

Louisiana Native Selected To Oversee Louisiana Natives

A Louisiana native has been selected as the new botanist for the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program. David Moore grew up in Baton Rouge and states he has always been interested in protecting our natural resources. He graduated from Louisiana Tech University with a bachelor's degree in Forestry and Wildlife Management and from Northeast Louisiana University with a master's degree in Biology. His thesis work was the "Preliminary Survey of the Vascular Flora of Union Parish, Louisiana."

Mr. Moore was employed by the Missouri Natural Heritage Program as an inventory biologist and natural areas coordinator and as coordinator/botanist for the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Program. In 1996, he worked on several projects for the Louisiana Nature Conservancy. Since September of 1996, he has worked as a botanist/ecologist for the Kisatchie National Forest. He states that he has a great interest in furthering the protection of Louisiana's rare plants and is very

excited by the opportunity to be the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program botanist. He is looking forward to meeting everyone who has an interest in the flora of Louisiana, and most importantly in the protection of Louisiana's rare plants.

Dr. R. Dale Thomas, under whom Mr. Moore did his master degree work commented that David's amiable personality will be a tremendous asset to the Natural Heritage Program. Dr. Thomas feels that Mr. Moore will promote positive relations with land-owners, government agencies and interested persons.

LNPS 16th Annual Winter Meeting

Bill Finch, Environmental Editor for the *Mobile Register*, will speak at the 16th annual Louisiana Native Plant Society Winter Meeting in January. Finch writes a weekly column devoted to the peculiarities of Gulf Coast gardening. A special project last year, in which he examined the past, present, and future of Alabama forests, won him the Scipps-Howard Meemon Award and other national and regional journalism awards. Harvard naturalist E.O. Wilson nominated Finch for a Pulitzer Prize last year for the articles.

Mr. Finch's formal introduction to horticulture was in the cotton farms of Alabama, where he worked with an agricultural consultant company in high school and college. He graduated from Warren Wilson College in North Carolina with a Liberal Arts Degree. After working as an Associate Editor with *Mother Earth News* magazine, he returned to school to pursue studies in forestry. He will speak to the Friday evening session on "Ditchbank Gardening," and on the subject of under-used woody plant species in the keynote address on Saturday.

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Prose from the president's pen...*Jim Foret, Jr.*

r.e.: Fall Field Trip

These are occasions when you are never sure who will come. You can imagine my surprise when I drove up to Lake Martin on Friday afternoon to see the bank full of birders worrying a poor little bird to death. Where were my native plant people? As I approached I realized they were them! (Oh, it was a Vermilion Flycatcher that they were so enamored by.) I was so worried that no one would come this time that I forgot that native plant people are all birders, we can't help ourselves.

Lake Martin was fun. My partner in life, Paula, made us all feel welcome at a well stocked mixer after dark in our home. Avery Island was enjoyable. I saw parts of the dark side of that place that I had never seen. Garrie Landry was a great guide, full of information and enthusiasm, and, he had a terrific handout prepared for the group. Our visit

to the southern fringe of the Great Southwestern Prairie was a lot of fun on Sunday. We ate lunch and all left smiling pledging to meet next year and do it again.

Oh, how could I forget La Poussier. As a part of my presidential duties, I was forced to take 5, that is 5 women dancing, alone, at this world famous dance hall. It was a Big Job, but I guess this is why they elected me pres. Like I said, I did not miss a dance all night.

Other stuff:

We seldom get to enjoy much fall color down here in the land below I-10, except on chicken trees that is. You may not realize it, but down here chicken trees are synonymous with fall color. I have to tell you how amazed we were to so many different trees were "on fire" this fall. Thank God for cool, dry, fall weather.

I hope to see you all up "nort" at the annual meeting in January. It is always good to be with plant people, especially when the emphasis is on natives.

Jim

Your Dues Are Probably Due

Check your mailing label. If the number above your name is highlighted, 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.*

16th Annual LNPS Meeting Agenda

Friday, January 23, 1998: 8:00 P.M. "Ditchbank Gardening" *Bill Finch*

Saturday, January 24, 1998: 8:00 A.M.: Registration: Book, Plants, Etc. Sales
9:00 A.M. : "Mayhaws" *Charlie Johnson*
10:00 A.M.: Break: Book, Plants, Etc. Sales
10:30 A.M.: Business Meeting A representative from

Kisatchie National Forest will address the business meeting on the state of on-going issues between the NFS and the US Armed Forces. If anyone has business to bring before the meeting, please notify the President, Jim Foret, 7766 Main Hwy., St. Martinville, LA 70582, 318-365-7806.

LUNCH—SEE BELOW 11:30 A.M.: Book, Plants, Etc. Sales

1:00 P.M.: KEYNOTE SPEAKER

"Under-used Woodies" *Bill Finch*

2:00 P.M. -Optional Field Trips

Field Trip #1: Little Eden Vineyard to see Mayhaw orchard.

Field Trip #2: Klsatchie National Forest, Catahoula District—Dr. Dale Thomas

LUNCH RESERVATION CARD
LNPS Winter Meeting, January 24, 1998
Camp Grant Walker, Pollock, LA.

I WILL PURCHASE

(Number of Lunch Tickets at \$5.00 each)
Pay at the door

Menu

Salad Bar
Baked Potato
B-B-Q Beef & Bun,
Apple Cobbler
Milk, Tea, or Coffee

Your name—please print clearly

**THIS CARD MUST BE
RETURNED BY JAN. 9TH TO
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Alexandria.

Some Notes on Pickerel Weed by Carl Amason



Pickerel Weed, *Pontederia cordata*

A common flowering plant in the sunny edges of the lowlands and swampy areas of southern and eastern Louisiana is *Pontederia cordata*, commonly known as pickerel weed. It has a wide native range, from Nova Scotia, Canada, along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts well into Texas, up the Mississippi River lowlands and major streams and lakes. It grows well in St. Louis, Missouri and has become a major plant of edges of ponds and bogs. It is much appreciated in European gardens, also. In its native range, it is beautiful in flower though in parts of South Louisiana, can be invasive, especially where it competes with Louisiana irises and other bog plants. The common name, pickerel weed, implies that it is hardy as far north as the region the fish, pickerel, is common. Maybe its growth is a favorite habitat for that fish.

It is a plant always of wet, marshy places and while it must be easily grown from seed, it is most frequently transplanted, very easily from divisions. Pickerel weed can grow in water up to one foot deep, or there about. This is not a plant for dry borders, or places that will dry out in the heat of summer.

There are two leaf forms. The wide leaf form with broad, heart-shaped leaves gives the plant its species name, *cordata*. The narrowed-blade type is listed as variety *angustifolia*. Both grow equally well, perhaps too well for some people who keep a garden that shows that man(or woman), is in control of growing things. For a large area with little care, it is truly a show of green foliage and blue flowers throughout the warm growing season, and it does grow! With regular deadheading, it will continue to bloom well into the season when it does not grow. Freezes will turn the green leaves to a brown broken leaf and stem border of wet areas, but with spring weather, it quickly resumes its growing and blooming. Since pickerel weed is usually grown for its blooming ability, it is not a disappointment. It has tall dense spikes of morning flowers that quickly wilt by afternoon on hot summer days. The spikes have many flower buds that give a continual show in much of the warm weather. Flowers are generally described as blue, but with purplish overtones. Not a true-blue color perhaps, but is more blue than so many other blossoms called "blue." It has about equal segments of six parts, common to most monocot plants. Since the flowering spikes are well above the foliage, it makes a delightful show in the garden, or more so in large natural areas. In the garden, it is usually grown in large sunken pots in pools, where it is contained or in larger natural ponds, where it can be controlled. In such natural areas, it is a favorite hiding spot for so many forms of wildlife, some desirable and some undesirable. There is a white flowered form that grows equally

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well and while the white flowers cannot be described as pristine or radiant white, it is well worth growing. The seeds of both forms germinate readily in the muck of pond edges. The white flowering forms do not always come true to white, giving some bluish colored forms, so it is best grown where the bluish flowered plants can be removed. The seeds and leaves are eagerly eaten by wildlife. Again, some wild animals are welcomed and others are not. Generally in a yard or garden that is not a big control problem.

Pickerel weed is so easily grown, perhaps that virtue is also its downfall. It must be grown as an aquatic plant and that keeps it from many dry gardens. As its relatives, the two invasive water hyacinths of tropical origin are the better known. Where winters are cold enough to kill or keep water hyacinths under control, it is appreciated, also. In the rice growing areas of the mid-South, there are several annual species of relatives. Relationships are obvious to those who have eyes for seeing such things. Pickerel weed is a very beautiful native suitable for growing in a wetland, bog, or pond condition in the garden. *Carl Amason is a superior plantsman who gardens near Calion, Arkansas.*



REMINDER!!!

**Vendors of plants, books,
and any other items of
interest to outdoorsy folks
are invited to sell at the
LNPS annual winter meeting,
January 23-24, 1998**

**LSU 4-H Camp Grant Walker
Pollock, Louisiana**

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Charles Johnson, professor of Horticulture at LSU will speak on the subject of mayhaws. He has been employed by the LSU Agricultural Center for the past eighteen years as a fruit crops researcher. He is responsible for the development of eight varieties of peaches that are used in Louisiana and surrounding states. For the past ten years, he has been involved with various projects concerning the preservation and utilization of native fruit species. He has B.S. and M.S. degrees in Horticulture from Mississippi State University and a Ph.D. in Horticulture from LSU. Currently he teaches Fruit Science courses for graduate and under graduate students and a Plant Propagation course.

The meeting will be held January 23 & 24 at Camp Grant Walker near Pollock. Participants may make reservations for lunch Saturday at the camp by returning the card in this newsletter. See page three.

DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR LUNCH RESERVATION CARD!!!

Baldcypress

by Kelby Ouchley

Nothing characterizes a southern swamp more than a giant moss draped cypress tree standing knee-deep in a backwater slough. Technically known as baldcypress, these survivors of ancient life forms once found across North America and Europe are now greatly restricted in range. In the United States, they are native to river bottoms and swamps in the Deep South and along the Eastern Seaboard north to Delaware. In Louisiana, although the last large virgin stands are gone, cypresses can still be found in every parish.

Cypress trees once grew to seventeen feet in diameter and 140 feet in height. They were the largest trees in the south and lived to be four hundred to six hundred years old. A few were estimated to be more than one thousand years old. Even though cypresses commonly grow in wetlands, their seeds cannot germinate under water and young seedling die very quickly if they are overtopped by flood waters. This means that the trees growing in Cheniere Brake in west Ouachita Parish, Bayou Desiard in Monroe, Walnut Bayou in Tallulah and other similar areas began life on dry or muddy ground which was not flooded during the growing season for at least a couple of years. Older trees can adapt to intermittent flooding regimes and usually develop fluted trunks, but permanent flooding will eventually kill the trees. A steady decline of cypresses in Bayou Desiard is quite evident.

Scientists have often pondered the functions of the unique root-like growths commonly known as cypress knees. Once thought to be structures to help the tree breathe, knees are now believed to be storage areas for starches needed for growth.

Historically cypresses have been very important to man in Louisiana. The wood is easy to work and very attractive, the heartwood having a reddish hue. The



Bald Cypress
Taxodium distichum

most famous characteristic is the durability and resistance to decay that develops in the wood of trees several hundred years old. Native Americans were the first to realize this and in northeast Louisiana, as elsewhere, routinely used cypress for dugout canoes. Early colonists were quick to discover this trait. In 1797, Don Juan Filhiol described Fort Miro, the first sizable colonial structure in the Ouachita Valley, as "an enclosure in posts of tipped cypress...in an area which is found the principal house...covered in cypress shingles." In the late 1800's the demand for cypress lumber for boats, furniture, pilings, trim, shingles, siding, and coffins was great. It was during this period that the vast virgin stands were logged over. By 1925 the once thriving cypress industry was in a spiraling decline as the last of the raw products were exhausted.

Most cypress stands today are second growth, but



there still remain a few giants among us. They exist because they are hollow and thus not merchantable or because they grow in an area so remote as to make harvest unfeasible. They tower one hundred feet above the earth and laid down their first annular rings during the classical period of the Mayan culture. They germinated and grew into seedling as Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman emperor. They were sound and mature when the sun gleamed from the swords of Hernando DeSoto's men as they marched across northeast Louisiana in a fruitless search for gold. It is possible that their limbs were once laden with the weight of a thousand passenger pigeons and that their bark was probed by ivory-billed woodpeckers. Cougars and bears may have sought refuge in their hollows. It is likely that a few of these will still be greeting each spring with a fresh feathering of needle-like leaves in centuries to come.

Editor's note: The preceding is the text from a program on KEDM 90.3 Public Radio, Monroe, called "Bayou Diversity." It is written and presented each Friday at 12:10 & 7:05 pm by Kelby Ouchley. Kelby is on our LNPS Board. He is employed as manager of the La. Wetland Management District by the USFWS, Darbonne NWR, at Farmerville. He and his wife, Amy, and their two sons live near Rocky Branch, La.

Wildflower Seeds Available

Wildflowers enhance home landscapes with their brilliant colors and unusual forms. Gardeners will find seed or spores of more than 200 varieties of flowers and ferns for sale in the **1998 Seed and Book Catalogue** of the New England Wild Flower Society.

Included are natives for woodlands, wetlands, and meadow gardens. Spring blooming wildflowers add color to shade gardens, while sun-loving varieties splash vibrant hues across summer borders or along pond shores. Once established, perennial wildflowers bloom for many years.

The wide choice of seeds offers an economical way to obtain wildflowers and opportunity for novices and experienced gardeners alike to grow native plants not usually available from nurseries. Many easy-to-grow varieties such as Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Blazing-star (*Liatris* sp.), and foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), are ideal for those trying for the first time to germinate wildflowers from seed. More experienced gardeners can find trilliums, ferns, gentians, pitcher plants, or native species of rhododendrons.

Requests for the **1998 Seed and Book Catalogue** must be received by March 2, and seed sales end on March 16. Requests will be filled in the order received and some seeds are in limited supply, so order early for best selection. The *Catalogue* is part of the New England Wild Flower Society's worldwide seed distribution and conservation effort.

To obtain the **1998 Seed and Book Catalogue**, please send \$2.50 to Seeds, New England Wild Flower Society, Garden in the Woods, 180 Hemenway Road, Framingham, MA 01701.

Members of the New England Wild Flower Society will receive the **1998 Seed and Book Catalogue** automatically in January 1998 as part of their membership benefits. This information provided by the New England Native Plant Society.

DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR LUNCH RESERVATION CARD!!!

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

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

LNPS News

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**ANNUAL WINTER MEETING, JAN. 23-24, 1998
SEND ENCLOSED CARD FOR LUNCH RESERVATIONS**