



# Newsletter of the Louisiana Native Plant Society

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## of Meadows and Mowers ...

Keynote speaker Chapman Kelley, at a Wildflower Workshop sponsored by the Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium, has inspired us! Kelley is curator of Wildflower Works, Dallas Natural History Museum. He has been able to utilize his talent for printing wildflowers in the creation of large-scale plantings of wildflowers. His canvas is the ground, and his paints are the flowers. The entire yard of his Dallas residence is a wildflower bouquet blooming continuously throughout most of the year. Kelley cuts his yard only once a year (after mature seed formation); once cut, his mowing and maintenance are finished for the remainder of the year.

As curator of the Wildflower Works, Kelley has planned and overseen efforts to convert the grass lawn of the Dallas Natural History Museum into a large scale representation of beautiful wildflowers. Not one square foot of grass is to be seen, only a rainbow of color. After some initial skepticism on the part of the public, the project has enjoyed great success, and city officials are gratified by lower maintenance costs with no grass to cut.

Kelley's next wildflower project will be another "first" for Dallas. He plans to sow wildflowers over the entire Dallas-Fort Worth Airport in the areas between runways. Just imagine it from the air! His creation will be a mosaic of beautiful colors prominent for most of the year.

Closer to home: According to Paul Hardy, the Secretary of the La. Department of Transportation, Louisiana has 16,000 miles of state highways with nearly 300,000 acres of grass requiring maintenance. The 1981-82 cost for mowing alone was \$5 million, it will rise to \$7 million in 1983-84. O.M. Pourciau, Roadside Development Superintendent, is required to maintain the highway right-of-ways. To do that, these areas are mowed 3 to 5 times per year, and in some places the use of herbicides is necessary. One a 300,000 acre scale, Pourciau has a tough time satisfying everyone.

The Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation has the same task but with one important difference: the citizens of Texas support and, more importantly, promote the Texas Wildflower Program. Their efforts have not only saved Texas taxpayers \$25 million in mowing costs but have created thoroughfares beautifully landscaped with wildflowers. Whereas, in the past, Texas usually cut four times per growing season, they now cut once.

Lafayette Mayor Lastrapes, Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Pourciau came out strongly in favor of such a project for Louisiana, stressing that concerned citizens must organize statewide to promote and publicize their efforts on behalf of wildflowers.

By Mike Buchart, Louisiana Office of Forestry



## Editor's View:

# A Case for Wildflowers

These days there's a far greater respect for all kinds of wildlife. With the 1960s' emphasis on environmental issues has come public awareness of the part wildflowers play in ecological stability; apart from their sheer physical beauty, native plants serve as indicators of mineral and metal ores, offer new sources for medicines and have acknowledged potential as food crops. Everything from courses to calendars and postcards are available to those who care to explore the world of wildflowers. A 1984 wildflower calendar familiarizing people with various endangered species may be obtained by sending \$5.50 to the Conservation Committee, Garden Club of America, 598 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Out of 20,000 native American plants, only about 60 are classified "endangered" by the Department of Interior. However, some botanists estimate that without protection, an additional 3,000 plant species in the U.S. may disappear in the next few decades.

Now that many natural habitats are being disturbed by housing and industrial developments, highway construction and farmlands, as well as natural catastrophes, no stand of wildflowers can be entirely safe from destruction. Federal and state laws have been enacted which partially protect these native plants, but they fall short of adequacy. Certainly another means of protecting them is the establishment of your own wildflower garden. Many people are finding a great satisfaction in doing their own gardening and are realizing that this naturalistic type of planting is often more rewarding than the familiar rose garden or annual beds. And once established, wildflower gardens are no more demanding, and perhaps easier to care for, than a strictly cultivated landscape.

To quote from *Natural Gardens, Gardening with Native Plants* by Jack Kramer:

"... wildings can pretty much fend for themselves once they are established (don't forget that they have been doing it for thousands of years). Give these plants the proper location and they will take off on their own, although in the beginning there may be fatalities. Observe and experiment; it's half the fun of cultivating wildings. You know what to expect from garden hybrids, but wildings are an adventure, and you'll find yourself entering a whole new role of gardening ..."

If you have decided to preserve wildflowers and cultivate them, they will be a never-ending source of fascination and bemusement, and there is no better place to observe plants than in your own backyard garden. For most of us, native wildflowers were the first flowers we knew — as children we passed the hours making clover chains, or putting buttercups under our friends' chins to see if they liked butter, or picking a bouquet of wildflowers to surprise mother. When we were young, the beauty of wildflowers was hard to ignore, and for us as adults, they will recreate a visual treat and rekindle long-forgotten memories as we view them in our own yards.

## Did you know?

We are now six chapters strong? Count them:

Shreveport  
Ruston  
Coushatta  
Alexandria  
Lafayette  
New Orleans

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For the carpenters amongst us, a virtually weather-proof planter box can be made and filled with varied native plants. It is appropriate for apartment dwellers and others living in borrowed and limited space, and ideal for anyone wanting to emphasize specific plants. Whole ecosystems can be maintained in large boxes and they can be planted for year-round beauty.

Following careful construction, it is imperative that the box be properly sealed to insure against leakage. Once it is filled with haydite (a light-weight gravel used for drainage), soil, plants and mulch, it is extremely difficult to fix any leaks. A good sealant is polyurethane; then three coats of oil-based enamel is applied, allowing time for each coat to dry thoroughly. The planter must now be caulked with clear silicon all along the edges. The final proof is to test it: fill with water and leave overnight to check for any leaks. Your intense labor will pay off in a water-tight structure. Any seepage can be fixed with additional caulking. Great project for a winter weekend!

COFFEE GROUNDS are great compost for acid-loving natives such as huckleberries, azaleas, cardinal flowers, oaks and wax myrtles.

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Anytime you BOIL EGGS, SAVE THE WATER. When cool, use it to water your seedlings. It's full of valuable minerals.

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It is a mistake to think that just because we enjoy searching out and identifying showy wildflowers that they're out there blooming for our pleasure. Humbug! Wildflowers bloom for the bugs. Most showy species — and that includes around 1,000 of Louisiana's native plant species — depend on creepy crawlers to keep the generations generating. The little rascals do it with their legs, antennae, proboscis, and other projecting parts. So next time you brush an insect off a blossom, be gentle.

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The National Wildlife Federation distributes a Backyard Habitat Kit showing how to plant a yard to provide the food and shelter that attract wildlife. Most of the certified yards — and there are well over 2,000 of them — are a quarter-acre or less; the maximum certifiable parcel is three acres. The aim of the non-profit NWF is to promote a better understanding of wildlife and to develop a system of mini-refuges to help wildlife survive the battle of the bulldozer. For your Backyard Habitat Kit, send \$1 to Backyard Habitat Program, National Wildlife Federation, Dept. PM, 1412 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.



# Sources

## Books

*Herbal and Folk Medicines of Louisiana*, by Samuel J. Touchstone; published by Folk Life Books, P.O. Box 128, Princeton, La. 71067, 1983. \$6.95.

Our own Sam Touchstone has written an informative and historical guide which should be of interest to every Louisianian. He has collected local herbs and folk medicines and researched their history, maintaining an interest since boyhood. The fruit of interviews with many of our people as well as little-known archival facts is included. Purchase your signed copy locally from the following bookstores: B. Dalton Bookseller, Barron's, The Tower and LSU-Shreveport Bookstore. It is also available at Sunshine Health Foods, 2328 Line Ave., Shreveport.

*Gardening With Wildlife*, published by the National Wildlife Fed., 1974. \$12.95 clothbound, 190 pp.

The comprehensive guide to transforming your yard into a mini-refuge bustling with wildlife. Information on landscaping; transplanting and using wild trees, shrubs and flowers to attract wildlife; construction and placement of bird houses, baths and feeders; attracting mammals ... and much more. Profusely illustrated.

*Growing Wildflowers*, by Marie Sperka, published by Harper and Row, 1973. \$10.95 clothbound.

An excellent, all-inclusive guide to growing wildflowers, lacking only a chapter on their conservation. Includes sections on soil preparation, types of plant propagation, and the successful cultivation of 200 species of flowers, plus a very helpful glossary. A list of wildflower suppliers is also included. The suburban or urban gardener attempting to "naturalize" his or her yard will find this book invaluable.

*Nursery Source Guide: A Handbook*, published as Vol. 33, No. 2 of Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record, Summer, 1983. \$2.25 paperback.

An important source of information on the availability of 1,200 tree and shrub types in the U.S. Booklet lists species, varieties and forms of plants, their outstanding features, their hardiness, and the retail and wholesale suppliers handling them. Order from: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11225.

*American Wildlife and Plants*, by Martin, Zim and Nelson, published by Dover Publications, 1951. \$3.95 paperback, 500 pp.

An illustrated "Guide to Wildlife Food Habits: The use of trees, shrubs, weeds and herbs by birds and mammals of U.S." It gives detailed information on the plant and animal menus of 1,000 or more birds, mammals and also some fish, amphibians and reptiles, and the range of each plant and wildlife species. Black and white drawings and maps. An oldie but goodie!

## Magazines

*Plants and Planets*, available from the Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium Association, 637 Girard Park Drive, Lafayette, La., 70503, (318) 261-8350.

Write for your donation category and information on membership benefits.

# Upcoming Events

Your annual meeting of the Louisiana Native Plant Society will be held Saturday, January 28, in Alexandria at the LSU-A Science Building. The campus is located 10 miles south of Alexandria on Highway 71.

Dr. Ben Martin has an interesting program geared for both the professional and amateur enthusiast. Our schedule looks like this:

8-9 a.m. — Slide show presentation on wildflowers

9 - noon — Various workshops

12-1 p.m. — Bring a sack lunch for this 1-hour break

1-2 p.m. — Business Meeting

2-3 p.m. — Late workshop

A registration fee of \$2 will be required. It promises to be a very worthwhile day in terms of education and enjoyment. Come and renew your love affair with the natives in the midst of this cold and continuous winter.

## Regional Workshop

Wildflower enthusiasts will want to attend a regional workshop scheduled for April 27-29 at Barnwell Garden and Art Center.

Lecturers from area colleges will talk on growing and propagation of wildflowers, developing wildflower gardens, the value of wildflowers to tourism and other topics on the first day of the workshop.

The second day is reserved for an all-day tour of the Northwest Louisiana Wildflower Trail and other places of interest.

Exhibits by local naturalists, artists and photographers will be shown on April 29.

## RECIPES

### Party Dip

16 oz. yogurt  
2 cups mayonnaise  
1 lb. frozen chopped spinach  
½ cup chopped wild onion tops  
½ cup chopped oxalis flower stems  
½ pkg. ranch dressing mix

Blend yogurt, mayonnaise and dressing. Thaw spinach in strainer and pat with paper towel until very dry. Add to yogurt mixture, fold in onions and wildflowers. Decorate with wildflowers.

Serve with whole wheat crackers. This dip is especially attractive served in a hollowed loaf of Italian or Chef's bread.

### Violet Dip

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese  
¾ cup honey  
½ cup chopped violets (blossoms only)

Blend cream cheese and honey, fold in violets. Decorate dip with violets and violet leaves. Serve with crackers, strawberries, or other fresh fruits.





# Jessamines in bloom now to April

By JACK P. PRICE  
Blanchard, La.

Yellow Jessamine is an evergreen vine which grows to a length of 20 feet or more. Its primary blooming season is January through April although some plants bloom almost every month of the year. Dark green leaves are opposite, lanceolate, deep veined and approximately two inches in length and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide. Leaves are spaced about two inches apart on the stem. A node forms at the leaf junction and when this node comes in contact with the soil roots develop. The vine is woody in texture, about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick and as the vine ages it turns from a light green to a darker green and then to a rusty color.

The root system is shallow and wide spreading. Small roots extend outward from the main system and may be several feet in length. Several vines may be produced by one root forming a cluster of climbing vines. Flowering takes place almost every month of the year. It is a pleasant surprise to be walking through the woods in January or February and find a Yellow Jessamine blooming. Yellow Jessamine reaches the height of its beauty in early March with a burst of yellow. Hundreds of flowers may blanket a fence or tree. Flowers bloom on the tips of the stems forming clusters of a dozen or more blooms.

The slightly fragrant trumpet shaped five lobed flowers are approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches across the opening. Flowers last for several days then shed after pollination. Seed pods are oblong, about one inch long and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. As spring advances new growth forms and more blooming takes place. In dense woods Yellow Jessamine will grow to the top of good size trees, on fence rows, low bushes and on open land where it will spread out forming a thick tangle of vines.

Yellow Jessamine is not easy to transplant, but once established it will do well under just about any soil conditions. It likes the sun but will do well in shade. Very little care is needed once it is established in your garden. When transplanting is attempted it is best to take the shallow runners in a ball of soil. Remove several sections where roots are established, cut from the main vine. Place in a plastic sack immediately as the plants will dehydrate very fast. Plant near a fence or tree where it will have a chance to climb. Place a plastic sack over the entire area and hold down with small rocks or a couple of boards. Keep the plastic covering in place until the roots have reestablished and new growth is noted. Water often. Winter months are the best time for transplanting. Do not attempt to take the main vine.



Yellow jessamine