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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1993

volume 11, number 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By the time you read this, the 1993 Gulf Coast Regional Native Plant Conference will probably be history. But as of this writing (May 25), excitement is building toward its June 9 opening. At this point, approximately half of the 200+ pre-registrants are from Louisiana, with the other half coming from twelve additional states (including such decidedly non-coastal states as Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, and Pennsylvania) and one Canadian province! After nearly seven years of managing a nature center and operating a backyard flower nursery, I can truthfully report that interest in native plants and naturalized landscapes has risen to unprecedented heights. And with each new supporter of native plants we stand to gain not only an additional wildflower conservationist, but also a potential ecological restorationist and environmental educator as well.

Conservation of wild plant and animal species (particularly within the context of the entire ecosystem they inhabit) will always remain a primary focus. Restoration of disturbed ecosystems is also gaining much recognition. In light of the fact that we now collectively own vast quantities of damaged lands - much more of this type than of pristine undisturbed lands - it behooves us to learn how such lands can be restored to functional ecosystems. This new science called ecological restoration is further researched and refined each time a landowner decides to convert his or her property to a more naturalized state. And upon reaching even rudimentary levels of success on their properties, each new "convert" immediately embarks on an educational mission to instruct and/or compare notes with friends, family, governmental agencies, and other institutions with which they come into contact.

Conservation, restoration, and education are the three prime objectives which together represent our best hope for preserving our planet's life support system. And while governments, universities, and other research agencies will always play a part in this three-pronged approach, it is incumbent upon everyday people like you and me to actively participate in the process. Be assured that agencies cannot do it alone. Without at least some degree of COMMITMENT and DEDICATION of time, money, brains, and brawn from EACH ONE OF US, little will change.

Plant a native today. Better yet, make a gift of a native species to your friend, relative, minister, governmental representative, etc. Go tell it on the mountain, y'all.

Bill Fontenot

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. John D. Griffin, 1950 - 1993

On March 9, 1993 LNPS lost one of its ardent supporters. John was a most enthusiastic and knowledgeable plantsman. John, his wife Susan, and their two children, Jonathan and Emily, moved to Ruston five years ago. He was a professor of horticulture at Louisiana Tech University. He was active in many horticultural organizations, as well as the LNPS. He served as president of the Ruston chapter of the LNPS two years ago.

Dr. Peter Gallagher has announced that the planned display garden at Tech will be named in Dr. Griffin's honor. The family has requested that any memorials be given to the Louisiana Tech University Horticultural Society, P.O. Box 10198, Ruston, Louisiana 71272.

DUES REMINDER

Don't forget that membership dues for 1993 were due by the first of the year, January 1, 1993! Members who did not paid their dues by April 1, 1993 were dropped from the roster. Please send your dues to the address below. If you know someone who is interested in joining (or rejoining) the LNPS, give them the following address. Make checks payable to the LNPS:

LNPS
Rt. 1, Box 195
Saline, Louisiana 71070

The dues schedule is as follows: Student=\$5.00, Senior Citizen=\$5.00, Individual=\$10.00, Family=\$15.00, Organization=\$25.00, Sustaining=\$50.00, Corporate=\$100.00.

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 uses the following deadline policy. Any information received after the deadline will be included in the next newsletter. Deadlines for the next four newsletters are as follows:

Fall Newsletter:	September 1, 1993
Winter Newsletter:	December 1, 1993
Spring Newsletter:	March 1, 1994
Summer Newsletter:	June 1, 1994

The editor's address is:

David Heikamp
717 Giuffrias
Metairie, La. 70001
Ph (504) 831-2342

MY INTRODUCTION TO VIBURNUM ASHEI

by Carl Amason

I shall never forget the eventful day, it was a Sunday before Labor Day and about forty years ago. I left home early that morning from Calion, which is on the Chauchita River, with the intention of visiting Mrs. U. B. Evans of Haphazrad Plantation and going all the way to the mouth of the Black River at Acme. It was a warm late summer's day but it wasn't one of those years when a drought was in fierce control. So I left home, went through Sterlington and notes the first big population of Spanish Moss in the river bottom. Spanish Moss does enter the southern fringes of major river bottoms in Arkansas, but one has to have good eyes, look quickly, and know when and where to see it. Then through Monroe, and I am amazed at how the highway has changed in going through the cities and towns all across the country now. Then down through the cotton country through Bosco, site of a lock and dam on the Cuachita River to Columbia. In those days, it seemed that all towns had beautiful old homes and yards, but time has taken its toll and highways go away from homes and gardens nowadays. At Columbia, I got back onto the west, or hilly side, of the Cuachita River. The upland woods look very much like the ones in Union County, Arkansas. Between Rosefield and Duty, the topography became more broken, lots of ravines and loess soil, very remindful of the soil types across the Mississippi River Valley in Mississippi.

I remember the beautiful large beech trees, slopes with Christmas ferns and a pocket of Magnolia acuminata. In those days, this section of the road was unpaved. I remember very few houses, and somewhere I pulled off on the side of the road, just to see the forest or countryside, something that I very frequently do. A tract of land had been timbered and a skidder, I presume, that pulled over a shrub and buried many limbs and twigs of something that I recognized as being a species of Viburnum. It was fascinating to see here a sprawled bush, buried in places in what had been winter's mud, taking root; truly a nursery of Viburnum plants. In spots between dual tires, a ridge had been formed and it was no problem to reach down and take up three well-rooted sprouts, about twelve inches high, with no digging necessary. It was a simple matter of breaking off sections of the ridge between the tire trenches, and presto, plants already rooted and in soil. So I took my three plants, noting that the foliage looked slightly different from the others I had seen, and went on my way more merrily than before. At Duty or Enterprise, I have forgotten which, was supposed to be a ferry. I didn't see any signs of one and I was headed toward Harrisonburg. Just north of town was a small grove of loblolly pine, well-kept, which was the site of a Confederate fort. Then on to Jonesville, where the Cuachita River becomes the Black River. About 2:00 PM I stopped and ate my regular travelling menu of my younger days - two hamburgers and lots of coffee. From there I travelled east to Frogmore, then north to Haphazard Plantation to spend some time with Mrs. Evans. I had written that I would be there in the afternoon, but it was later than I had thought it would be, but it remains without saying, the meeting was delightful with demi-tasses of strong black Louisiana coffee, and talk of wildflowers, tame flowers, just any old flower that came to our minds.

I had stayed my visit and it was time for me to go. Mrs. Evans and I had surveyed the yard and its contents thoroughly, and most unexpectedly, as if by magic, she handed me a bulb of Hippeastrum evansiae, the Bolivian amaryllis named for her. It was a beautiful bulb, and I have always wondered when, where and how did she produce that bulb!

It was midnight when I got back home, and I didn't have to go to work Monday, it being Labor Day. I set out my Viburnums in sites as close as I

could approximate their growing site, and I potted up the amaryllis bulb. The three Viburnums are still growing today, but the bulb was overwatered one winter, and it rotted.

My Viburnums have prospered, and I have searched for years for their identity for my own satisfaction. I planted one rather high and dry but wet in winter and spring, one in a damp area and the other in a site in between the other two. All are in shady situations as about all I have is shady wetlands, and all have bloomed and care has been minimal. The clustered white flowers arise after the fresh green leaves are grown. The flowers are pretty, not particularly fragrant, and they bloom in late spring or early summer (June). The leaves are opposite, a bit elongated, longer than they are wide, (maybe 1 3/4" X 3/4"), and have few step-like serrations. The bush is open, somewhat pendulous, and grow up to 8 to 10 feet tall, all coming mainly from a single, tree-like main stem. Fruit is soon ripened, is black and eagerly sought by songbirds. It turns a bright primrose yellow in the fall, really lovely when backlit by the low fall sun. Often a few leaves at the ends of twigs will survive the winter. It is close kin to Viburnum dentatum, which in or about sweet bay galls in my area - really constantly wet and moist, and this species grows from several clustered main stems. And gets me around to my final gleaming from the botanical books. Dr. Clair A. Brown lists Viburnum ashei and pictures it in its typical flowering manner and next to it is pictured a flowering twig of Viburnum dentatum in what I have also mentally pictured what that species should look like in his book "Wildflowers of Louisiana". He states that Viburnum ashei also grows in Mississippi and Texas. In "Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of the Southwest" Robert A. Vines does not even list Viburnum ashei. In "An Atlas and Annotated List of the Vascular Plants of Arkansas" (I consider this book the authority for Arkansas) Dr. Edwin B. Smith lumps Viburnum ashei with Viburnum dentatum without any consideration of a varietal or subspecies status. Back to Dr. Clair Brown's comment under Viburnum species in Louisiana; there is no agreement among botanists. "Hortus Third", under Viburnum dentatum states that it is a widespread polymorphic species and some of the variants have been described as species and subspecies.

And so I go along with Dr. Clair Brown as I can see some subtle differences between Viburnum dentatum and Viburnum ashei. I took a plant to a Louisiana Native Plant Society meeting for identification as much as anything. When I asked John Mayronne what it was, he casually glanced, and without batting an eye said "Viburnum ashei". That was good enough for me. My good friend, Rosana Shelby of Shreveport wanted the plant, so she got it.

And so I will declare Viburnum ashei to be a good shady garden plant for Louisiana and adjoining areas of states bordering it. To this date, I have never been to the mouth of the Black River at Acme and I still want to make that trip. The old Confederate fort near Harrisonburg was baldly littered when I went back years later. So much of Louisiana and Arkansas is badly littered and sometimes a pile of litter is an indicator of a rare plant site as litterbugs have that instinct of ruining a rare plant population or making an eyesore of a beautiful site. But I still maintain that Louisiana and adjoining states, in spite of their litter problems, freezes, hurricanes, droughts, floods, and politics is one of the most beautiful parts of the world that I have ever seen, and has an elegance that is just as beautiful.

LSU AGRICULTURAL CENTER NATIVE PLANT ARBORETUM

The LSU Agricultural Center Native Plant Arboretum had its inaugural open house on May 26th. The facility maintains a collection of Louisiana native trees and shrubs and evaluates their potential use in landscaping. Guided tours for groups of ten or more are available by appointment. A support group, "Friends of the Native Plant Arboretum" exists. If you're interested in joining or visiting, call or write:

Calhoun Research Station
P.O. Box 539
Calhoun, La. 71225-0539
Phone (318) 644-2662 (Monday to Friday, 7:30 AM
to 4:30 PM)

THE CASE OF THE MISSING PLANTS

by Cliff Coles

It's a detective story. Missing: animal and plant species. Detectives, in the form of biologists and other scientists, go about their investigative work, examining records, asking questions, visiting the scene, digging for answers.

Case in point: two Louisiana plant species, missing and presumed lost. They are species likely to be overlooked, but in their own way important, as every species is important. One of them, Cyperus cephalanthus, has not even been graced with a common name. The other is known by the unwieldy name of the Caddo Parish false-foxglove (Agalinus caddoensis).

Cyperus cephalanthus was first discovered in 1835 in Galveston Bay, Texas. The first report in Louisiana was by botanist John Thieret in 1967 (the plant had not been seen in Texas by biologists since its discovery). Thieret located five populations of C. cephalanthus in the southwestern region of the state.

This plant occurs in the coastal prairie plant community in Acadia, Jefferson Davis, Vermillion, and Lafayette parishes. It is a perennial herb with sparse leaves and six foot stems. It produces its buds underground, an adaption for withstanding the direct effects of fire.

Fire is the primary natural factor controlling overgrowth and promoting fresh growth. Human attempts to control fire and the fragmentation of coastal prairies have resulted in a loss of habitat. As a result, the only prime habitat remaining is railroad and highway right-of-ways and the edges of agricultural fields.

A report submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1993 identified four additional populations of Cyperus cephalanthus, bringing the total to nine. They are distributed over an area of 35 miles by 15 miles. Because of the inconspicuous nature of C. cephalanthus and the high density and height of associated prairie species, it is likely that not all populations were detected in the area.

Even though the habitat is declining, the story of the search for Cyperus cephalanthus ranks as good detective work paying off. Now that we know where they can be found, conservationists can take steps to protect the species.

The outcome of the status survey of the Caddo Parish false-foxglove has not been as successful. Agalinus caddoensis is known only from one locality not been as successful. Agalinus caddoensis is known only from one locality in Caddo Parish near Shreveport, where it was discovered in 1913. Botanist Francis W. Pennell collected about a dozen specimens at a railroad stop three miles northwest of what was then a small town. Since then, Shreveport has grown and the site has been swallowed up within the city limits. The Caddo

Parish false-foxglove is an annual herb about a foot and a half tall that occurs in what Pennell described as "dry loam oak woods."

Fairly extensive surveys by botanists at Louisiana State University at Shreveport from 1970 to 1977 were conducted without success. Botanists with the Natural Heritage section of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and LSU, Baton Rouge continued to survey the original collection location and neighboring areas. The species has not yet been rediscovered at the original locality and new populations have not been located.

Prevention of further habitat loss is the lesson learned from the Cyperus cephalanthus and Agalinus caddoensis detective story.

Today, city planners attempt to take into account environmental and biological factors such as the occurrence of rare plants and animals. It is becoming standard practice for cities and new communities to conduct environmental assessments as they expand in an attempt to live in a more harmonious relationship with the environment. It is inevitable that, as human populations grow, townships will spread and roads will be built. The key is to plan ahead.

GROWING WILDFLOWERS

by Beth Erwin

There have been some big changes around our place in the last several months. We have added several more plants to our garden. My grandmother moved out of her home last October, and the grandkids were granted open season on her yard, first come, first served. We came away with several large royal and cinnamon ferns, blood lilies, a purple orchid whose name escapes, and assorted other bulbs. A couple of spiderworts (tradescantia) piggybacked along with some of the bulbs. One of them turned out to be white, which was a nice surprise.

By now, many of you know that Terry and I and our two children will be moving to Collinston soon to develop a new nature preserve. Collinston is about five miles south of Bastrop. Those of you that attended the summer LNPS field trip several years back in Morehouse Parish will remember the site, as we wound up our trip there at the house and grounds known as Kalorama. I am looking forward to propagating all those prairie species that I have found on local prairie sites and getting them started at Kalorama. So far, we have not found any one site in the parish that contains all the species that we have found.

Late last spring, I collected seeds of Celestial Lily and Camassia scilloides from Rector's Prairie here in the parish. I planted them immediately in flats of mostly sand. I have the best luck with sand as a propagation medium. A year later, the Celestial Lily seed have sprouted. They resemble pine needles poking through the soil. I hope that they will survive transplanting. That is usually where I lose plants. The camassia haven't sprouted. I have already collected some more camassia seed and planted it. There were several populations of those at Kalorama. In fact, Kalorama is only the second place in the parish that we have found camassia. Kalorama is located about twenty miles south of Rector's Prairie, on the same ridge that rises up out of the delta down the middle of the parish.

Kalorama means "beautiful view" and I hope you will come view it with us in the future.

WINTER MEETING SYNOPSIS

The LNPS winter 1993 meeting was held at LSU-Alexandria. President John Mayronne opened the meeting for business. He thanked Dr. Ben Martin for his work in setting up the meeting. Ella Price gave the Treasurer's report. The balance before the meeting was \$3,501.83. One hundred and forty members registered at the meeting.

Beth Erwin read the minutes from the previous two meetings. The minutes were approved as read.

Officers were elected:

President:	Bill Fontenot
Vice President:	Charles Allen
Secretary:	Beth Erwin
Treasurer:	Ella Price
Board Members:	Dr. Dale Thomas
	Peggy Reed
	Terry Erwin

Bill Fontenot conducted the remainder of the meeting.

Old business included:

-Atlas of Louisiana. Charles Allen said Volume I would be available this spring, and showed a sample copy.

-Hodges Gardens display garden. Richard Johnson suggested that Briarwood become the official display garden. It was moved, seconded, and passed. A suggestion was made that we find one for south Louisiana, central Louisiana, and south Louisiana.

-Endangered plant bill. A complete report was not available. Robert Murry asked that we take a position in favor of it. Bill stated that we needed a copy of the bill to approve it. Robert asked that if a legislation was offered and the board approves it, that the society support it. The motion was seconded, and passed. Peggy Reed, Peggy Reilly, as well as two others agreed to help with legislation in Baton Rouge.

-Julia Larkin, the new Natural Heritage Botanist, introduced herself.

New Business Included:

- Bill discussed the regional conference to be held in Lafayette in June. He urged support from the group in the area of publicity. Annette suggested letters to the editors in small newspapers around the state. He listed costs. It was suggested that we use a page of the newsletter as a copyable PR sheet.

-Terry Erwin motioned that the LNPS become a co-sponsor, with a cap of \$500 for support. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

-Richard Johnson proposed a bylaws change in the constitution to remove the restrictions on the secretary's and treasurer's term limits. It is to be voted on at the summer meeting.

-Judy Teague, graduate student at LSU, is surveying Caddo and Bossier natural areas for her thesis, she asked for areas to observe.

-Summer meeting. Charles Allen motioned that we set a date in October with location to be determined. Bill Fontenot agreed to be in charge of it.

-Robert Murry reported on the 3rd annual bogs and birds festival, to be held May 28 in Vernon Parish.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed that we adjourn.