



Gaillardia

Oklahoma Native Plant Society

The purpose of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society is to encourage the study, protection, propagation, appreciation and use of Oklahoma's native plants.

Volume 38, Number 1 Spring 2023

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Photo of ferns by Adam Sarmiento. Article Pages 4-6

Upcoming Events/Activities

(check the ONPS website or Facebook for more details)

APRIL IS NATIVE PLANT MONTH

Apr 6 - Central Chapter meeting, 630 socializing and 7 pm program at OCU Dawson-Loeffler Building.

Apr 15 - Sand Springs Herbal Affair—BUY NATIVE PLANTS.

Apr 21 - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays (details below)

Apr 22 - EARTH DAY

May 1 - NE Chapter meeting, 6:30 socializing and 7 pm program at the Tulsa Garden Center, Tulsa.

May 5-7 - Wonders of Wildflowers (see Insert flyer).

May 19 - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays (details below)

Jun 16 - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays (details below).

We have LOTS of field trips scheduled. April 15 and 22, May 21 and 27, June 3rd there are two and July 22.

See Page 16 for Field Trip information!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Central Chapter, 6:30 pm socializing and 7:00 pm meeting at Oklahoma City University in the Dawson-Loeffler Science Center, Room 208.

NE Chapter, 6:30 pm socializing and 7:00 pm meeting at Tulsa Garden Center, 2435 S Peoria Ave, Tulsa

Fabulous Wildflower Fridays, 3rd Friday monthly, 5:30 pm, casual, at Panera Bread, 5601 E 41st Street, Tulsa

Preview Chapter meeting topics inside. All members are invited to all meetings, including board meetings, and are encouraged to bring guests.

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Micah Friedman	Central
Nancy Hamill	Mycology

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Color Oklahoma	Pearl Garrison

Conservation Committee and statewide Tulsa Garden
Center Liaison positions retired.

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President's Message

By Patrick Bell, ONPS President

Spring is here. And with it comes the eagerly anticipated enlivenment of nature. In that renewed enlivenment, the spring growth and flowers are a warm, welcome change from the drabs of winter. As you embark on the new season with its busyness and bustle, don't forget to get out in nature- a walk in the park, a morning in your yard, or a planned trip to a natural area; all can be restorative, and fun.

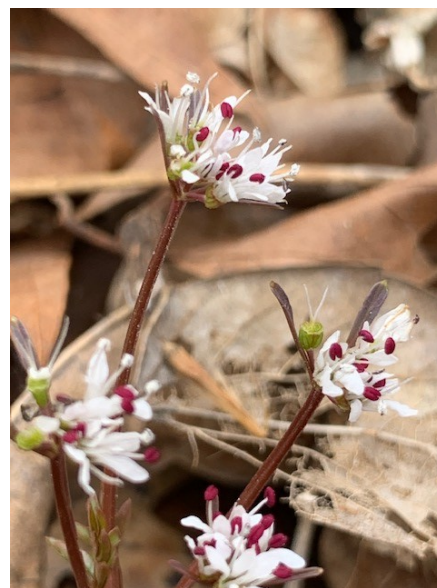
To help with those plans, ONPS has lots to offer:

Our annual Wonders of Wildflowers weekend (WOW) will be held at the scenic Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge May 5th-7th. With ideal temperatures and the recent moisture, the blooms should be bountiful and beguiling.

Also, to help with getting out, the Northeast and Central Chapters are planning multiple spring field trips; always enjoyable and informative. Keep an eye on our website, oknativeplants.org, for more information and updates.

As a final note, April is National Native Plant Month in America. In conjunction with the Garden Clubs of America, the ONPS has petitioned the Governor to proclaim April as Native Plant Month

for Oklahoma. Perhaps we can encourage that effort on an annual basis. It's time to get out, and to get the word out...



Harbinger of spring, *Erigenia bulbosa*, found during an Invasive Plant Council Weed Wrangle to remove Garlic Mustard. Photo by Lynn Michael, Ozark Plateau WMR, 2/25/23.

Central Chapter Update

Micah Friedman, Chair

For our upcoming meetings, Gus Barksdale will be speaking about ferns in March and Vonceil Harmon will be presenting on pollinator habitat in April. There will be no monthly meetings for May, June, or July. Instead, we will be hosting the Wonders of Wildflowers weekend in May, a plant walk in OKC in June, and a plant walk at Arcadia Lake in July. Hope you can make it out!

Events:

March 2nd: Gus Barksdale will present on winter fern botanizing.

April 6th: Vonceil Harmon will present on building capacity for pollinator habitat on working landscapes.

May 5th - May 7th: Wonders of Wildflowers weekend in the Wichitas (see insert)

June 3rd: Plant Walk: Botanizing Disturbed Areas and Old Fields (DAOFF) Where: Deep Fork River Meeting in front of Shoe Carnival, 1701 Belle Isle Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73118
Time: 10am We will caravan to the Deep Fork River, which is .5 miles from the meeting spot. Wear hiking clothes (ticks will be out) and bring water.

July 22nd: Plant Walk: Plants of the Cross Timbers Ecoregion Where: Arcadia Lake
Time: 10am Meeting at Arcadia Lake Park Office parking lot, 9000 East 2nd Street, Arcadia, OK 73007. Wear hiking clothes (ticks will be out) and bring water.

Contributions

General Fund

11/11/2022 thru 2/10/2023

1/20/2023	Anonymous	\$ 50.00
12/6/2022	Anonymous	\$ 861.00
12/28/2022	Creider, Thomas W.	\$ 30.00
1/9/2023	Anonymous	\$2,000.00
1/9/2023	Schneider, Fred	\$ 4.00

OVERALL TOTAL \$2,945.00

Northeast Chapter Update

Kathy Doss, Chair

NE Chapter's had a meeting December 5 at the Tulsa Garden Center. We had a delightful program with our own Fran Stallings. She shared "Tales of Plants on the Prairie", stories and tall tales about native plants. Fran is a wonderful story-teller. Don't miss if you ever get a chance to hear her.

Our next meeting will be March 6 with a program with Sarah Cross from Across the Prairie, Oklahoma Native Plants and Landscapes.

Sarah will tell us about how she started her business and about growing and landscaping with native plants.

We will also meet May 1 with a program to be determined.

Welcome New Members

Added 11/16/2022 thru 2/9/2023

11/30 - Ken and Barbara Zaslow

12/1 - Leah Lowe

12/25 - Will and Ellyn Harges

12/31 - Martie Buzzard

1/2/2023 - Katie Huskerson

1/11 - Emily Soreghan

1/12 - Malarie Gotcher

1/22 - Brooke Blessed

1/27 - Peggy Beavers

2/3 - Jennifer Bryant

2/4 - Aleah Walker

2/8 - Heidi Kamm

2/9 - Lisa Fowler

A Sanctuary of Ferns

Article and photos by Adam Sarmiento

On Sunday some go to church, mosque or synagogue to practice their spirituality and commune with God. If I'm lucky and the stars align, I get to go out into a wild or semi-wild remnant of natural ecosystem and there find my preferred place of worship. On one recent lucky Sunday I got to do just that. Along with my young botanizing savant of a companion, Mr. Gus Barskdale, we set out on this foggy cool December morning to explore a somewhat remote canyon in Western Oklahoma. Part of a group of eroded Rush Springs Sandstone canyons known as the Caddo Canyons which are in turn part of an enormous series of canyons and ridges



Above: *Asplenium wootonii*, Wooton's spleenwort.

At right: Gus examines a specimen with a hand lens.

dotted along a line that extends as far south as northern Mexico and at least as far north as Western Nebraska. These canyons, with their sheer walls of fifty or more feet, help retain moisture and keep temperatures cooler and thereby allow for disjunct populations of flora. In Oklahoma these canyons are sheltering places for plants from areas much further east and in some cases west too. For botanist and plant lovers this represents an opportunity to find rare plants or at least plants very rare to their location. For those like myself interested in the spiritual character and power of places, these canyons also represent a connection to a somewhat lost world of powerful feral ancient forces untamed by European conquest of thought and deed. The irony of the remoteness of this region is that lies only 65 miles west as the crow flies from the increasingly suburbanized and ecologically disturbed megalopolis of the Oklahoma City area we live in. These remnant pockets, remote but within reach, provide a glimpse of the incredible diversity that once existed all across this part of the world. Our main botanical

objective of the day was to explore and document the rich fern diversity to be found in these canyons. With any luck we would find rare ferns far from their normal habitats. Within twenty minutes of our departure from Norman, we began to see the farm and grazing lands grow wider and farther as the strip malls and garish glowing signs grew fainter in our rearview. The fog on this particular morning added to the enchanting effect that we were heading to a place of hidden magic. Slowly but surely sandstone walls covered in multi-hued Lichen began to appear along the side of the roads where the rocky outcroppings had been cut or blasted through for roadways. The rich lichen diversity on these walls looked like a living Jackson Pollock painting and the first of "xeric" fern colonies could be seen along the tops of the walls. A harbinger of things to come! A decaying, rusty, abandoned APCO gas station at the ghost town of Cogar, where a phone booth scene in Rain Man was filmed, is a sure sign that we had left modernity behind for a day. Not too far up the road the descent into the canyon began. At the parking area we were greeted by a high red canyon wall that stretched as far as the eye could see heading into Juniper, Oak and Maple woods and thickets.



We set out following this wall and within 5 minutes walking we found our first of many patches of cliff hugging ferns. *Myriopteris tomentosa* (wooly lipfern) which is a gorgeous greyish (owing to their fine hairs and hence tomentose) green was the most numerous fern we found. These were some of the biggest healthiest clumps I'd ever seen growing. They prefer niches along the sheer sandstone cliffs but could also be found along the rim of the canyons with short grass plants, as well as in some locations in clumps below the canyon walls with forest plants. The other most common ferns encountered were *Asplenium platyneuron* (Ebony Spleenwort) and an as yet specified *Woodsia* species but likely *W. obtusa*. These three species were often found on the same large rock or outcropping along with a variety of Lichens and *Selaginella* (spikemoss). The



way this complex of species created soil shelves on the rocks indicated the symbiotic relationship they appear to share. The ferns are almost always accompanied by these other companions. Another species we were keen to observe was *Acer saccharum* v. 'Caddo' (Caddo maple or Sugar Maple). These native Sugar Maples are thought to have once covered a broader area during the last ice age but were able to persist in sheltered locations like these canyons. The closely related *Acer grandidatum* (Bigtooth Maple) similarly persists in canyons in Western Texas. The Caddo Maples were in great abundance here! Owing to the mild fall, their yellow and beige leaves made them hard to miss and at times they were so thick as to be hard to get through. Although I have planted many a Caddo Maple this was my first time seeing them so abundantly and in their natural habitat. It was heartening to see them in all stages of development as well. From small seedling to large mature specimen they seem to be thriving in this location. The Bigtooth Maple in Texas are under threat of the

overgrazing of deer but here in this Caddo canyon the Maples seem to be doing OK. All along our way we could see evidence of Wild Boar rooting around in the soil. Another of our botanical goals was to hopefully see the single leaf of the *Tipularia discolor* (Crane-Fly Orchid) but despite seeing much suitable habitat we were unable to spot a single specimen. Since the tubers are edible we hoped the Boars had not eaten them all. Interestingly the western facing slope of the initial canyon we explored supported the most ferns and lichens. In one spot we saw a single specimen of *Myriopteris wootonii* (Wooton's Lip Fern) which is quite rare in Oklahoma. Without fern aficionado Mr. Barksdale on this expedition, I probably wouldn't have noticed it being different from *M. tomentosa* but upon closer inspection I could see its leaflets were nearly round, like little beads. Instances of *Asplenium resiliens* (Blackstemmed Spleenwort) were also encountered along this side of the canyon, often growing right out of the sandstone. Gus spotted a lovely small specimen of *Pleurotus ostreatus* (Oyster mushroom) growing from a hardwood tree trunk. Thirty yards or so ahead of us we saw the small black Boar and a litter of little squeakers darting off into the forest understory. After exploring most of this initial canyon, we crossed over to the east facing side and followed this up to another canyon that forked off in a northerly direction. The bottom of this canyon spur was an intricate lattice of Beaver engineered streams and low tunnel-like paths through thick colonies of *Equisetum hyemale* (Rough Horsetail), and *Acer negundo* (Box Elder), *Toxicodendron radicans* (Poison Ivy). Owing to the latter species this area would be difficult to traverse in the warm months. As it was, we were often walking on dense clumps of *Equisetum* rather than solid ground. The further up this canyon we went the less traces of human activity (names carved in the sandstone, trails) could be seen until eventually there were none. A deepening sense of hush and quietude could be felt here, like passing into a tranquil forgotten world far from the incessant digital clamor of the

microbiome all around. The only thing disturbing this tranquil remote setting was the loud whooshing white noise of a very nearby wind turbine above the canyon rim. Along some of the north facing inlets of cliff wall were spotty occurrences of *Cystopteris* (either *fragilis* or *tennesseensis*) that looked a little forlorn hanging on under the cliff overhangs. We passed through numerous beautiful glades surrounded by Caddo Maples, Oaks and a variety of other trees. Some instances of *Equisetum* could be seen high up the canyon floor indicating past flooding events. We came upon a steep embankment of soil which led to what appeared to be an attempt at a road carved into the sandstone. This led us up on top of the canyon wall to look at the variety of flora found there. Short grass prairie plants of *Schizachyrium scoparium* (Little Bluestem), *Bouteloua gracilis* (Blue grama), *Thelesperma filifolium*, *Artemisia ludoviciana* v. *Mexicana*, *Yucca glauca* and *Y. arkansana* and other common plants of this type of habitat dominated here. Amongst these short grass plants raised mounds of *Juniperus virginiana*, provided shade and roots upon which a living carpet of *Selaginella rupestris* and *S. peruviana* in turn provided habitat for *Myriopteris tomentosa* and the ever-present array of Lichens. These Caddo Canyon rims support a unique assemblage of plants with the aforementioned fern complex often alongside *Opuntias*, *Yuccas* and other more typically xeric habitat species. Along the western rim of the canyon we spotted a single specimen of *Artemisia filifolia* (Sand Sagebrush) which is about as far east as this species is found. After descending from the canyon rim we explored the last few areas where springs seep out of the northern canyon wall. In one such small inlet a lone fern of as yet unidentified species was found, fairly deep under a cliff overhang. My esteemed Pteridophile hiking partner is still uncertain as to what species we found. In consulting with Fern experts their suggestion and even adamant confirmation of the exotic species *Christella dentata* from Oceania, leaves me quite skeptical. This is an invasive fern in many parts of the world, but mainly in the warm southeastern states. No other instance of it is documented in Oklahoma so to find it



growing in such a remote location tucked under a cliff, away from much if any horticultural industry seems very unlikely to me. Although Mr. Barksdale saved a small specimen voucher a larger specimen collection was not possible due to it being the only specimen we encountered. Hopefully a return trip the location can shed more light on this mysterious and disjunct fern specimen. I noted two young upright tree trunks standing like sentries, or doorways on either side of this fern and had a sense of a remote retreat from ever encroaching gears of development. My sense of the presence of primordial spirits was quite acute in this protected spot. As the afternoon light was beginning to fade and my feelings of peckishness was ever increasing, we headed back to our vehicle. After crossing a sturdy beaver dam that had made the stream quite wide and provided a lovely waterfall, we got a little sidetracked up onto the canyon mesas but eventually found our way out. Standing at my truck parking on mowed grass, I was struck by the density of interwoven, symbiotic life we had just been enmeshed in. Nearly every surface of the canyons had been covered in lichens, spikemoss, moss, ferns, fungi, trees, grasses and dizzying array of plant life. I thought of

the lack of this biodiversity in our human inhabited areas and felt a pang of loss and a desire to tarry a little longer, but home called through the misty foggy wheat fields above, and back to the world of concrete and plastic...

Growing Native Plants

by Marilyn Stewart

Oklahoma is diverse. Southeast Oklahoma has alligators, orchids, lakes and Black Bears. Of the 79 state champion trees, 31 are in the bottom right-hand corner, in McCurtain County with an average rainfall of 54 inches. Contrast that with the upper left-hand corner in the panhandle, an area of short grass, lava rock, antelope, cactus, and some of the most impressive grasshoppers I've ever seen. With an average of only 17 inches, trees are on the short side.

Both extremes are in the boundaries of the state, but plants do not recognize man-made boundaries and planting an Oklahoma native without consideration for where it is native, and the conditions it needs, is a waste of time and money. For many years natives have been promoted as plants that never fail, never need water, will grow in any condition, and make your yard look like a seed packet ad. But natives are no different than any other plant and each has its specific needs and requirements.

So, how to choose plants for your spot? First, you can check to see what is native to your area. I like to look up plants on the USDA website as it shows where a plant is native, often with counties marked. Another is wildflowers.org, a site out of Texas that is connected to the University of Texas and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. This one isn't as specific as to counties, but it does give some information about growing conditions and benefits to wildlife. Finally, my plant bible and book I would save in case of fire is the John and Connie Taylor guide An Annotated List of the Ferns, Fern Allies, Gymnosperms and Flowering Plants of Oklahoma. This one lists all the plants of Oklahoma and the general areas they are located in as well as their status as a tree, shrub, annual, etc. and if they are medicinal, edible, or poisonous.

Are the conditions like your own? That Little Bluestem growing so well in harsh conditions on the side of the road looks fantastic, but if you plant one in your yard and have a sprinkler system that Little Bluestem will rebel.

Following are some considerations when choosing plants:

***Sun exposure**, there are differences between full sun, partial sun, full shade, partial shade and the shade that occurs after trees have leafed out. There are differences as well depending on the time of year. Also keep in mind that many plant care labels originate on the east coast and that plant, while it may be native here, may be labeled as full sun for Massachusetts but not be full sun here.

***Moisture**, what kind of water needs does the plant require? If you have an irrigation system, be aware that many of our native prairie plants do not like extra water.

***Soil**. You may want to get a soil test done, there are some at home tests you can do, but your OSU Extension office will do a great job. How deep is your soil? At our place we tend to hit sandstone about 24 inches down so it has been hit and miss on some plants in our prairie, in particular some of the deep rooted ones like Compass Plant have struggled in places. Is your soil sandy or clay? Rocky?

Some great books and resources are out there. Natural Resources Conservation Service sponsors programs such as Yard by Yard, and has free information to the homeowner. There are several good books out there that give advice for planting natives, a longtime favorite of mine is Gardening with Prairie Plants by Sally Wasowski. Of course, any book by Doug Tallamy has my vote, and a new publication by Benjamin Vogt titled

(Growing Native Plants continued on Page 8)

(Growing Native Plants continued from Page 7)

Prairie Up is a practical guide and seems to be geared to our part of the country.

Most importantly, take a hike! Walk around, observe what is growing where. Experiment. Plant densely, allow plants to move and naturalize. A garden of native plants may not always be easier, but the rewards are immense when you consider how many birds, insects, and species of wildlife those gardens support. By simply choosing native plants, each of us CAN make a difference.

Bartlesville Yard Ordinance

Article by Mary McCormick

In September, the Bartlesville City Council approved a yard ordinance regarding a “managed natural landscaping area.” The new ordinance details how a property owner can replace lawn with other plants, meaning residents can establish small meadows in their front yards.

There are many requirements:

- The managed natural landscape area exceeding 12 inches in height can occupy only 50 percent of the yard visible from any public way.
- The natural area must have a solid impermeable barrier — such as rock, brick, some kind of landscape edging.
- A 10-foot wide “transition area” or setback from the street is required, or five feet from a public sidewalk, whichever is greater. The transition area required for side and rear lot lines is five feet.
- Plants within the transition area must be no taller than 12 inches.
- Plants on Oklahoma extension service lists, both native and naturalized, are authorized for usage, as long as they meet height regulations.
- Plants other than trees and shrubs which exceed four feet have to be within 15 feet of a building or a fence.
- All plants within the designated area must be cut annually to no more than 12 inches.
- Complete removal of turf grass must occur prior to establishing the natural area.

The ordinance also enables the city to respond to neighbors’ complaints about an untended or unmaintained yard.

Change may occur very slowly. There is still a strong 50s-tidy presentation in most Bartlesville yards. The council met with considerable opposition to this ordinance.

I would like to see the ONPS join with such groups as Okies for Monarchs, Audubon Society, the Xercis Society and Tribal Alliance for Pollinators to encourage other cities throughout the state to adopt similar ordinances. Bartlesville city government people do not know of another city in Oklahoma which has passed such an ordinance.

(Editor’s Note: Greg Collins, the Assistant Director-Community Development for the City of Bartlesville can be reached for a pdf copy of the ordinance or with questions or comments at gscollins@cityofbartlesville.org)

A Puzzling Plant

Article and photos by Dale and Sue Amstutz



Photo #1—early summer 2003

as the years went by. Our interest in native plants which had begun in around 1970 had already caused us to switch the “meadow” from tomato plants and cucumbers to prairie coneflowers, purple coneflowers, and coreopsis. Obviously, the Burfordi holly didn’t provide a suitable backdrop for our wildflower garden. So in 2002, the hollies got banished and were replaced with shrubs of a more natural demeanor: clove currant, sweetspire, fragrant sumac, beautyberry and Shrubby St. John’s-wort.

The rest of this story is about the St. John’s-wort. Its first blooms appeared in the early summer of 2003...sunny yellow powder puffs surrounded by delicate petals. (see photos #1 and #2). The two plants thrived for the next several years. Winter of 2007 was their downfall, though. The massive ice storm of February which coated the shrubs with a thick shield of solid ice weighed down the branches of the shrubs so heavily that the weight literally demolished them in such a way as to end their very existence. So no more St. John’s-wort yellow powder puffs. OR SO WE THOUGHT!!!



Photo #3—summer 2022

Now, the puzzle. How had it survived? The original plants were along the south fence in the shrub border planted in 2002. This new “offspring” was at least ten feet farther NORTH and in a totally different location than the 2002 plantings. How did our 2022 version move...a seed left over from a dozen or more years earlier which had found a new home? A root that managed to stay alive and found a location in which to produce new growth? We don’t know. But we’re certain of one thing....this is not only an interesting puzzle, but one of Nature’s true enigmas...how a plant supposedly “dead” for fifteen years could make a comeback and thrive.

Native plant enthusiasts are always on the lookout for the unusual, the unexpected, or the unexplainable. “What is it?”....“Where did that come from?”..... “is it a native or a fugitive from someone’s kitchen garden?”... “If I gather seeds, will they germinate?”... and so on. We had just such a puzzle last year in our upper “meadow” garden.

Back in 1970 when we bought the property which has been our home for all these years, the south fence was “guarded” by a hedge of prickly Burfordi holly bushes. Keeping these sticker shrubs under a modicum of control got harder, and thornier



Photo #2—summer 2003

Fast forward to June, 2022. One day, Sue noticed a yellow bloom among the greening plants of the upper “meadow” garden. On closer examination, including photographing the plant for comparison to the earlier 2003-2004 photos, with amazement, we determined that the plant we “discovered” was the Shrubby St. John’s-wort we had lost fifteen years earlier during the ice storm. (Photos #3 and #4).



Photo #4—June 2022

Murrah Makeover with Natives

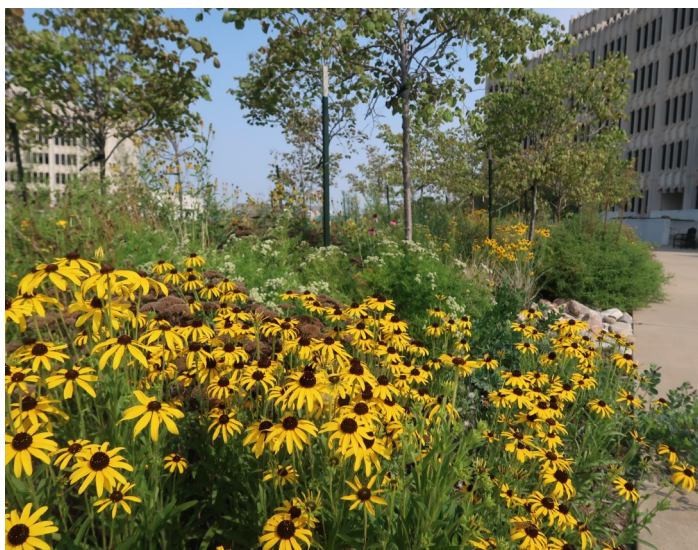
Article and photos by Connie Scothorn

In 2021, construction was completed on the renovation of the Memorial Grove, a large planting area that was originally constructed in 1995 to commemorate the victims of the Murrah Building Bombing. The site is on Northeast 24th Street, just north of the State Capitol, and so this public site can be viewed at any time.



Redesign of the site was respectful to the original Memorial Plan, in that it maintained the one tree to victim ratio that was originally established. 168 trees were planted including Crabapples to represent the children, Sawtooth Oaks to represent military members and Rising Sun Redbud to represent the remainder of those killed on April 19, 1995. Below those trees were planted 10,500 native forbs, planted in groups to provide flowering color throughout the year. The native forbs are easy to maintain and have since spread and taken over their perfect microclimate amongst others, while still providing amazing color from March until October. Since Oklahoma is on the migration path of the Monarch Butterflies, this garden provides a waystation for food and replenishment for their long journey. They found this site within the first year after planting, with bees, butterflies and thousands of dancing pollinators adding to the flower show. We would encourage anyone to visit this site this spring.

ONPS members Connie Scothorn and Brian Patric with CLS were the project landscape architects.



One of the Other Yellow Flowers

article and photos by Rebecca Carlberg

Olof Rudbeck the Younger (1660-1740) or could it have been Olof the Elder (1630-1702). Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778) tutored Olof the Younger's younger kids. So impressed was 70-year-old Olof with 23-year-old Linnaeus' style, Olof wanted to step down and have Linnaeus become the botanical garden demonstrator at Uppsala University in Sweden.

The Rudbecks were no slouches. Professors of medicine, they were both scientists and linguists. Olof the Elder founded Sweden's first botanical garden in 1655, known now as the Linnaean Garden. The garden includes 1,300 species originally cultivated by Linnaeus. Olof the Younger was also a botanist as well as an ornithologist.

Linnaeus named the plant genus *Rudbeckia* in honor of both Olofs. A quote from Wilfred Blunt's "The Compleat Naturalist: A Life of Linnaeus". "So long as the earth shall survive and as each spring shall see it covered with flowers, the *Rudbeckia* will preserve your glorious

name.....Pride of our gardens, the *Rudbeckia* will be cultivated throughout Europe and in distant lands where your revered name must long have been known."



I never realized Black-eyed Susans were so famous. They are the state flower of Maryland. *Rudbeckia hirta* is a true native to this area as well, but rather confused, not too sure to call itself an annual, biennial or perennial. So happy, the tough flowers have eye-catching yellow ray flowers surrounding a dark brown center of disc flowers. The brown flower cones range from nearly level mounds to pronounced hills.

The Susans are composite flowers in the Asteraceae family of sunflowers, asters, daisies in the 1900+ genera I will not list here. Lucky you. Abundant trichomes (*hirta* means hairy) make for fuzzy leaves and stems which not only deter insects and other munchers from nibbling away, but prevent water loss. The 2-to-3-foot-tall plant is very drought tolerant but does appreciate a drink when dry.

Black-eyed Susans effectively deal with the toxic Juglones of the walnut family designed to prevent plant competition. If you have pecan, walnut, or hickory trees, the black-eyed Susan is your landscape flower since it grows not only in sun but partial shade.

In addition to its beauty, the birds, bees and butterflies go for the Susans. Birds for seeds, insects for pollen and nectar. This *Rudbeckia* is host plant for the caterpillars of the Bordered Patch Butterfly, Silvery and Gorgone Checkerspot. Not cats. The plant is toxic to kitties. I really don't know of any carnivorous cats that would chow down on this hairy plant. Then again, my two cats find the South African spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*) irresistible.

(One of the Other... continued on Page 12)

(One of the Other... continued from Page 11)

But wait. Perhaps you don't call them Black or Brown-eyed Susans. Brown Betty, Gloriosa daisy, Yellow ox-eye daisy, English bulls-eye and Golden Jerusalem are other common names. A number of varieties (40+) have cropped up. No info on how these affect pollinators, but some have green eyes for brown centers, thin narrow yellow petals, double petals similar to chrysanthemums or an inner row of curly petals around the cone. Cultivars with orange yellow petals, petals the color of cherries, autumn colors and *Coreopsis* mimics are available.



This *Rudbeckia* has a long bloom time from June to early October. That said, the big window opens the competitive plants up to a few opportunistic pests. Powdery mildew and leaf spots are usually maintenance problems associated with high humidity, improper watering or plants crowded too close together. Insects are no big deal, but sap sucking aphids and the host specific *Rudbeckia psyllid* nymph may appear.

Black-eyed Susans can be found for sale in plant nurseries. Be cheap and sow seeds you've collected the previous summer or fall. Mature seed cones with dark seeds form 3-4 weeks after flowering. Black-eyed Susans can also be transplanted, but do keep them moist as they acclimate. Translation: don't move them during a dry spell or heat wave.



Grow Some Wild Seeds!

Color Oklahoma with Wildflowers

Committee members Monica Bartling and Craig Williams with Martin Villarreal of the Oklahoma State Department of Transportation.

Color Oklahoma

This spring look for more Color Oklahoma native wildflowers near Stillwater, at Waurika, and near the Red River in far southwest Oklahoma. We increased the acreage in the Stillwater Loop of the Cimarron Turnpike at the request of the district Turnpike Authority superintendent. Committee Member Ron Tyrl has lead expansion of the site for years.

With continued support from the state Department of Transportation and committee members Monica Bartling and Craig Williams, we added to the beautiful stretch along state Highways 81 and 70 extending from Waurika. Monica and Craig were also leaders in expanding a planting site at the Randlett exit off the Bailey Turnpike and creating a site along Highway 79 at the Red River bridge.

Members of Color Oklahoma thank the Turnpike Authority of the Department of Transportation for continued support of our wildflower sowing project. Their crews sow the seeds each fall and have coordinated with us to avoid premature mowing of sites. We purchase species that complete their bloom cycles before the first scheduled mowing of the year. This year, Color Oklahoma and the Turnpike Authority are testing two sites along the Kickapoo Turnpike in Oklahoma City with species that bloom throughout the year. The Authority has pledged to not mow those sites until the last mowing of the year. The Authority will monitor response from the public.

Funding for the project comes from the state's sale of Color Oklahoma license plates. Color Oklahoma receives \$20 of each tag sold. The money is used for the purchase of Oklahoma native plant seeds and education. The tags are available online from the Oklahoma Tax Commission, Specialty Tag division.

The name of Color Oklahoma - Sow Some Wild Seeds has been changed to Color Oklahoma with Wildflowers. The change was made to help web users more easily find our new website, coloroklahoma.com, created by Monica.

Color Oklahoma, a committee of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, will reorganize in February in the wake of the resignation of co-founder Pearl Garrison.

Musings from Joe

by Joe Roberts

Why you should lie to your kids about native plants.

My friend Andy was recounting a gig he had teaching conversational English to a bunch of Japanese high-school students (Andy lives in Japan). He was telling me about the job, and how he was instructed to show up at an English class and talk about himself, so the students could get practice listening to English from native speakers. He would introduce himself, talk about his life, his hobbies, etc. I asked him what hobbies he told them he had, because in my experience Andy's only hobby was debauchery. He said, "I tell them I surf." I replied, "But you don't surf." He said, "I don't, but the kids seem to think it's cool, and they pay attention after that."

What can botanists learn from Andy? Duplicity. That creating interest is far more important than being correct. The CORRECT answer to "What's this plant?" is either the correct answer or an incorrect answer. The INCORRECT answer is "I don't know," which is guaranteed to make them lose interest in plants forever. Therefore, as far as my kids know, every composite flower on the planet is Daisy Fleabane. And now that they know it, they think they are experts. On hikes, they'll dutifully point out some unidentifiable DYA (darn yellow aster) by the trailhead, "Look Dad, Daisy Fleabane!" "Great job, kids, nice find." All good. Anything edible is immediately of interest to kids. So point out Shepherd's Purse, Greenbriar tendrils, and Sassafras.

If you really want to make something stick in their heads, spin a tale of intrigue around the plant. Plants are interesting to kids, but we adults too often feel hesitant to teach them plants because we ourselves aren't sure of the ID. The solution: Lie. And lie big. "This plant is the only thing that will save you if you are stung by a scorpion." "This plant keeps vampires away." "This plant makes you smell like worms so you catch more fish." First they get interested, then they can figure it out on their own.

(Editor's note: The above is an opinion of the author and not necessarily an ONPS view.)

Meet the Members: Bill Farris - From Rodeo to Rudbeckia

Article by Fran Stallings

Bill grew up rodeoing, raising cattle, and raising hay for cattle. He was born in Wichita Falls TX, but “got to Oklahoma as soon as I could.” His grandfather, upon retiring from the Texas oilfields, had bought a ranch in Jefferson County OK. Since Bill's parents travelled year-round managing rodeos, from the age of six Bill stayed with the grandparents to attend school.

Bill rodeoed at both the high school and college level. Through Waurika High School's FFA he studied soils, participated in land judging, forage grass identification and livestock judging, then studied plant science at Murray State College in Tishomingo. Then he started a construction business. One cold winter day when he was feeling his rodeo injuries, he went with friends to a greenhouse in Kingston OK to buy some house plants. It was warm and fragrant in there... very tempting!

Bill's cousin had a PhD in horticulture. She suggested books and trade magazines he could study. This was in 1985-86 when Oklahoma's economy was struggling, so he moved to Los Angeles and worked in construction management while continuing his research and reading. There he met his wife Sally, who agreed to come back to Oklahoma in 1989. They bought land south of Noble, fixed up the house and built one greenhouse, opening for business in spring 1990. Since the greenhouse had not been ready to start stock in time, they bought plants to resell.

Bill says things were changing in the horticultural world at that time. Gardeners were bringing in articles about culinary herbs and perennials they wanted to buy. Few Oklahoma nurseries carried those so Bill ordered herbs from Texas and perennials from an Oklahoma City grower – and recognized a market opportunity! When fancy tissue-culture-grown exotics did not thrive in Oklahoma, he saw the potential for native plants. And when interest in pollinator gardens burgeoned, Bill and Sally were in the right place at the right time. (His advice: Don't read trade journals, listen to customers who will tell you what they want.) Prairie Wind Nursery thrived.

When they decided they wanted less work, they sold the big nursery in Norman to some cannabis growers who offered a price they couldn't refuse. They retained two small greenhouses at home, one heated for culinary herbs and tender plants, the other for hardy perennials, with some woody nursery stock and grasses outdoors. But recently they made a deal to start a retail greenhouse in Purcell “big enough to keep out of trouble” and only five minutes further from home than Norman was. They will grow a full line of culinary herbs plus natives and pollinator plants with a few bedding annuals for cash flow. They enjoy selling at herb festivals such as the ones in Sand Springs (30 yrs!) and Jenks. “It's like a reunion of old friends” especially Marilyn Stewart, who usually has a neighboring booth.

Bill figures Marilyn probably connected him with ONPS, but he was a member for a long time before getting active on the board. He is grateful that members are loyal to the business.

Bill says that monarch/pollinator awareness is just starting to take off. “Nobody is against butterflies, it's a matter of getting the word out and folks will jump on board.” Younger generations don't want chemicals in their yards, knowing about the downside of “pool table lawns and poodled-up hedges.” Doug Tallamy's programs have had a big impact. Bill says it took a lot of learning to change his mind about tolerating a few bugs, but now he seldom sprays, and only with products approved by the Organic Materials Research Institute.

Bill intends to continue growing plants as long as he stays healthy. His father, who worked into his 80s, will soon be 95 and still lives independently. Bill hopes to do the same!



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DUES ARE OVERDUE. If 2023 dues are not paid by
March 2023, this could be your last *Gaillardia* issue.
Don't miss out!

**COPY AND ART
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FIELD TRIPS!!!!!!!

Apr 15 - Field Trip at Oxley Thrush Trail. Meet at the Interpretive Bldg at 10:30 am

Apr 22 - EARTH DAY Field Trip to Keystone State Park. Meet at the park office at 10 am

May 5-7 - Wonders of Wildflowers (see insert)

May 21 - Jacob DeVecchio of Oklahoma Fungi Company will lead a mushroom walk. Meet at 2 pm at Bluff Creek Park, 11301 N Meridian Ave. Oklahoma City, OK 73120.

May 27 - Field Trip at Rogers State University Education Reserve at 10 am in the parking lot.

June 3 - Plant Walk: Botanizing Disturbed Areas at Deep Fork River. Meet at 10 am in front of Shoe Carnival, 1701 Belle Isle Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73118

June 3 - Auto/walk tour at Pawnee City Lake. Meet CR Ledford at the Bathhouse at 10 am.

July 22 - Plant Walk: Plants of the Cross Timbers Ecoregion. Meet at 10 am at Arcadia Lake Park Office parking lot, 9000 E 2nd St, Arcadia, OK 73007

Wear hiking clothes and boots, and bring water (some also bring lunch). Insects will be out so bug spray is recommended.

Registration is not required, but suggested to ensure everyone gets needed information and directions. For more information and additional impromptu plant/mushroom walks email jennmichael54@gmail.com put ONPS Field Trip as the subject line.

2023 ONPS Wonders of Wildflowers

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

Friday, May 5

6pm to ? Reception and socializing Medicine Park, OK. Tentatively at Old Plantation Restaurant bar area.

Saturday, May 6

Breakfast on your own

8:30 am Botanizing Walk #1

10:30 am Botanizing Walk #2

Lunch Boulder Cabin Picnic Area on the Refuge

1:30 pm Botanizing Walk #3

3:30 pm Botanizing Walk #4

6:00-9:00 pm Dinner @ Museum of the Great Plains, 601 NW Ferris Ave, Lawton OK, in Elmer Thomas Park. Enter at 6th or 7th St on Ferris Ave.

6:30 pm Presentation by Connie Murray "Doyle McCoy's Wildflowers". Connie will give commentary and show the original slides used by the late Cameron Univ. Botany professor Doyle McCoy in his groundbreaking "Roadside Wildflowers of Oklahoma" books published in the 1970s.

Sunday 7th (optional)

Breakfast on your own

9:00 am ONPS Board meeting. Environmental Education Center, Quanah Parker Lake on the Refuge. All are invited.

~11:30 am Botanizing on the refuge

Lunch on your own

*** The refuge and facilities will be busy. Times/locations may change, therefore, all attendees must provide an email for updates, or will need to monitor the situation actively so as not to be left out. For questions, contact Joe at oknativeplants@yahoo.com or (405) 820-6851. Online registration and additional information can be found at the ONPS website: www.oknativeplants.org

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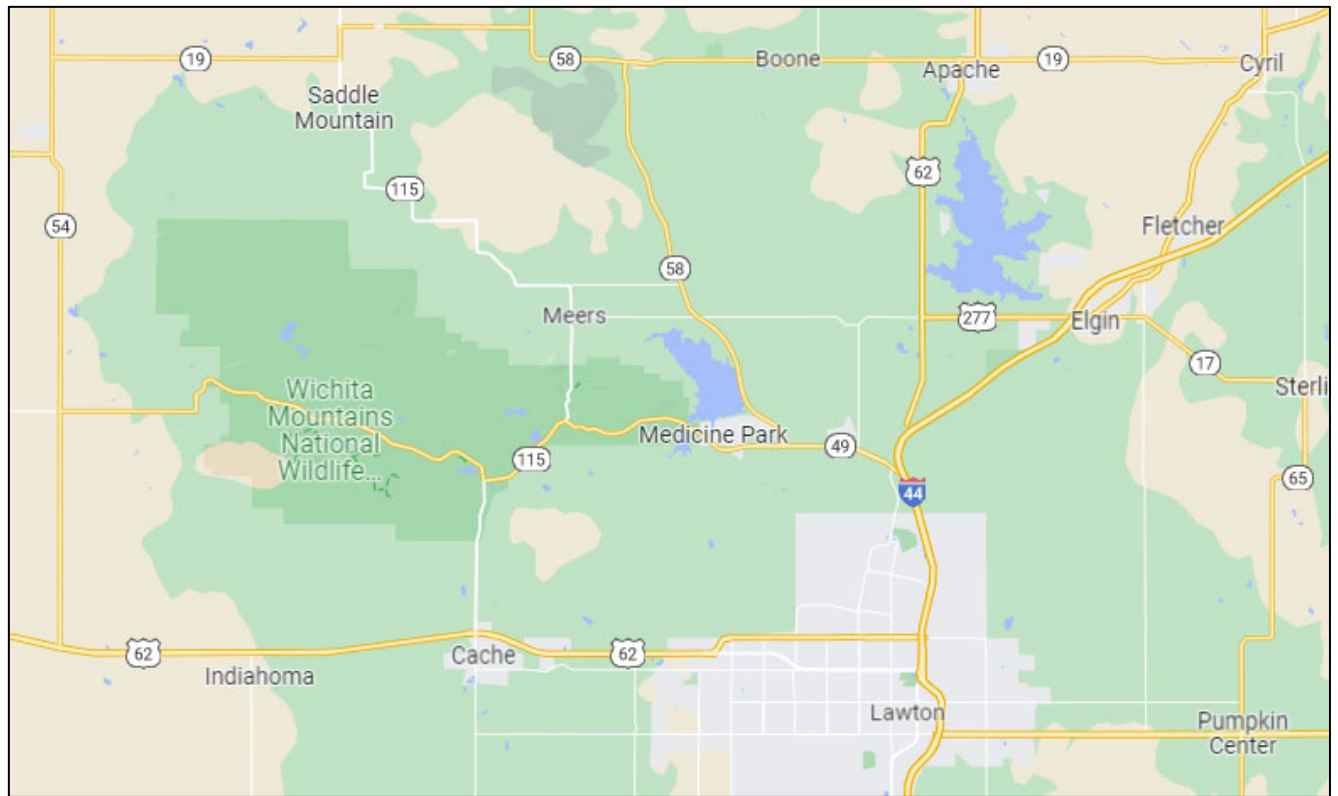
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Additional information including detailed directions and links to area accommodations and attractions can be found on the ONPS website (oknativeplants.org).