



SUMMER 1987

volume 5, number 2

## The LOUISIANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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### SUMMER MEETING REMINDER!!!!

This year's summer meeting will be held at Briarwood, the Caroline Dorman Nature Preserve, June 5 through June 7. It is sponsored by the Northwest Chapter of the LNPS. Briarwood offers one of the largest collection of plants native to the southeastern U.S. to be found anywhere. Many specimens are over seventy years old. Some of our state's foremost botanists, naturalists and landscape architects will be available to answer any questions you might have. Tours will be informal with a balance of talent to cover all fields. Expect a great time! The agenda is as follows:

#### Friday, June 5th:

12:00 Noon: check in and set-up camping.  
7:00 - 9:30 PM: campfire and socializing.

#### Saturday, June 6th:

6:00 - 8:00 AM: early walk for birders and  
photographers.  
8:00 - 12:00 Noon: tours and study group.  
12:00 - 1:00 PM: lunch.  
1:00 - 2:00 PM: business meeting.  
2:00 - 5:00 PM: sandhill car tour - meet and leave  
from Briarwood.  
5:00 - 7:00 PM: rest, relaxation, supper.  
7:00 - 8:00 PM: late walk at Briarwood.  
8:00 - 9:30 PM: slides and lecture.

#### Sunday, June 7th:

6:00 - 8:00 AM: early morning walk for bird watching.  
8:00 - 8:30 AM: relax or pack.  
8:30 AM: depart from Briarwood for Cypress-Black  
Bayou Recreation Area (1 1/2 hour  
drive).

Three words of warning that pertain to most of our state in June: mosquitoes, chiggers (redbugs) and ticks. We use Cutters Repellent for mosquitoes and ticks and dust our socks with sulphur for chiggers. Taking care in where you walk helps most. The first discussion of the day will be how to avoid these little killjoys!

Saline, La. and vicinity is blessed with stores and gas stations that are open every day including Sundays. Restaurants are mainly "a la hamburger" here in Saline, but we do have an excellent catfish restaurant called "Mirror Lake" located nearby. Natchitoches, a forty minute drive from Briarwood, has several restaurants and motels. For Chamber of Commerce information call

1-318-352-4411 or write: 781 Front Street, Natchitoches, La. 71457.

Briarwood (the Caroline Dorman Nature Preserve) is located just off La. Hwy. 9 - 2 miles south of Saline or 19 miles north of Campti, La. There's a big, green highway sign by the road. For more information call Richard L. Johnson at 1-318-576-3379 or write him at Rt. 1, Box 195, Saline, La. 71070.

Particulars: camping facilities are available for tents and self-contained RVs. As a special invitation to LNPS members, Briarwood can provide several tent and RV sites. RVs should make advance reservations. Campstoves are OK, NO OPEN FIRES ARE ALLOWED! A screened cooking porch is available and restrooms are available at the Visitor Center. Several camp sites are available:

1. Cloud's Crossing: located on Saline Bayou, several campsites are available along this swift-running creek. Picnic tables, a swimming hole, chemical toilets, and garbage bins are available. Mosquitoes can be rough so be prepared. 9 1/2 miles from Briarwood.
2. Mill Creek Reservoir: large open area on lake for camping. Nice view, no facilities. 3 1/2 miles from Briarwood.
3. Kisatchie National Forest: several places around if you prefer isolation. We suggest scouting the area first. Campfires are permitted.

#### LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Every day I give thanks for the beauty and wonder our native flora and the creatures they support have brought to my life. I can go right outside my front door and pick a bouquet of wildflowers or watch the bees and butterflies as they enjoy the bounty. It is certainly a pleasure to watch the bees and butterflies at the Mamou plant on their way to the Red Honeysuckle via the Indian Pink. The field near the small frog pond is covered with the yellows and reds of Coneflower, Coreopsis and Firewheel, and is a warm welcome to the day.

Native plants deserve our recognition and dedication to their preservation now more than ever. Our Society can make a difference if we continue to work for them by educating the general population of the value of native plants to the natural world. As philosophers and naturalists like John Muir pointed out, undisturbed nature contains a unique value and simply must be preserved where it is still possible to do so. But in a world of finite resources, preservation alone is not enough. Earth stewardship is going to have to move beyond preservation to restoration. We are going to have to learn to restore nature in far less time than nature takes to heal herself.

The land my husband and I bought to live on and with was essentially barren of diversity and plants other than agricultural crop plants. I have dedicated my landscape work to restoring the native flora on this beautiful escarpment landscape which the prehistoric Indians were able to enjoy and use.

I have hope for preservation and restoration because of the LNPS and its members. We need to become active in education, in project work, in learning more about the delicate balance our natural environment requires. I have hope in my young son and in the young grandson of Jessie and Richard Johnson, among others. After all, the first thing my son sees when he awakes each morning is the wildflowers I planted in the front of hsi window just for his appreciation,

Diane Bullard

President, LNPS

DON'T FORGET OUR TREASURER'S ADDRESS!

If you know someone who did not receive this newsletter, there's a good chance their 1987 dues are outstanding! So, if you have to renew your dues, or know someone that would like to join the LNPS the place to send your \$5 is:

Bill Gebelein  
11128 Woodmere Drive  
Shreveport, Louisiana 71115

DEADLINES FOR NEXT 4 NEWSLETTERS:

Don't forget! In an effort to better coordinate the distribution of information concerning field trips as well as other dated information the newsletter has started a new deadline policy. The amount of material received for this newsletter was well below that received for the previous (Spring '87) newsletter! The deadlines for the next four newsletters will be as follows:

Fall Newsletter:	September 1
Winter Newsletter:	December 1
Spring Newsletter:	March 1
Summer Newsletter:	June 1

Every effort will be made to have the newsletters in the mail within 7 days following the deadline.

WHITE VIOLETS TRANSPLANT EASILY INTO THE GARDEN

There are some 400 or more different species of violets in North America and a good many of them are found in our area. Almost all violets have several things in common - the lower petal is flat, they have two side petals and two upper petals. The lower petal slopes back to form a spur. The pistil and five stamens are enclosed by the spur. The white violet of our areas (Viola primulifolia) is among the first of the season to bloom. You will find them in large patches in roadside ditches where the soil is well drained. Plants crowd one another and there will be several hundred plants in a small area.

Flowers are about 1/2 of an inch in size and have a very pleasant odor. Petals are white with the exception of the lower petal which has purple stripes. Blooms first appear as a green bud at the tip of an upright leafless stem. Stems are four to six inches in height and light fleshy pink in color. Each flower lasts for several days. The three-chambered seed pod grows to about 1/2 of an inch in length and 1/4 of an inch in diameter after pollination. Pods mature very rapidly then split open dropping the many seeds. Some seeds will germinate in a few days, others will wash away to start a new colony of plants in a new location.

Leaves are ovate-lanceolate and taper at the base on the petiole. The petiole or stem is approximately three inches in length. The root system is a rough small rhizome which is located just below the soil. Water washes soil over the rhizome and keeps it covered since these plants grow in damp, moist places. However, when the soil is washed away exposing the rhizome it will go from its natural whitish color to green. Many fine roots form at the joints

on the rhizome. Stolons or runners also form at the joints and they extend outward several inches. New plants form in time and when they are well established the new plants will detach from the parent plant.

Viola primulifolia blooms from late February until well into the hot, dry summer months. Birds like the seeds and deer are fond of the foliage and rhizomes. They can be transplanted successfully and will reseed to form thick colonies of plants. Plant in a damp, cool, semi-shaded area of your garden.

### TEXAS BLUEBONNETS ON MY LAWN

by Carol Wells, of Natchitoches

My Texan husband spent twenty years telling me that bluebonnets refused to grow anywhere but in Texas. When we moved to Louisiana in 1963 he was amazed to find bluebonnets in his new garden. Lupinus texensis is the species we have. Every spring when they are in bloom I am asked questions about them: can I pot some up for a July church sale? Why don't we use them for roadside planting? Can they be grown from seed? How do you grow them?

Here are my amateur answers to these questions. The temperature here is about the same as in Texas, and the soil is all right provided plants are moved with their own soil, thus bringing with them the necessary soil bacteria. The original plants on our lawn were brought from Texas in the late 1940s by the original owners, who dug them with a teaspoon from a roadside and carried them in teacups. In forty years, the plants have spread across the hot, dry middle part of my lawn.

Louisiana rainfall makes it hard to grow bluebonnets. They cannot contend unaided with all the weeds that grow abundantly in Louisiana but not in dry Texas. In my legume enriched lawn, I have to weed the entire lawn, not just a garden bed. I pull up wild geraniums, fuzzy-stemmed grass, ugly yellow clover, the lovely, clear-colored tradescantia, horrid bedstraw, yellow daisy flowers, lathyrus, and a lot of other intruders that would take over in one season if allowed, but none of these weeds can compare with vetch!

Vetch has an up-and-over-the-bluebonnets policy that has them stretching out and setting seed before the bluebonnets even show blue, and as the bluebonnets try to get started, the vetch keeps climbing - great sheaves of stems bowing the bluebonnets over. No one who asks about roadside planting knows the hours I spend tiptoeing in moccasins among the bluebonnets, gently insnarling the long vetch stems, plucking it, strand by strand. Nor do they count the bags of vetch set out for roadside collection. And still it grows competitively, with abandon, with purpose. Even if every visible stem and root were pulled, there would be wispy little stems, hugging the ground, unobserved under the lovely bluebonnet foliage, setting seed, waiting for next spring...Gotcha!

April is the best month for bluebonnet flowers. After April the whole show goes downhill: plants grow sprangly and flop over. The turn brown while setting seed. When they are mowed at last, there is no way to have a lovely lawn. I try to compensate for this by growing spider lilies, Lycoris radiata by the thousands on the lawn. Their clumps of fading springtime foliage make islands in the bluebonnets on which to stand to do the lawn weeding. By fall, small green rosettes have sprung up, promising next year's bluebonnets. While there is no way to pot the plants for summer sale, in winter they can be dug and potted in their own soil, and seeds can be planted in summer in lawn soil. I hope to bring some to the winter plant sale in January.