

Louisiana Native Plant Society

News

Spring 1994

vol. 12, no. 1

Letter From the President.....Bill Fontenot

Though I suppose I shouldn't be, I am still amazed by the sheer speed with which "plant mania" descends upon us each year. With most plant life settling in for a long nap by late November, my schedule usually becomes filled with birding activities between then and late January. By the last week in January, I'm still wandering around with my binoculars, when someone asks me about the LNPS Winter Meeting. "Ohmygosh. You're right! It's this coming weekend. Darn. I shoulda known. See that Yellowtop (*Senecio glabellus*) blooming? There's my reminder!"

In a few short days I'm in Alexandria, hobnobbing with wild plant fans from all over the state--and believe you me, we're making up for lost time. For those of you who didn't make it, this year's edition of the LNPS Winter Meeting held true to form. Plant names were tossed around like movie star names at a Hollywood restaurant. Plants, books, and T-shirts changed hands at dizzying rates.

Two weeks later and I'm off to northeast Louisiana to do presentations at the Louisiana Cooperative Extension office in West Monroe. I am astonished by the number of people attending each of the three programs. The old Perry Mason-style meeting/class room fills to capacity. Where are all these folks coming from? One thing's for sure, they want to know about NATIVES! While up there, I had the opportunity to investigate the beginnings of two exciting native plant-oriented educational facilities. The first is the William B. Reily Nature Preserve at Kalorama (Greek for "Beautiful View"), a 40-acre wooded paradise near Collinston, LA. on the Bastrop Ridge, which is actually a series of loessial ridges located on the western edge of the Mississippi Delta just north and east of Monroe. Horticulturist and LNPS charter member, Beth Erwin was selected to convert this property into a conservation education facility. With assistance from husband Terry (a past LNPS president) and kids, Ben and Elisabeth, Beth's first priority will be to curate a collection of most plants native to Morehouse Parish.

The second facility I visited was the new native plant arboretum located at the LSU Research Center at Calhoun, LA. in Lincoln Parish. Established last year with funding from the Frost Foundation, this 10-acre display features plantings of woody species native to the southern U.S. I was most impressed with the oak collection, which boasts at least 35 species, including such Louisiana rarities as the Shingle, Bur, Compton's, and Oglethorpe Oaks.

It seems that with each passing year, the demand for information concerning native plant conservation, cultivation, and usage increases by leaps and bounds. Likewise, native plant organizations throughout the U.S. are experiencing unprecedented growth. Hence, as LNPS members, it behooves each of us to meet this demand in our own way. We need writers, speakers, growers, landscapers, and most of all, gardeners and amateur naturalists to spread the news: Natives are precious treasures. Natives are gifts from God--our natural heritage. Natives form the basis of our very life support system. Here's hoping that we're all up to the task!

CHANGING OF THE EDITOR

After over ten years of organizing more than forty issues of this newsletter, David Heikamp has decided to lay aside his pen. Most of us have no earthly idea of what goes into editing a newsletter. Suffice it to say that it is an excruciatingly detailed, thankless job--a job that David has performed year in and year out with the utmost in consistency and dedication. David, we are sad to see you go, but you have more than earned a break! Please accept our sincere thanks and appreciation; and best wishes as you pursue an MBA at the University of New Orleans.

Terry Erwin has agreed to become our new newsletter editor. He'll need all of the assistance that he can get from our membership. Please consider contributing articles to this newsletter. Gardening/propagating experiences, species profiles, conservation/preservation/restoration projects, culinary/medicinal information, political developments, research projects, and meeting/conference announcements are just some examples of the types of articles desired. Please help!

Newsletter Deadlines

March 1st
June 1st
September 1st
December 1st

Send Articles To:

Terry Erwin
P.O. Box 126
Collinston, LA. 71229
FAX#318-281-5742

Articles may be sent on 3.5 floppy disk, Word Perfect, but will accept information otherwise, also.

THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER!!

If you have a 93 highlighted on your newsletter address label, then you need to send in your dues to remain on the membership/mailling list. Please send your dues to our new treasurer, Jessie Johnson. The dues schedule and Jessie's address are as follows:

Student-----\$ 5.00
Senior Citizen---\$ 5.00
Individual-----\$10.00
Family-----\$15.00
Organization-----\$25.00
Sustaining-----\$50.00
Corporate-----\$100.00

Louisiana Native Plant Society
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Saline, LA. 71070

Membership runs per calendar year, and includes the quarterly newsletter.

Officers and board members elected at the Winter Meeting in January are:

Bill Fontenot, President
Charles Allen, V. President
Jessie Johnson, Treasurer
Beth Erwin, Secretary

Julia Larke, 1997
Jim Robbins, 1997
Fred Christian, 1997

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The **FRIENDS OF THE NLU HERBARIUM** group will be having its annual wildflower sale on April 7, 8, 9 from 8 AM till 5 PM at the Biology and Horticulture greenhouses on Bon Aire Drive on campus in Monroe. Many wildflower seedlings and transplants will be available. Most wildflowers in 4" pots will be for sale for 0.75 and the woody plants in the gallon pots will be 1.25 each. All proceeds will be used to support the Herbarium. Sales are available at other times by appointment. Contact Dr. R. Dale Thomas, 342-1812.

FIELD TRIP: The West-Central Chapter of the Louisiana Native Plant Society is sponsoring a Bog and Bird Festival on Saturday May 14, 1994. Meet at the Little Cypress Recreation Area in the Kisatchie National Forest north of La. 10, east of Ft. Polk and Pickering, and west of Pitkin. Tours will start at 9:00 AM and will be led by Robert Murry, Malcolm Vidrine, and Charles Allen. Tours of pitcher plant bogs and upland longleaf pine forests are planned. The Spring wildflowers will be featured with a few of the Summer ones included. Birders should get an opportunity to see the red cockaded woodpecker and other birds of this area. A sampling of edible natives is planned for lunch on Saturday but pack a lunch as the amount of native edibles will be limited. There are several motels in Leesville and primitive camping (potable water and bathrooms but no electricity hookups) is available at Fullerton Lake. For more information, contact Robert Murry 318-383-6123 or Charles Allen 318-342-1814 or 318-345-5280.

SUMMER LNPS MEETING: The summer meeting and field trip will be held on Saturday, September 24th, at Longleaf Vista in the central part of the state. Richard Johnson is coordinating the trip. Complete information, including maps, accommodations, etc. will be in the summer newsletter in June. Mark your calendars now!

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SPRING CONFERENCE

Cocoa Beach Holiday Inn Resort 1-800-226-6587

April 29-May 1, 1994. The FNPS conference will focus on "Integrating People with the Natural Landscape". This event will be a fun filled and educational 3 days for homeowners and professionals. There will be seminars, guest speakers, landscape awards, book and plant sales, a plant raffle and field trips, including canoeing.

Contact William & Carolyn Alvord, 1355 Bishop Road, Merritt Island, Fl. 32953, (407)459-2132.

PUBLICATIONS

Native Trees for Urban Landscapes in the Gulf South, a brochure developed by the Crosby Arboretum, identifies and describes the best 40 native trees for street and garden plantings along the Gulf Coast. The trees, some familiar and some little used, were chosen for their ability to thrive under harsh urban landscape conditions, and also for their ornamental quality, wildlife value, and ease of culture and maintenance. Order (\$1.50) from Crosby Arboretum, P. O. Box 190, Picayune, MS 39466).

EASTERN NATIVE PLANT ALLIANCE NOTES

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ENDANGERED SPECIES, "WISE USE"

Re-authorization of the Endangered Species Act, already delayed a year, is expected by some to be put off still longer, perhaps as much as another year. Meanwhile the "wise use" or property rights movement continues to promote legislation that would have the effect of weakening the ESA or discouraging its enforcement. This movement is also looking askance at proposals to preserve bio-diversity by protecting ecosystems, and thus their constituent species, instead of focusing exclusively on species-by-species protection. The recently established National Biological Survey is a first step toward an ecosystem-wide approach. Two sources of information to keep you up to date on this intensifying debate:

Reports on bills and amendments before Congress and the positions of Senators and Representatives appear in the monthly newsletter of the Endangered Species Coalition (666 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003; 202 547-9009). The coalition also circulates fact sheets and issue analyses that member organizations produce. Updates on ongoing federal programs related to protection of endangered species (including funding levels) are added to information on pending legislation in the ESA Contacts letter (\$10 a year) prepared by Faith Campbell, of the Natural Resources Defense Council (1350 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005; 202 783-7800). Both publications include specific suggestions for action by those who favor strengthening ESA.

The "wise use" movement is being examined critically in other publications too. For example, under the heading "Wishful Thinking," *Sierra* (Jan./Feb.) discusses the "county movement," which in the name of local "custom and culture" seeks to exempt counties from land-use laws such as the Endangered Species or Clean Water acts. The magazine also provides references to two comprehensive reports on the county movement. *CoastNet* (see *Resources and Possibilities*) devotes most of the December 1, 1993, issue to a central "wise-use" issue, property rights, with specifics for several southeastern states. It excerpts articles published elsewhere, updating some of them, and lists a number of resources, including bulletin board access to the original articles.

NEWS FROM THE LOUISIANA WILDLIFE & FISHERIES NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

by Julia Larke

One of the responsibilities of the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program is to identify and map occurrences of rare plants, animals, and natural communities across the state. The rare plant list for the state is compiled from information in the Natural Heritage database. A project we're currently working on is the preparation of a guide to the rare plants found in the pine-hardwood forests of Louisiana. The LA Native Plant Society will be pleased to note that member Jack Price will have many of his plant photographs in the guide. Also photographs by members Susan Carr and Lowell Urbatsch will be included. The following article on page 5 describing the project was written for an upcoming issue of the Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries *Conservationist* magazine:

Forest Stewardship in Louisiana:
A look at some rare plants in Louisiana's pine-hardwood forests.
by Julia Larke and Latimore Smith
LA Natural Heritage Program

The desire of conservation-minded landowners to manage their forested lands in ecologically sound ways is focusing interest on rare plants in pine-hardwood forests of Louisiana. These forests, which as a general type occupy much of the uplands, flatwoods, and small stream bottoms across Louisiana, are a principal source of timber production in the state. One of the first steps in maintaining Louisiana's diversity of native wildlife and plants is providing information about the identification of rare species in these habitats.

The Louisiana Natural Heritage Program (LNHP) of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries (LDWF) is currently preparing a guide to some of the rare plants of pine-hardwood forests in the state. The guide is initially intended for members of Louisiana's Forest Stewardship Program, a national program coordinated by the USDA Forest Service that encourages private landowners to sustain biological diversity on their forested lands through multiple-use resource management. The LDWF provides information and technical assistance to program members in the management of their natural resources. Because the LNHP is responsible for maintaining a database on significant natural areas and occurrences of rare plants and animals in the state, their expertise was called upon to produce the manual.

Forests classified as natural pine-hardwood communities by the LNHP occur state-wide in Louisiana and are highly variable in species composition depending on the setting in which they are found. Site factors that influence community composition include surface geology, soils, topographic position, and moisture regime. What they all have in common is the presence of pine trees in association with a mix of hardwood species.

Of the five native pines in the state, loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) is the most abundant and is found in all pine-hardwood communities, but principally in mixed hardwood-loblolly pine. Longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) may be sporadically mixed with loblolly and various hardwoods in bayhead swamp forests and wet pine-hardwood flatwoods; slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*) is a common natural associate in these settings in the eastern Florida Parishes (in areas elsewhere it has been introduced). Spruce pine (*Pinus glabra*) is found mixed with loblolly and hardwoods in pine flatwoods, riparian forests, and hardwood slope forests in the Florida Parishes. Shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*) was once the dominant pine in association with a variety of oaks and hickories in the dry uplands north of the longleaf pine range in central and north Louisiana. A shortleaf pine-hardwood association is also found within the longleaf pine region to a limited degree. Many of these natural forest associations have been replaced over much of their range by monoculture plantations of loblolly and slash pine.

Hardwood components in moist pine-hardwood forests are extremely variable but include, for example: sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), beech (*Fagus grandiflora*), water oak (*Quercus nigra*), cherrybark oak (*Quercus pagoda*), swamp chestnut oak (*Quercus michauxii*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*). On drier sites, common hardwoods may include: southern red oak (*Quercus falcata*), post oak (*Quercus stellata*), blackjack oak (*Quercus marilandica*), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), red maple, mockernut hickory (*Carya tomentosa*), and sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*).

Found within pine-hardwood forest communities are a wide variety of native plants, several of which are known from very few localities and are listed as rare in the state. The presence of rare plants in a forest is often an indication that the area has been relatively little altered from its natural condition. Because of the infrequent occurrence of rare plants, conservation of these species is only a small part of the bigger picture of ecosystem management that the Forest Stewardship Program is promoting.

The rare plant identification manual will depict 25 of the rare plant species occurring in the various pine-hardwood forest communities. Each species treatment will display a photograph, and in some cases a drawing, along with brief descriptions of the plant, its range, similar species, and key ID characters.

Loss of habitat because of development of land for agri-forestry, farming and grazing is probably the leading cause of species rarity in pine-hardwood forests. However, not all rarity is explicitly related to the activities of man. Some plants are naturally rare throughout their range, and, in combination with habitat loss have become very scarce. An example of this circumstance is southern lady's slipper orchid (*Cypripedium kentuckiense*) which occurs near the southwestern extent of its native range on wooded lower slopes adjacent to small stream floodplains. It is almost always found in older pine-hardwood forests with an open understory.

In some cases, species are rare because they are confined to specific soil conditions that are uncommon in the state. An example is the calcareous forests that arise on limy soils in areas of the Jackson Formation in southeastern Caldwell Parish. Among the rare plants found in these woodlands are Oglethorpe oak (*Quercus oglethorpensis*), starry campion (*Silene stellata*), wahoo (*Euonymus atropurpureus*), and white-leaved leather-flower (*Clematis glaucophylla*).

Some species that will appear in the manual are southern wood fern (*Dryopteris ludoviciana*), growing in wet wooded riparian areas near streams; fire pink (*Silene virginica*), found in mixed hardwood-loblolly forests in north Louisiana; and Texas trillium (*Trillium pusillum* var. *texanum*), a globally-rare plant found in bayhead swamp forests and in seeps in sandy pine-hardwood forests in Caddo Parish.

Managing pine-hardwood forests in ways that maintain native biological diversity will result in a healthy forest ecosystem, and, in the long run, will benefit landowners. Forest stewardship is the conservation of all living things that make up a forest, and at the same time using its resources in many different ways to benefit human society. Promoting long-term forest management in a manner that fosters ecological integrity will help conserve our state's diversity of native plants and animals and will enhance the value and beauty of Louisiana's forested lands now and for future generations.

If you have any questions about the Natural Heritage Program, or would like a list of the rare plants/animals/communities in Louisiana, please contact: Julia Larke or Latimore Smith, La. Natural Heritage Program, Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000, phone (504) 765-2821.

For questions regarding the Forest Stewardship Program please contact at the above address: Kenny Ribbeck, Stewardship Coordinator, (504) 765-2941

HORSESUGAR (SWEETLEAF) IN LOUISIANA

by R. Dale Thomas and Charles M. Allen

Horsesugar (*Symplocos tinctoria* (L.) L'Her) is also called Sweetleaf, Yellowwood, Florida Laurel, Dyebush, and Wild Laurel. It is an evergreen (in Louisiana) shrub or small tree to 35 feet tall. It is widely distributed in the state generally on the well drained soils but is absent from the large floodplains. The leaves are alternate, simple, oblong to lanceolate or elliptic, leathery and with a glabrous, dark green and lustrous upper surface and a paler and pubescent lower surface. The pith is chambered and the bark is smooth and gray to reddish. The flowers are yellow, fragrant, and produced from February to early May. The fruit is an ovoid drupe that turns orange-brown in the Fall. The wood is brittle, weak, soft, light, and weighs 33 lbs. per cu. ft. The leaves and fruits produce a yellow dye and the roots are bitter and have been used as a tonic. The leaves can be chewed to relieve thirst and have the taste of apple peelings. Some plants produce a glaucous green growth on the stems that can be eaten raw or pickled.

The horsesugar family (Symplococaceae) contains only one genus of plants (*Symplocos*) although there are over 160 species in the Western Hemisphere and another 140 in the Old World. There is only one species, *Symplocos tinctoria*, in the United States with a range from Delaware to Tennessee and Arkansas and south to Texas and Florida. Enough variation exists between the Coastal Plain plants and those of the Piedmont and mountain regions for Small to predict that further study may show the coastal and mountain plants to represent two species instead of one. Vines reports that two varieties have been recognized: a hairy variety from the mountains of South Carolina, called var. *ashei* Weatherby and a variety hardly over 3½ feet tall called var. *pygmaea* Fern. These two variants are in addition to the common or typical variant. One of the most variable characteristics of horsesugar is how many of the leaves remain evergreen during the winter. In Ouachita Parish, most of the plants keep their leaves until the flowers open during the following spring. Following this is a period of a few days when most of the stems are devoid of leaves. In the North Carolina mountains the plants are almost completely deciduous. The new leaves and especially the seedling leaves are very hairy.

Horsesugar can grow under an overstory of large oaks or other lawn trees and has thick, shiny leaves and fragrant yellow flowers, thus it is a desirable landscaping plant. Most books on cultivated woody plants mention both *Symplocos tinctoria* and an Asiatic species, *S. paniculata*, often called sapphireberry, as desirable plants. We have had difficulty transplanting plants from the wild and have found no data on how to germinate the seeds. The recent publication, **THE REFERENCE MANUAL OF WOODY PLANT PROPAGATION** by Dirr and Heuser says that 100 percent success was reported for rooting *S. paniculata* from fresh-growth cuttings with hormones. However, none of the plants survived the winter, either as transplanted plants or those left in flats. They state that there is no published record of how to germinate the seeds of *S. tinctoria*.

For horsesugar, they also say, "The plants grow as colonies and the shoots grow from very thick, sparsely branched roots. Plants that reproduce in this manner are very difficult to propagate by divisions. Such plants are good candidates for propagation from root cuttings. One to two inch long root pieces taken in December and January produce shoots within 1 month and roots within two months. Root growth is slow and the cuttings probably should not be disturbed until the second spring. The rooting of leafy cuttings has not been studied, however, it may be possible since *S. paniculata* is so easy. The same over-wintering problems that apply to *S. paniculata* may apply to this species."

Since this unusual woody native is a desirable plant to use in our landscaping, the authors would be pleased to receive any information about how the readers have or have not had success in various ways of reproducing this plant. Perhaps a good exercise would be to try various ways of propagating this desirable plant.

The unusual common names of horsesugar and sweetleaf are supposed to come from the sweet taste of the leaves. The amount of sweetness seems to vary from plant to plant and just how sweet it tastes seems to also depend on the one doing the tasting. Most works attribute the names to the fact that these leaves are relished by livestock and by deer. The leaves of the tropical species of *Symplocos* are also reported as food for browsing animals and the sweetest part of the leaf is said to be near the midrib.

The authors have noticed patches of horsesugar in north Louisiana with no evidence of deer browsing, although the surrounding Japanese honeysuckle, greenbrier, sweet spire (*Itea*), and other browse plants show a lot of damage from browsing.

The Herbarium, Biology Department, Northeast Louisiana University, Monroe, LA. 71209-0502.
342-1812 (Thomas) and 342-1814 (Allen).

GROWING WILDFLOWERS

by Beth Erwin

Sooner or later, I guess every modern gardener faces what Terry and I did this year. We are a mobile society. We change residences, and more importantly to us, yards. We moved the contents of the house, the children, and the dog and cat last October. We moved the yard in February. It never occurred to either one of us NOT to move the yard.

With the help of a friend who happens to be a nurseryman, and his workers, we transplanted everything in one day, in a caravan of pickup trucks piled high with garbage bags of plants and rocks. We planted until darkness drove us in, and heeled in the rest. We continued to plant over the next several days. When it was all said and done, we were missing a few things. Terry knew he had moved the *Geranium maculatum*, but didn't know which pile it was heeled into. It was a clump of roots, no sign of leaves yet. It turned up recently, in the pile of sod I had peeled back with the tractor so that I would have bare ground to plant perennials. It seems none the worse for wear. I knew that I had not moved everything, because some things I just couldn't find. I knew exactly where the *Uvularia sessilifolia* I had gotten from my grandmother years ago, grew, but couldn't find any evidence. I had the same problem with the celandine poppy and the shooting star. I keep going back by the old yard to see if they have popped up yet. They haven't come up yet, but I keep finding other things that have, that I forgot I had. All of the perennials seem to have transplanted well. It remains to be seen about the shrubs. It was very satisfying to finally have everything with us again. We still have a good many rocks to move. I love early spring best of all, when things are just beginning to poke through.

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

by Beth Erwin

The LNPS held its annual winter meeting on the campus of LSU-Alexandria. There were approximately 60 members present for the morning session. Speakers were Sally and Andy Wasowski and Nancy Newfield.

President Bill Fontenot presided over the business meeting after lunch. Members held a lengthy discussion on the financial condition of the society, after it was pointed out that expenses for the winter meetings were exceeding income.

Reports were given on the **Atlas of Plants of Louisiana**, the display garden at Briarwood, and the status of the endangered plant legislation.

Bill reported that the Gulf Coast Native Plant Conference had been a success, both financially and educationally. The 1994 regional conference would be held in Memphis, October 20-23.

Officers and board members(see p. 2) were elected for the new year. Outgoing treasurer, Ella Price, was commended for the outstanding job she did straightening out and keeping the financial records. The Society voted to set a limit of \$250. on reimbursement for expenses for a representative to attend the Eastern Native Plant Alliance meeting. Reimbursement must be requested, and approved by the executive committee. Several members requested that the appearance and formatting of the newsletter be upgraded, and the Society voted to have the president look into this.

Richard Johnson agreed to sponsor the summer field trip in the area around Red Dirt WMA and the area south of Natchitoches, to include parts of the Kisatchie and Evangeline ranger districts. The field trip was set for the last weekend in September, with details to be published in the summer newsletter.

It should be noted that Dr. Ben Martin, charter member of the LNPS, and former chancellor of LSU-A was sorely missed. Ben always made sure that the mechanics ran smoothly at our state meetings on the LSU-A campus. Our loss is most definitely Alabama's gain.

Don't forget to buy a Wild Louisiana Stamp (only \$5.50) to promote non-game programs throughout the state. If you are between 16 to 59 years in age and use (hike or birdwatch) on state-owned Wildlife Management areas you are required to purchase either a Wild Louisiana Stamp or a hunting or fishing license. This state has a long tradition of support for game species through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. 1993 is the first year in which the Wild Louisiana Stamp program has been in effect as a new source of funding for non-game species. The plants and animals of Louisiana need your support. If you can't find stamps at a local sporting goods store, your local parish sheriff should have some, or, contact the LDWF at the following address: P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA. 70898-9000 Thank you.

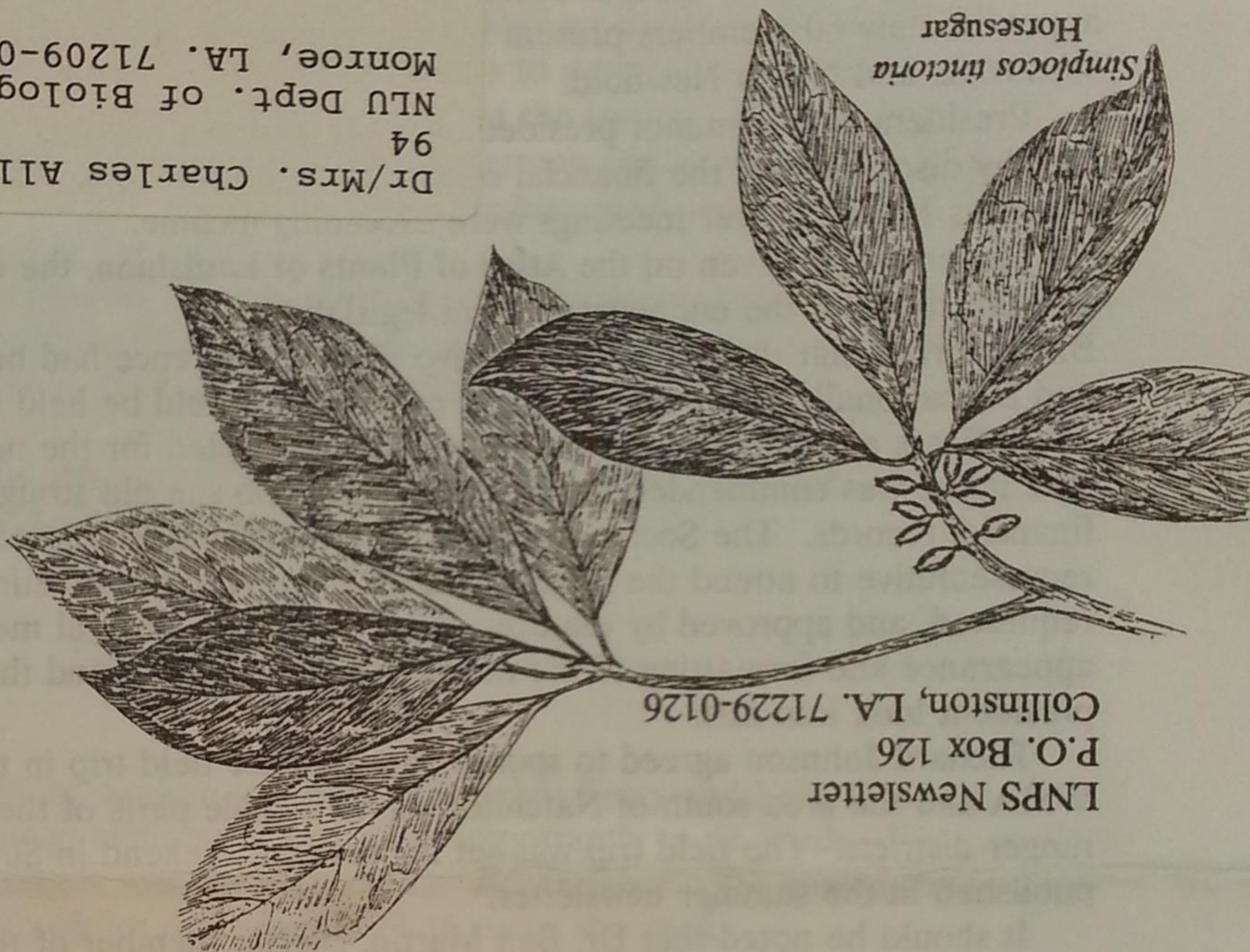
The Louisiana Native Plant Society was founded in 1983 as a state wide non-profit organization. Its purpose is:

- *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.



MAR 11

COLLINGTON



LNPS Newsletter
P.O. Box 126
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Simplicocis tinctoria
Horsesugar

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