Your Lawn Off Grass: A North American Guide to Turning Off the Water Tap and Going Native

By Carole Rubin (Madeira Park, British Columbia: Harbour Publishing, 2002. 176 pages, p.b., \$18.95 CDN, ISBN 1-55017-259-X)

Carole Rubin's first book, *How to Get Your Lawn & Garden Off Drugs*, was an inspiration to countless gardeners, providing a path to organic gardening that was at once concise, humorous and practical. Rubin has now taken that recipe for success and extended it to the topic of native plant gardening, urging readers to ditch their turf and replace water-guzzling lawns with water-conserving native plants. The result is a fine introductory guide full of wit and passion that will whet the gardener's appetite for more. Give the book to a neighbour still chained to turf maintenance and see what new ideas sprout as the wisdom of Rubin's clarion call sinks in ...



Native Plants in the Coastal Garden: A Guide for Gardeners in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest

By April Pettinger with Brenda Costanzo (North Vancouver, British Columbia: Whitecap Books, 2002. 232 pages, p.b., \$22.95 CDN, \$19.95 US, ISBN 1-55285-331-4)

Originally published in 1996, this classic guide to gardening with native plants in the Pacific Northwest has been revised, updated and expanded. Two new photo inserts add lush inspiration to the informative text, which covers all aspects of native plant gardening in detail. The plants and gardening procedures



Arctic lupine (*Lupinus arcticus*). Photograph by Brenda Costanzo from *Native Plants in the Coastal Garden*.



Wood sorrel (*Oxalis oregana*) groundcover at a coastal forest residence. Photograph by Barry Pettinger from *Native Plants in the Coastal Garden*.

discussed in the book apply to the region that stretches from southeast Alaska down to Eugene, Oregon; and from the Pacific coast to the Coast Mountains in British Columbia and the Cascades in the United States. The incredibly rich and diverse range of natural habitats in this region is well represented with thorough outlines of plant communities and conditions through to suggested plant lists and combinations. Even if you already have the first edition, you'll find much of interest here: added chapters on shoreline habitat, container gardening, ornamental grasses, pest control, design, philosophy, trends, and an exhaustive resource section. Highly recommended.



Redesigning the American Lawn: A Search for Environmental Harmony

By F. Herbert Bormann, Diana Balmori and Gordon T. Geballe (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2001. 178 pages, p.b., \$16.95 US, ISBN 0-300-08694-6)

Hide your gas-powered lawn mower and herbicide stash – the conventional North American lawn is under attack. Yes, North Americans love their lawns (indeed, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say we're addicted to them), but at what cost? Mowers pollute the air and contribute to the greenhouse effect. Fertilizers threaten water supplies. Grass clippings fill already crowded landfills. Synthetic

pesticides threaten human and animal health. The ideal American lawn – weedless, pestfree and uniformly green – is contributing to many of the serious environmental problems facing the planet.

In this updated and revised edition of *Redesigning the American Lawn*, the authors (all of whom teach at Yale) bring their scholarly attention to a down-to-earth subject: the need to rethink the ways we design and care for our yards. Full of quirky facts and far-from-dry statistics, the book makes a compelling case for replacing the 31 million acres of U.S. lawns with more environmentally sound alternatives. And just as useful as the practical advice is the fascinating cultural and social history of the lawn that the authors explore – indeed, they manage to get at the root of our obsession and mow it down for good.



Early lawn mower. From *Redesigning the American Lawn*.



The "lawn" of a medieval garden consisted of small flowers and grasses. From *Redesigning the American Lawn*.


✧
*The Grass is Greener:
 Our Love Affair with the Lawn*
 By Tom Fort
 (London, England: HarperCollins, 2000. 278
 pages, p.b., \$15.50 CDN, ISBN 0-00-653125-3)

It seems that the subject of lawns is open to endless exploration, and in *The Grass is Greener*, author Tom Fort takes the approach not of critic but of unapologetic devotee. Clearly, he loves his lawn. And more than that, he's interested in what the lawn – as the dominant landscape form – says about us. While his focus is mainly on Britain, where the lawn developed, his insights have a much broader relevance. For example, his analysis of the lawn as primarily a masculine domain has as much currency in North America (think advertisements during televised hockey games) as it does in Britain. Likewise, his comments on the lawn as an expression of social status will ring true in the North American context. The writing in this cultural history is leisurely, meandering into unexpected and surprising corners, drawing out images in fruitful digressions.

✧
Recovering the Prairie
 Edited by Robert F. Sawyer
 (Madison, Wisconsin: University of
 Wisconsin Press, 1999. 225 pages, h.c., ISBN
 0-299-16460-8)


The North American prairie landscape has long been a subject explored by artists and writers. In *Recovering the Prairie*, people from many different fields consider the connections between aesthetics and economics, landscape and culture, politics and ethics, as illustrated by the prairie in American civilization. What is being "recovered" is the place of the prairie in the American imagination. Essays explore the ideas of Walt Whitman, Willa Cather and Jens Jensen, and there is also a never-before-published piece by Aldo Leopold. The visual component of the book is beautifully represented with reproductions of photographs and paintings by 16 contemporary artists.

Reviews by Lorraine Johnson



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In the News

For more than nine years, Canadians have been striving for a law to protect Canada's growing list of species at risk of extinction. That list, prepared by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), has grown from just short of 250 species in 1993, when the federal Liberal government first promised to protect species, to more than 400 today.

The Species at Risk Act (SARA), Bill C-5, was passed by the House of Commons on Tuesday, June 11, 2002, by a vote of 148-85. Though the Bill remained far from perfect, conservation groups from across Canada were able to support recent amendments that strengthened habitat protection in some areas of federal jurisdiction, and provisions to allow scientists to have more say on which species are listed as endangered.

The effort to protect endangered species has only just begun. SARA must now pass through the Senate before becoming law. And then the law must be applied on the ground, where the future of so many animals in Canada – beluga whales, monarch butterflies, grizzly bears, and others – will be determined.

– from *Wildcanada.net*

❖

The Maryland Native Plant Society is urging Americans to write letters to their members of Congress in support of The Harmful Non-native Weed Control Act of 2001, HR 1462 and S 198. Known as the Craig-Daschle bill, this initiative provides matching federal funds for cash-strapped weed control/eradication efforts in Maryland and throughout the U.S. For more information, see <http://mdflora.org>.

❖

Friends of the Don East (FODE) in Toronto is embarking on an ambitious plan to inventory trees in neighbourhoods in the Don River watershed. Volunteers will collect crucial data about the condition of trees in order to ensure that the community forest has a sustainable and healthy future. To get involved, contact Allan Sinclair at (416) 466-9153 or fode@web.ca.

❖

For close to two decades, the Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre in Toronto, Ontario, has engaged in outdoor programs that bring children (with and without special needs) from the community together with children at the rehabilitation centre to have a shared creative experience in a natural context, the garden. A recently published book, *The Spiral Garden Resource Book*, presents the unique approach of integrating art, garden and play that has been developing in Bloorview's programs. The goal of the book is to provide inspiration and guidance for artists, educators, therapists and community workers interested in working with children, art and nature. Fully illustrated and including step-by-step directions for more than 30 activities, the book is available by cheque (\$65 CDN; \$40 US) from Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre – Spiral Garden, 350 Rumsey Road, Toronto, Ontario M4G 1R8; (416) 425-6220, ext. 3317; e-mail spiral_cosmic@bloorviewmacmillan.on.ca.

❖

Olmsted Woods, a small woods directly beside the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., is being restored to its original composition. Members of the Maryland Native Plant Society are involved in the volunteer effort, which includes planting native species and removing invasive exotics. Horticulturist Elizabeth Brewster is directing volunteers, and work continues every Saturday (10 am to noon) and Thursday (9 am to noon) through to November. To volunteer, call (202) 537-2213.

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Orchid enthusiasts have a new publication to browse: *The Wild Orchids of Arizona and New Mexico* by Ronald Coleman treats all the species of wild orchids currently found in or historically known to have occurred in Arizona and New Mexico. Of the 35 orchids native to the region, 29 are at the limits of their range, as the southwestern region of the United States is a great floral crossroads, with species of wildflowers associated with the north and south converging in the diverse flora described in this book. (Published by Cornell University Press, 272 pages, 160 colour images, \$39.95 US, cloth, ISBN 0-8014-3950-7)

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The Michigan Native Plant Producers Association (MNPPA) has put together a highly useful guide that lists native plant species grown by MNPPA member nurseries. The species are not only native to Michigan, but originated from documented Michigan wild populations. MNPPA members assure consumers that all plants originated from stock collected with appropriate permits and permissions. By consulting the guide and ordering listed species from the nurseries included in the guide, consumers know that they are ordering plants native to Michigan, grown in Michigan and originating from Michigan genotypes. To reserve a copy of the MNPPA guide to Michigan Native Plants and Seeds, contact Wetlands Nursery, Inc., P.O. Box 14553, Saginaw, Michigan 48601, or e-mail JewelR@Wetlands-Nursery.com.

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The Forest Gene Conservation Association is developing a system of certification for the source of woody plants in Ontario. Called "Ontario's Natural Selections," the program certifies seed collectors (through training and audits) and nurseries (through inspections and audits), who are then eligible to register and certify their source-identified seedlots and stocklots. Once registered they can label them by their exact source location or by a more general seed zone and sell them as certified. Source identification will assist restoration practitioners in choosing appropriate stock for their projects. Certification of source will give them a measure of assurance that they are getting what the label says. Practitioners can assist in building the supply by asking for source-identified material, and certified material. For more information, contact barb.boysen@mnr.gov.on.ca.

 Ontario's Natural Selections

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.

September 14–15, 2002

BOWMAN'S HILL WILDFLOWER PRESERVE
NATIVE PLANT SALE
New Hope, Pennsylvania
Many varieties of nursery propagated native plants from seeds or cuttings ready for fall planting. For more info, call (215) 862-2924.

September 14–15, 2002

FIELD BOTANISTS OF ONTARIO AGM
St. Thomas, Ontario
Field trips include Springwater Park, Dutton Prairie and Dunwich Swamp. For info, see www.trentu.ca/fbo.

September 14, 2002

GUELPH ARBORETUM AUXILIARY PLANT SALE
Guelph, Ontario
This popular fundraising event includes native trees, shrubs, woodland and rare plants for sale at the R.J. Hilton Centre on College Avenue East. Opens at 9:00 a.m. – arrive early. For info, see www.uoguelph.ca/~arboretu or call (519) 824-4120, ext. 2358.

September 14, 2002

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AGM
Vancouver, British Columbia
Join native plant enthusiasts for a potluck lunch and AGM. For info, e-mail npsbc@hotmail.com.

September 15, 2002

4TH ANNUAL NATURAL GARDEN TOUR
Vancouver, British Columbia
For info, contact (604) 984-9730 or schimph@dnv.org.

September 23, 2002

NOVA SCOTIA WILD FLORA SOCIETY MEETING
Halifax, Nova Scotia
The NSWFS meets at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. For information, e-mail Barry.Sawyer@ns.sympatico.ca or see website www.chebucto.ns.ca/~nswfs/

October 1–2, 2002

EASTERN NATIVE GRASS SYMPOSIUM
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
For more info, see www.unc.edu/depts/ncbg.

October 7–9, 2002

5TH CANADIAN URBAN FOREST CONFERENCE
Markham, Ontario
Hosted by the Ontario Urban Forest Council. For info, see www.event-horizons.com/cufc5.

October 18, 2002

SHRUB IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP
Guelph, Ontario
Horticulturist Henry Kock leads this hands-on workshop at the University of Guelph Arboretum. For info, see www.uoguelph.ca/~arboretu or call (519) 824-4120, ext. 2358.

October 27, 2002

INVASIVE PLANTS – GLOBAL ISSUES,
LOCAL CHALLENGES
Chicago, Illinois
A symposium hosted by the Chicago Botanic Garden. For info, see www.chicagobotanic.org/symposia/jmposymp.html.

November 2, 2002

NANPS AGM
Toronto, Ontario
Held at the Civic Garden Centre, from 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., includes guest speaker Mathis Natvik speaking about restoring Carolinian woodlands. For info, see www.nanps.org.

December 2002–March 2003

GREEN LEGACY
Montreal Botanical Garden, Montreal, PQ
An exhibition showcasing the beauty, diversity and vulnerability of Canada's native plants.

NANPS Seed Exchange

The NANPS Seed Exchange is grateful to receive seeds of native plants – and now's the time to collect seeds! 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. The list of seeds available in the 2002/2003 exchange will be published in the Winter 2003 issue of *The Blazing Star*.

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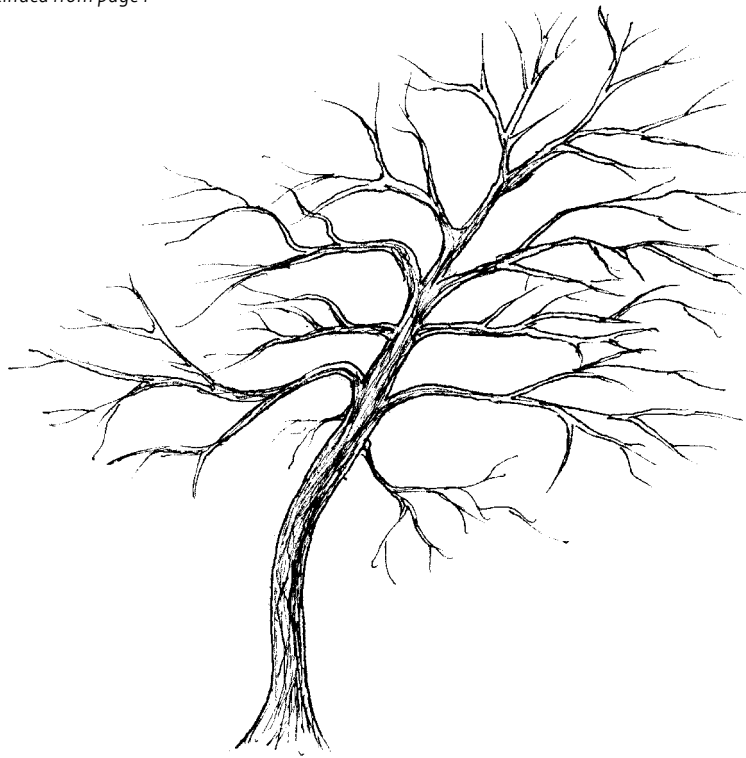
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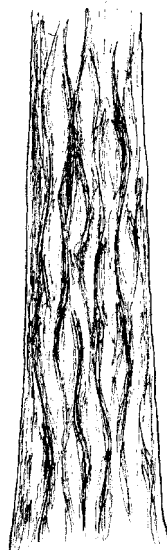
Carpinus caroliniana

Native Trees, use yet another common name, hornbeam. As I have learned since my childhood explorations in the woods, it is better to make the effort to learn at least some botanical Latin.

Enough of names! *Carpinus caroliniana* is an understory tree found in the woods often near rivers or streams. It prefers shade (although it can be grown in sun) and is quite tolerant of a wide range of soil conditions. Its adaptability and wide range – from the northeastern shores of Georgian Bay to near Quebec City down the entire eastern United States to northern Florida and eastern Texas, even being found in the mountains in Mexico – is cause for awe from experienced arborists. Sternberg and Wilson say this tree is “one of the most broadly adapted of all our native trees.” There has been some concern expressed in the literature about transplanting the tree due to its shallow root system. However, in my experience this can be overcome easily. My own musclewood was purchased as a tiny plant barely two feet tall in a two-gallon pot with a distinct and somewhat worrisome bend in its main trunk. It has thrived under my mature apple tree and now is approaching ten feet after three years. The bend in the trunk seems to have straightened, and the tree is developing nicely.

Carpinus caroliniana is not often seen in the

cultivated landscape but it has many merits which could make it a useful addition to a small, shady yard. I have valued its tendency to grow in an asymmetrical way with a leader that bends into graceful curves. Sternberg and Wilson’s description of its “serpentine growth that can give the tree a bonsai-like appearance, looking older and more venerable than it is” reminds me of my childhood tree,



Mature bark of musclewood

which seemed to be quite bent and ancient looking. The growth habits vary from specimen to specimen with some being multi-stemmed and others having one straight trunk. This tree will not grow large or quickly, usually not exceeding the height of a semi-dwarf fruit tree, according to Sternberg and Wilson.

Graceful in all seasons, *Carpinus caroliniana* often produces a luminous display of colour in the fall. My tree’s leaves turn a warm orange-yellow colour nicely complementing the deep wine red leaves of the nearby flowering dogwood (not the native but the Korean one). Who needs flowers with such a lovely leaf display? “Quite a nice native tree,” says Michael Dirr, who continues by noting that “This tree has a lot to offer our landscapes in subtle beauty.” Dirr, the author of *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, has also promoted the use of these trees in an article called “The hornbeams – Choice plants for American gardens.” Unfortunately, I am not aware of the tree being used much in North American gardens. The European hornbeam, however, has been used widely in landscaping in North America and Europe, and many selections with various attributes are available.

Worth seeking out, *Carpinus caroliniana* will reward you with year-round, trouble-free beauty. It is not prone to attacks from insects or disease. Its hard wood saves it from damage from ice and wind. Not likely to outgrow a small shady space in your yard, it will never need pruning. It prefers deep, rich, moist and slightly acidic soil but will reportedly withstand the worst urban soils and conditions without evidence of stress. My tree has not produced any flowers (staminate catkins) followed by winged nuts, but these are not noteworthy and perhaps only come when the tree is more mature. It is unlikely that the tree, when it does flower, will create any nuisance seedlings. So, even if you don’t have a musclewood tree in your childhood memory bank, perhaps you can make childhood memories for some young person in the future. Remember – it’s slow growing. No time to lose.

Catherine Siddall lives and gardens in Toronto, where she is a long-time member of the Toronto and Parkdale Horticultural Societies. Catherine’s garden design, build and maintenance business is thriving and she has successfully insinuated many native plants into clients’ landscapes. She is also a partner in Siddall and Cope, which offers services to groups wanting to establish community gardens or naturalization projects. She can be reached at (416) 531-2253 or rc.siddall@sympatico.ca.

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIGITTE GRANTON

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