

Ft. Polk Kisatchie: The Next Step

Charles Allen, LNPS president, received the following memo from the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund concerning public hearing on the Army's use of the Vernon District of the Kisatchie National Forest:

On August 1, 1996, the Department of Agriculture and the Army entered into a supplemental memorandum of agreement (MOA) regarding Fort Polk and the Kisatchie N.F. In brief, the MOA provides that within 30 days the Army will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) of its recurring limited use of the Vernon District. If the EA results in a finding of no significant impact

(FONSI), as is predicted, then there will be a 30-day public comment period on the EA. Expect a public meeting in early September, soon after the EA is released.

The MOA also requires that the Army do an environmental analysis of their proposed new intensive uses of the Forest. This will be an 18-month process, with the analysis to include examining a full range of alternatives, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This analysis is probably the more important of the two. There should be several opportunities for public

participation in the course of this process, starting with a "scoping meeting" to help the Army and Forest Service identify factors which should be considered in the analysis. It will be very important for the public to speak up.

To be sure that you are informed of public meetings, the availability of draft documents, public comment periods, etc., write soon to both of the following to ask to be added to the mailing list for the Fort Polk/Kisatchie National Forest land use matters. Anytime you write about these Kisatchie issues, it would be a good

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Johnston/Breaux Amendment Dies In Committee

The LNPS received notification around August 1st that the Johnston/Breaux amendment to transfer the Vernon District of Kisatchie National Forest to Ft. Polk had been removed from the Defense Authorization Bill in Conference Committee. The Administration opposed the amendment "because it would waive the application of existing environmental laws and requirements." However, the Administration has directed the Dept. of Agriculture, of which the Forest Service is a part, to work out an agreement regarding the Army's use of lands in the Vernon District. The hashing out of that agreement is about to begin.

About fifty national, state and local groups, and countless individuals participated in the lobbying efforts to halt the land transfer. Unfortunately, it is not over yet.

Eastern Florida Parishes Fall 1996 Extravaganza!!!

September 28, 1996. Meet in downtown Franklinton at Dad's Donuts* at 9:00 A.M. From there, spend the morning at a variety of natural communities at LSU's Lee Memorial Forest. We will arrive at Lee Forest around 9:30, so meet us there if it is more convenient; see directions below. We will visit upland sandy habitats; a mature riparian natural area; and possibly floodplain forest along the Pearl River or select roadside stops. Spend the afternoon at The Nature Conservancy's newest preserve, Abita Creek Flatwoods near Abita Springs. This is a premier site featuring old growth bayhead forest and pitcher plant savannahs and pine flatwoods. Special plants include pond cypress, *Taxodium ascendens*, parrot pitcher plant, *Sarracenia psittacina*, and dozens more! End day one in the beautiful, historic town of Abita Springs for an optional visit to hear live bluegrass music at the Piney Woods Opry, or consume exceptional food and beverages at the Abita Brew Pub and Restaurant. **BRING YOUR LUNCH AND WATER/DRINKS** *Dad's Donuts is located across from the Courthouse at the intersections of La. Hwys. 10 & 16. Phone #504-839-3765.

September 29, 1996. Meet near Lacombe, La. at the gates of Fontainebleu State Park at 8:30 am. See lodging, Saturday Night, below, for directions. Caravan to Big Branch National Wildlife refuge to see natural slash pine-wiregrass community that grades into marsh habitat along Lake Pontchartrain. Finish up around lunch time, so bringing a lunch is not necessary.

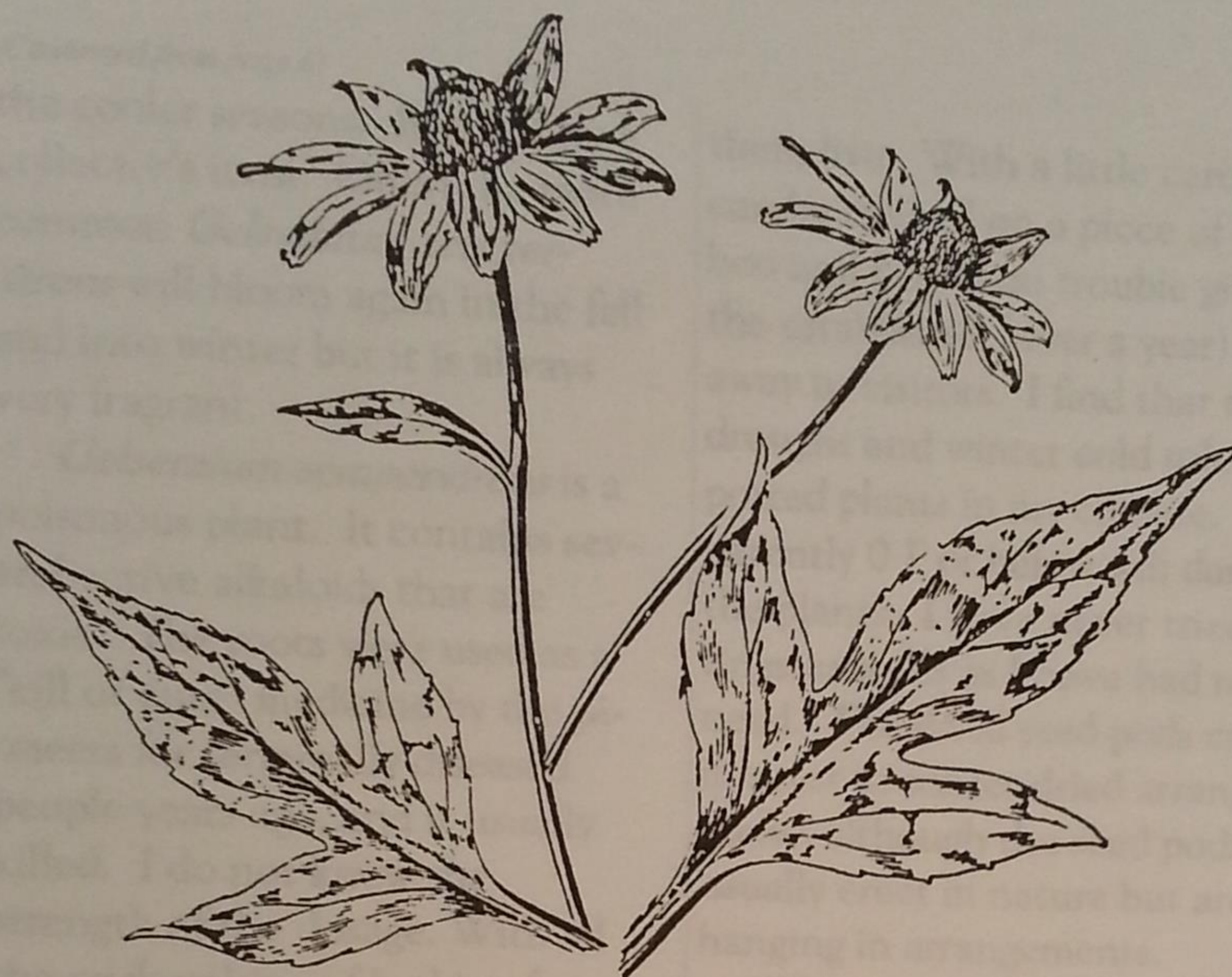
Lodging. Friday night: Lodging is available at Lee Forest for about \$12 per person. This LSU's School of Forestry camp. **Directions:** It is located 10 miles east of Franklinton off La. Hwy. 10. Turn north at LSU Lee Memorial Forest sign across from small grocery store called Midway Grocery. Go about 75 yards and turn left at driveway with LSU Lee Forest sign. Lodge is 2nd building on the right. Facilities include a large dorm with 30 single beds, two small rooms with 2 single beds each, and one room with 3 single beds. Bathrooms, showers, and a kitchen(with dishes, pots, etc.) are available for use. You must bring linen or sleeping bag and pillow case, towels, and food. There is one group TV. Camping is also allowed free of charge, with a small fee if you use the kitchen. If you are interested in staying at Lee Forest, contact Nelwyn McInnis at 504-338-1040.

There are camping areas around McComb/Tylertown, MS. Contact the Pearl River Basin Public Recreation Area at 601-684-9568 for information on the Bogue Chitto Water Park campground. Near Tylertown, also on the Bogue Chitto River is Walker's Bridge Campground, 601-798-0966. Holmes Waterpark campground, 601-876-4947, is near Lake Walthall south of Tylertown, MS. **Motels:** If you are coming from North Louisiana, you may wish to stay in the McComb, MS area Friday night. There are 3 chain motels: Comfort Inn—1-800-221-2222, Ramada Inn—601-684-5566, and Holiday Inn—601-684-6211.

Saturday night **Motels:** Covington, La. has the nearest hotel chains: The Holiday Inn, 504-893-3580, and the North Park Best Western, 504-892-2681. Covington is about 10 miles from Abita Springs. Camping is available at Fontainebleu State Park, located along US 190, about 3 miles east of La. Hwy. 59 in Mandeville, La. Bathrooms and showers are available. Phone # 504-624-4443. There are lots of campsites, so reservations are not usually necessary according to park staff.

There are a number of bed & breakfast and cottage-type places in the Covington/Mandeville/Abita Springs/Lacombe area. The tourist information center at the number below has an Accommodations-Attractions brochure available upon request. Call the St. Tammany Parish Chamber of Commerce at 504-892-3216 or Tourist Information at 504-892-0520.

Our route will be as follows: Saturday—La. Hwy. 10 East from Franklinton to Bogalusa, La Hwy. 21 South to Abita Springs. Sunday—US 190 East to La. Hwy. 434 South.



Three-lobed Coneflower
Rudbeckia triloba

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Rudbeckia missouriensis, the Missouri coneflower, is also considered rare. It is known only from the calcareous prairies of Vernon Parish. "These are calcium-rich soils which have extreme physical and chemical properties which hinder tree growth," said Department of Wildlife Fisheries botanist Julia Larke. "Only grasses and herbs grow there."

Another rare coneflower is *Rudbeckia triloba*, the three lobed coneflower. It lives in calcareous forests of Bossier and Natchitoches parishes. "Calcareous forest are similar to calcareous prairies but they support some tree life," said Larke. This species also occurs in the salt-dome hardwood forest of

Weeks Island in Iberia Parish.

Another rare species is the Mexican hat, *Ratibia peduncularis*, a coastal dune grassland species found in Cameron and Vermilion parish cheniers.

Larke noted that LSU botanist Lowell Urbatsch is studying this unique group of plants. He is working out relationships among various coneflower species and between cone-flowers and other species using chemical taxonomic techniques. Larke's own work takes her to plant communities where rare as well as common species grow. Whether common or rare, these beautiful flowers can brighten anyone's day. For more information, contact Julia Larke at 504-765-2821. This article was provided by the LDWF as a press release.

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idea to send a copy to both of these gentlemen and keep a copy for yourself.

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Maj. Gen. Michael B. Sherfield
Commander, Headquarters
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Feel free to call Esther Boykin at
(504)522-1394 if you need more
information or if you have
information to share.



Pale Coneflower
Echinacea pallida

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the cooler seasons. It is mostly a collector's item. Often the more common *Gelsemium semper-virens* will bloom again in the fall and into winter but it is always very fragrant.

Gelsemium sempervirens is a poisonous plant. It contains several active alkaloids that are toxic. The roots were used as a "kill or cure" medicine by the pioneers for terminally diseased people years ago, and it usually killed. I do not know the strength of the dosage. With all the undertaking of looking for some natural cure for diseases today, some of the laboratories are probably looking into any curative properties of this popular garden plant.

Small plants are easily transplanted. Larger plants are very difficult or impossible. Apparently, root ratio to leaf surface is important when moving this plant. Frequently I pull up small plants and directly pot them into the soil they were extracted from and water them and almost all of

them live. With a little care, they can be trained on a piece of bamboo and I have no trouble giving the established (over a year) plants away to visitors. I find that they are drought and winter cold tolerant as potted plants in my climate. Apparently 0 F or below will damage the plants. I have never tried cuttings or seeds as I have had no need. The dried seed pods can give interest to winter dried arrangements although the seed pods are usually erect in nature but are left hanging in arrangements.

When logging is done in the woods where Carolina Jessamine is found, the big vines are usually killed. There are many small vines that will soon take the dead vines' places. I suppose it could be used as a ground cover, but frankly, there are better ground covers. Where it grows, it is one of the most sought after native plants.

Carl Amason is a regular contributor to the LNPS News. He is a superior plantsman who gardens near Calion, Arkansas

The Louisiana Native Plant Society was founded in 1983 as a state-wide, non-profit organization.

Its purposes are:

- to preserve and study native plants and their habitats.
- to educate people on the value of native plants and the need to preserve and protect rare and endangered species.
- to promote the propagation and use of native plants in the landscape
- to educate people on the relationship between our native flora and wildlife.

Free Wildflower or Other Plant Identifications

If at any time you would like to know the name of a plant, break off a piece of plant including leaves and stem and flowers or fruit (if present at the time) and place it in a plastic reclosable zipper bag. Mail it directly to the NLU Herbarium. It will stay alive for at least a week in the bag and can be put in an envelope without other packaging without damage to the plant. This service is FREE and is guaranteed to be faster than most other sources. Send plant to Dr. R. Dale Thomas, Director of the Herbarium, Department of Biology, Northeast Louisiana University, Monroe, LA 71209-0502. Phone is 318-343-1518. No approval is necessary before sending plant. Include your name and address.



Cardinal Flower,
Lobelia cardinalis

Note from the president...Dr. Charles Allen

Time has flown, it seems like yesterday we were touring in southwest Louisiana. Don't forget our fieldtrip to southeast Louisiana on Sept 28-29th. Look for details in this newsletter and see you in Franklinton on the 28th. I remember our last trip to this area. My son Andy was about 10 years old and he, Robert Murry, and I camped in Washington Parish that Saturday night. Andy swam in the clear cold stream all evening. The next day, the lugs came off of a wheel on Robert's truck and we could not find the right lugs in Franklinton. Andy was eating an ice cream sandwich and Robert took Andy's ice cream sandwich wrapping paper, placed it on the studs and then screwed the lugs on. Robert then drove all the way home to Simpson with the ice cream paper in place. We also saw a lot of plants that trip and am sure we will again this year.

I recently led a group from Baton Rouge on a flower photographing trip to Fort Polk. It

was hot but worth the sweat as we toured Fort Polk's prairie area and saw *Rudbeckia missouriensis*, *Echinacea purpurea* (Purple Coneflower), and *Euphorbia bicolor* (Snow on the Prairie). In the bogs, we saw three orchids; fringed yellow orchid, crested yellow orchid, and fringeless yellow orchid. We saw also *Asclepias rubra*, *Ptilimnium costatum*, *Oxypolis filiformis*, and many other flowers in the bogs. We stopped by the Whiskey Chitto Creek bottom and everyone got to photograph the crane fly orchid. Our day ended on Sunday with several Carolina lilies in flower and posing for the cameras.

The Gulf Coast Regional Plant Conference in Baton Rouge was very successful. Everyone that I talked to there raved about how much they were learning from and enjoying the presentations. Marion plus all her coworkers deserve a tremendous pat on the back. There was one mystery surrounding the conference "Why did Ben Gay stock go up right after this conference?"

Are Your Dues Due?

Check your mailing label. If F95 is after your name, your dues are due with this issue. Please send your dues to the treasurer, Jessie Johnson, 216 Caroline Dorman Road, Saline, La. 71010. Remember to send us your change of address. The newsletter is sent bulk mail and will not be forwarded to you by the postal service.

Student or Sr. Citizen	\$5
Individual	\$10
Family	\$15
Organization	\$25
Sustaining	\$50
Corporate	\$100

The *Louisiana Native Plant Society News* is published four times per year. It is the official publication of the Louisiana Native Plant Society. The editor welcomes articles, notices of upcoming events, and book reviews of interest to native plant folks, as well as illustrations, poems, and prose. Deadlines for submissions are June 1st, September 1st, December 1st, and March 1st. Send any address changes to LNPS News, P.O. Box 126, Collinston, La., 71229.—Terry Erwin, editor.

Species Profile: Louisiana Coneflowers



Black-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta*

drug derived from an American medicinal plant.

Echinacea is very popular as a perennial wildflower for gardens. Purple coneflowers attain large and long-lasting blooms and sturdy stems. There are as successful in full sun as in partial shade.

Many coneflower species can be quite tall. The group ranges from about a foot or so tall to the tremendous nine foot height of *Rudbeckia maxima*.

This group also includes some very rare plants for Louisiana besides the familiar and widespread ones. One of the rarest plant species in the state is the Sabine coneflower, *Rudbeckia scabrifolia*. The Nature Conservancy considers it "imperilled globally because of rarity." In Louisiana, it is found only in Natchitoches, Sabine, Vernon, and Winn parishes in hillside bogs.

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Beautiful yellow or purple coneflowers have been blooming all over Louisiana. Among them are the familiar and conspicuous "black-eyed susans" that can be found along roadways across the state.

Louisiana's coneflowers are in four genera of "composite" flowers of the sunflower family. Composites are characterized by many small disc flowers in the center surrounded by larger tongue-shaped ray flowers. Other composite flowers include asters, daisies and sunflowers.

Coneflower are so named because of their cone-or dome-shaped center made up of many tiny individual flowers. The center flowers are either brown, orange or dark maroon. Ray flowers can be dark red or purple, but most species' are yellow.

Louisiana boasts three *Ratibida*

species and ten *Rudbeckia* species ("black-eyed susans"). *Rudbeckia hirta* is the common black-eyed susan that can be seen everywhere along roadsides in early summer.

A third genera in Louisiana is represented by the clasping coneflower, *Dracopsis amplexicaulis*. This species is as widespread as the common black-eyed susan.

There are four species of *Echinacea* in Louisiana. These are the purple coneflowers, which have pink-purple ray flowers and orange disc flowers. *Echinacea* was used by native peoples and is still used today for medicinal and herbal purposes as a heal-all. The root is known to increase the body's resistance to infections, and from 1890 to 1930, one species was the largest-selling and most popular

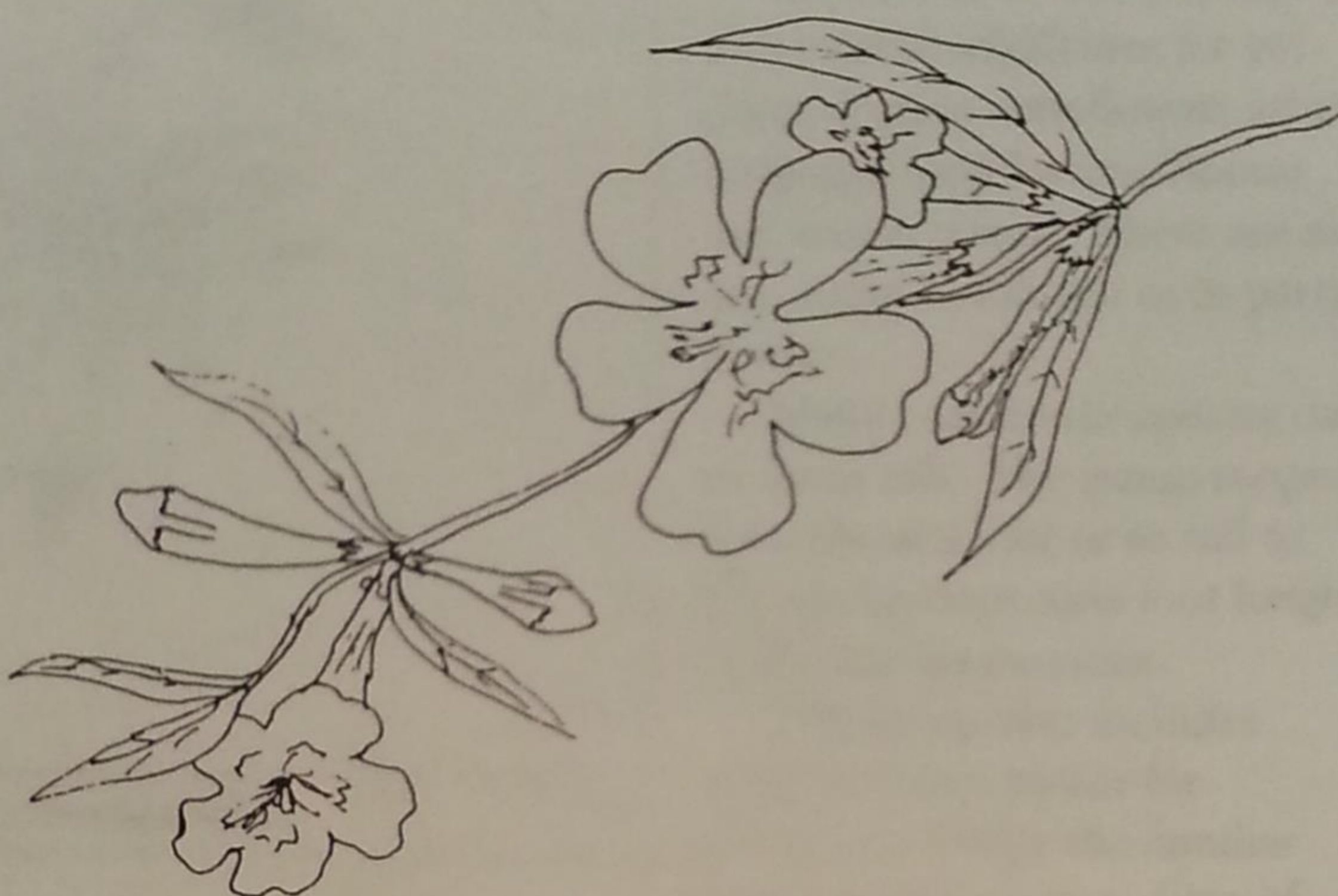


Mexican Hat, *Ratibida pinnata*

Carolina Jessamine by Carl Amason

Among the native wildflowers of the Southeastern United States, among the vines, perhaps the most outstanding is the Carolina or Yellow Jessamine. It is known by the scientific name, *Gelsemium sempervirens*. This plant is not a true jasmine in spite of its name, *Gelsemium*, which is a Latinized version of *gelsomino*, the Italian name for jasmine. There is no doubt that the name 'Jessamine' comes from the scientific name. The pronunciation is the same but the spelling has changed.

None of this affects the popularity of this vine in the gardens of the humble to the grand gardens of the wealthy, wherever it can grow. Carolina Jessamine is limited by its cold tolerance. It grows fairly well in Memphis, Tennessee, but it is not hardy in St. Louis, Missouri. It is considered too tender for best results in Washington, D.C., where it is marginal at best. In the mid and lower South, hardiness is no real problem. It is happiest and most vigorous in the acid soil of the pine tree belt. Here it can grow up to 60 feet into mature pines on the forest edges. The vines must have some sunshine and good drainage to prosper. Carolina Jessamine grows well as an exotic in the alkaline soils of Arizona and California, where they are very popular garden plants. In its natural habitat, it grows



conspicuously along woodlands that border country roads. They are a delight to the eyes and nose in late winter and early spring.

The blooms appear before dogwood trees, but frequently some blooms will linger until that time. Its generic name of *sempervirens* means nothing more than "evergreen" in plain English. It is termed evergreen, but the opposite leaves turn to a nondescript purplish color in the full sun of winter. The leaves are simple, narrow lanceolate, about one-fourth inch wide and two inches long. The flowers are bright yellow, numerous, and trumpet shaped with five stamens. The woody vine is easily managed, but it does have radiating runners from the soil level that root easily in sandy loam.

One plant soon makes a small colony. The vines of Carolina Jessamine can easily be trained to grow on a fence, tree, arbor or trellis. The cascading vines in full bloom can be an outstanding sight in the garden or in its native woodland.

I have never seen anything but the bright yellow single flowers. Horticultural selections in recent years have produced the double clone known as 'Pride of Augusta.' I presume it was found near Augusta, Georgia. A pale yellow unnamed selection is listed by a few speciality nurseries. There is another entirely different, similar species, *Gelsemium rankinii*, of the Gulf Coast area. It grows in wet marshland areas, has no odor to the bloom and usually blooms in

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Coming Events

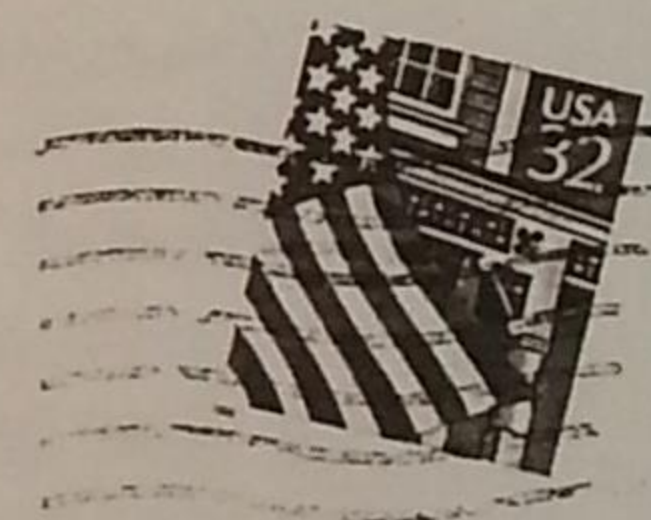
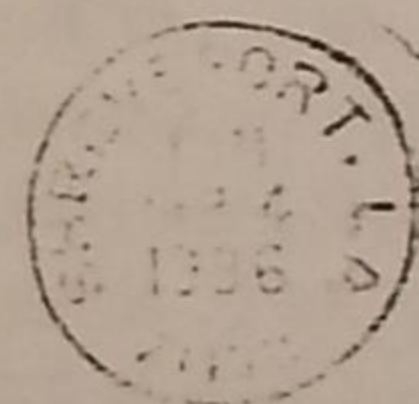
LNPS Fall Field Trip, September 28-29, see page 3 for details.

Plantfest! Friends of LSU Hilltop Arboretum annual plant sale—a great place to pick up native plants and other neat stuff. October 5-6, 11855 Highland Road, Baton Rouge.

Southern Gardening Symposium, St. Francisville, October 11-12. Speakers are Steven Still, author of *The Manual of Herbaceous Ornamental Plants*, will speak on perennials, Elizabeth Murray, author of *Monet's Passion and Painterly Photography*, will speak on "Awakening the Artist Within Us," Katie Moss Warner, Director of Disney's Horticultural and Environmental Initiatives at Disney World Resort, and Bill Brumback, Director of Conservation for the New England Wildflower Society. Workshops include Beverly Church on "Garden Parties," Scott Ogden, author of *Garden Bulbs for the South*, and Martha Sealy on "Gardening for Children." For information, call 504-635-4220, or write P.O. Box 2075, St. Francisville, La. 70775

NLU Plant Sale, October 26, 1996, 8-5, at the NLU Greenhouses on Bon Aire Drive, north of Ewing Coliseum on the NLU Campus, Monroe. Sponsored by the Friends of the NLU Herbarium. Contact Dr. R. Dale Thomas at 318-342-1812 during the day or 318-343-1518 in the evenings. Almost all plants offered are native—trees, shrubs, vines, and herbaceous material.

LNPS News
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