

Newsletter of the Louisiana Native Plant Society

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Fall 1983

The Shreveport Chapter of the Louisiana Native Plant Society was well represented at the first convention in Alexandria on August 20. Among the locals were Jim Robbins, Karlene DeFatta, Ruth Griffin, Bill and Louise Gebelein and Richard Johnson.

Seven towns were represented and dues were paid by 33 new members. These conventions will be held twice yearly.

Dr. Ben Martin of LSU-Alexandria and Dr. Charles Allen of LSU-Eunice led the way for the 8 a.m. field trip, which was one highlight of the day.

Ruth Griffin of Minden took the minutes throughout the sessions as the naturalists got down to business. There was a talk by Carl Amason, president of the Arkansas Native Plant Society. In another session Richard Johnson, society president, and David Heikamp, founder of the Greater New Orleans Native Plant Society, met with members from around the state to work out guidelines to present to the chapters. A board of directors was appointed. New society officers will be elected at a January meeting.

Keep in touch.

The Editor
Teresa Thrash
166 Rustic Way
Shreveport, LA 71106

President's Message

Our dream is now a reality — Louisiana now has a statewide native society! I am very thankful to have had a small part in making this happen.

Our next goal is to register as many new members as possible before the charter year ends in December.

The time is drawing near to start potting plants for our winter meeting and plant sale. Let us be careful to gather a strong root system with our plants, for without roots the plant will surely be lost. Seeds and bulbs are also acceptable sale items but should be packaged and identified in botanical terms as well as common names.

Some of my friends complain of the "dog days" as the "do nothing" time but it is a good time to prepare soil and plant native irises. It isn't too soon to prepare sites for late fall planting of perennials and other herbaceous plants. Early preparation lets plant foods "mellow" and reduces the danger of fertilizer burn.

In the near future we hope to publish a seed availability list in which members can share with each other the seeds of various wildflowers not commercially obtainable.

There are so many exciting possibilities and projects for our native plant society. If you have a pet idea, write it down and tell us about it at our January meeting.

Richard L. Johnson

Edible Natives

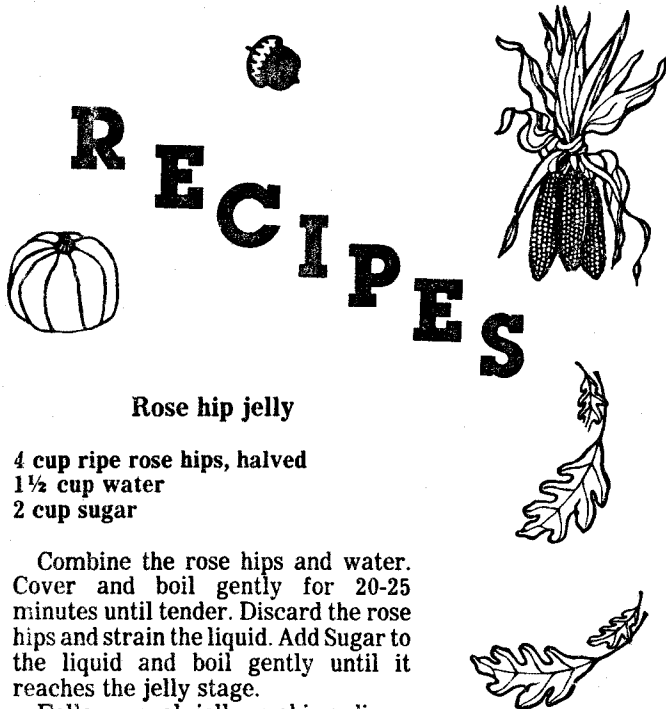
In the fall of the year much fruit will be harvested. A great untapped source is our native fruit/nut/berry. However, it is no longer possible to rely on the "berry patch down the road." I have seen such patches destroyed by a dozer in a matter of days in the name of progress. The berry patches so common along railroad tracks are now questionable for human and wildlife consumption due to herbicides sprayed in those areas. The same is unfortunately true for a particular plum orchard to which we may have had access in the past. The solution is to **grow your own**.

The rewards landscaping with edible natives are many. However, three seem to take precedence over the rest: producing healthful, tasty foods; the distinct financial benefit; and the personal satisfaction derived from creating a yard that is both productive and beautiful.

There is a native plant for every use in the landscape. Some of these categories are:

Ground covers
Herbaceous borders
Shrub borders
Hedges (unclipped
and clipped)
Boundary or
barrier plants
Foundation plants
Screens and windbreaks
Espaliers
Climbers
Lawn trees (Large,
medium, small)
Interest plants
Flowering plants
Plants with
colored foliage
Fragrance plants
Container plants
Native crabapple
Blackberry, dewberry

Wild Cherry
Wild onions/garlic
American elderberry
Muscadine grape
Hickory
Jerusalem artichoke
Red mulberry (needs
male pollination)
Pawpaw
Pecan
Persimmon (needs
male tree for pollination)
Wild plums
Prickly pear or
Indian fig
Rose hips
Native strawberry
Sweetbay or bay laurel
Black walnut
Huckleberry



Rose hip jelly

4 cup ripe rose hips, halved
1½ cup water
2 cup sugar

Combine the rose hips and water. Cover and boil gently for 20-25 minutes until tender. Discard the rose hips and strain the liquid. Add Sugar to the liquid and boil gently until it reaches the jelly stage.

Follow usual jelly making directions.

Eleanor Witherspoon's persimmon pudding

1 cup sugar
½ cup melted butter
1 tsp. cinnamon
2 tsp. baking soda dissolved in 2 Tbsp. water
2 tsp. vanilla
1 cup seedless raisins
½ cup ground pecans
1 cup persimmon pulp
1 cup unbleached flour
2 eggs
¼ tsp. salt
1 tsp. lemon juice

Mix ingredients together in the above order and pour into a greased pudding mold or one-pound coffee can, and use aluminum foil as a cover.

Cover the mold (or coffee can), place in a large pan, and add boiling water until it reaches half way up the mold. Cover the large pan and simmer on the top of the stove 2½ hours. Do not let water level drop; add more if needed. Serves 6-8.

Creating a Wildflower Garden

Beginning a wildflower garden or adding to an existing one can be the beginning of a rewarding life-long hobby. It will be different from any other garden — yours alone, and you can have a fantastic time creating it. It only requires a love for wildflowers and much patience.

Ideal sites will include both high and low areas for different drainage requirements. Shade-loving plants need the protection of trees and/or other tall structures, while sun-lovers request open areas.

The single most important addition to a wildflower garden is native trees and shrubs. Louisiana has many beautiful flowering shrubs and trees. Perhaps the finest of all are the magnolias: *Magnolia grandiflora*, *Magnolia virginiana* (sweet bay), *Magnolia macrophylla*, *Magnolia pyramidata*, and *Magnolia fraseri*. A related shrub, star arise (*Illicium floridanum*) with its odd, spidery crimson flowers and evergreen foliage, is lovely.

Louisiana is rich in hawthorns and viburnums. The parsley hawthorn (*Crataegus marshalii*), with its prettily-cut leaves, delicate flowers, and masses of small red berries, is an excellent plant for landscaping. *Crataegus brachyacantha* is called Pomete Blue because of its blue berries. The blue fruit is an oddity in a genus which has fruits of green, orange and red, so the color readily distinguishes this species from all other Louisiana haws. The mayhaw, *Crataegus opaca*, is gathered for jelly-making in April. Give this one a low, wet spot and it will thrive.

The native viburnums rival the cultivated types anytime. *Viburnum nudum* and *V. scabrellum*, with glossy leaves, take on rich shades of red and rose in the fall. They may have clusters of green, rose and blue berries all at the same time. The maple-leaf viburnum, *V. acerifolium*, a pretty under-shrub, takes on bright rose fall colors.

Fringe tree, *Chionanthus virginica*, is very showy with its delicate fringed blooms. The male and female blooms are on different plants, the male with longer fringe and female having blue fruit.

A charming tree is the silver bell, *Halesia diptera*. Every twig is hung with white bells before the leaves appear. A closely-related shrub, snowbell, (*Styrax americana*) has star-shaped flowers borne on dainty sprays. Big-leaf snowbell (*S. grandifolia*) has larger leaves and sprays of blooms.

The wild crabapple *Malus angustifolia* blooms are pink and have a delicious fragrance. They bloom in such profusion that the branches weep with the weight of the blossoms. Do not attempt to grow wild crabapples near cedar trees, as cedar rust will damage or kill them. Sourwood (*Oxydendron arboreum*) is one of our most beautiful trees. It puts on racemes of fragrant white blooms in June and July, reminiscent of lily-of-the-valley. Pointed leaves show crimson color in the fall. It is related to the huckleberries, so requires an acid soil.

The oak leaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) is very showy and easy. The tall spires sport attractive flowers: first white, then shades of pink and rose. The entire plant is rose-colored in the fall. The red buckeye, *Aesculus pavia*, with soft rose, flesh and pink leaves, is quite a sight in spring. During late spring the 4- or 5-foot wide and high plant bears bright red spires of blooms atop the big, deeply-veined leaves. I have a tree buckeye 15 feet tall and as wide, which covers itself in red bloom in April. Its trunk is white-spotted and there is a difference in the texture and color of leaves. The two buckeyes grow in the same conditions. In Hal Bruce's *How to Grow Wildflowers and Native Shrubs and Trees in Your Garden*, the shrub is classified as *A. splendens* and the tree as *A. pavia*.

No wildflower garden would be complete without the pretty wild azaleas which grow along our branches. *Azalea canescens* grows in north Louisiana; its fragrance is very sweet. So delightful is the bloom stage, you may find shade differences in the pink color or size of the cluster. I find them easy to grow in sandy soil where they get plenty of water to set buds in August.

You can never have too many dogwoods. Transplanting in October or November is simplicity itself. Plant them the same depth that you found them growing and mulch and water well the first year. Dogwood is *Cornus florida*. Grow redbud trees for a glorious show in early spring. The delicate, frothy pink or lavender buds precede the leaves.

Ferns create such a cool, peaceful setting. They will turn a shady nook into a wonderland; some will grow in partial sun if conditions are boggy. Among deciduous and evergreen ferns are: the lady, net-veined chain, royal cinnamon, sensitive, ebony spleenwort, venus hair, Christmas, Virginia chain and climbing fern.

It's so simple to select wildflowers for blooms nearly all year. For a spring filled with color and fragrance consider: violets, trilliums, bloodroot, trout lilies, Louisiana iris, phlox, spiderwort.

Summer ushers in: skull caps, poppy mallow, coral bean, penstemon, hibiscus and clematis. These will serve you well by cheering you on during those hot meals.

Then fall appears in a riot of purple and gold: liatris (blazing star), narrow-leaf sunflower, goldenrod, blue ageratum, asters and ironweed. And for variety there is the red cardinal flower!

These are but a few of the many wildflowers that bloom all year.

Remember our native vines for draping fences or trees or trellises. Or try them in hanging baskets. Coral honeysuckle is a blaze of red on a fence — first with blooms in spring and summer, followed by attractive translucent berries in the fall. Yellow jessamine is even a good ground cover, as it is an evergreen vine. A cross vine in bloom against a pine tree trunk is a sight to behold.

There is no better way to preserve our beautiful native plants than to collect and nurture them in your own yard.



Chicory grows in area

Chicory was imported years ago from Europe and escaped from cultivation. This perennial is also called Blue Sailors. It is a hardy plant standing up to 5 feet tall. Color ranges from sky blue to light pink or white. Flowers are about 2 inches across with 12-15 petals. Petals are notched at the tips. Each petal overlaps the one next to it; they are not uniform in length or width. Flower centers are a lighter color. Approximately 15 stamen and the pistil are located in the center. Blooms are arranged in an interesting and fascinating manner. The first flower develops on the stem and is attached to the main stem without any sign of a connecting stem (pedicel). The second bud will have a very short stem and crowd out the first bloom. Then as the second bud develops a third bud forms on a much longer stem out to about 1 inch. A fourth stem grows from the same junction where the first flower was located. This fourth flower stem will extend outward as much as 2 inches with a new flower at the tip. Plants start flowering in late May and last until frost.

**Jack P.Price
Blanchard**