
MISSISSIPPI NATIVE
PLANT SOCIETY
APRIL 1989



SYCAMORE

Platanus occidentalis

NEWS ITEMS

Vic Rudis

I. The Nature Conservancy is a 479,000 member, private non-profit conservation organization which protects critical habitat for endangered and threatened species and natural communities. TNC manages more than 1,000 preserves nationwide and has been responsible for the protection of 3.3 million acres in the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The organization has 900 members in Mississippi and has already assisted in the protection of 80,094 acres with a value in excess of \$41 million.

On April 15, 1989, the Nature Conservancy established its first field office in Mississippi with the appointment of Mr. Roger L. Jones. Mr. Jones comes to us from South Carolina where he was director of Land Programs. His job will be to help build a strong private land conservation program in the state.

II. A native plant law was passed by Congress. Section 130 of the 1987 Surface Transportation Act requires all landscape projects funded through Federal Title 23 money (relates to the states' part of federal gas tax funds) to provide for native wildflower planting. Mr. Davis of the Federal Highway Administration in Jackson told me that the percentage required is 1/4 of 1% of the landscape project costs. Not a lot of money, to be sure, but the symbolic gesture is welcomed

How does this work? As an example, some landscaping is planned along US98 (east of Hattiesburg) in the next year or so. As part of the project 0.25% must be designated for native wildflowers. This amount is for landscaping only, not for what is considered "erosion control." A new road project which does not have plans to landscape, but which traditionally plants grasses for erosion control—such as the widening and development of US82 near Starkville— does not require the planting of natives.

Wildflowers deter people from littering and reduce mowing costs, according to an article in NATIONAL WILDLIFE magazine. Talk to your local Highway Department about planting natives. I feel we should be "landscaping" roads with natives, instead of planting exotic grasses for "erosion control." One could try to get them to think of erosion control planting as a form of landscaping. [It is obvious to us, but not to traditional highway personnel.]

In Mississippi, John Snuggs of the State Highway Dept. in Jackson (359-1173) is the man to talk to regarding native wildflower plantings along state roads. Mr. Snuggs also works with the Garden Clubs of Mississippi to plant native magnolias along entryways to major highways.

III. If anyone is planning a trip to New England this spring or summer, be sure to check out the field trips and short courses offered by the New England Wild Flower Society, Inc., Garden in the Woods, Hemenway Rd., Framington, MA 01701. They have a 47-page catalog of courses, field trips, garden tours, and horticulture seminars presented throughout Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maine and Rhode Island.

IV. Check the expiration date on the mailing label of your newsletter. Please remember to renew your membership. A flyer was sent out earlier. Vic Rudis, MNPS, P. O. Box 2151, Starkville, MS 39759.

MNPS T-SHIRTS

New MNPS T-shirts are now available. The design includes American hornbeam (Carpinus caroliniana), yellow trillium (Trillium luteum), blue lobeila (Lobelia siphilitica), purple coneflower (Echinacea purpurea), and showy primrose (Oenothera speciosa). Colors: T-shirt in silver-grey; print colors in teal and blue-violet. The left sleeve has the original circular MNPS logo. QUANTITIES ARE LIMITED. Cost: \$10.00 for adult sizes; \$9.00 for youth sizes. Please include an additional \$1.50 per shirt for postage and handling. Sizes available: S(34-36), M(38-40), L(42-44), XL(46-48); Youth S(6-8), M(10-12), L(12-14). Send your requests and payment to: Mississippi Native Plant Society, P. O. Box 2151, Starkville, MS 39759.

FUTURE EVENTS

May 20, 1989 Starkville area field trip. Meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot behind Harned Biology (west side).

July/August 3rd Annual Mississippi Native Plant Conference, Jackson, MS. Contact: Felder Rushing, 601-372-4651.

October 27-29 2nd Annual Mid-South Native Plant Conference. Contact: Steering Committee, c/o Lichterman Nature Center, 5992 Quince Rd., Memphis, TN 38119.

TISHOMINGO MEETING-FIELD TRIP

The recent joint meeting of MNPS with the Alabama Wildflower Society was a definite success. Over 100 individuals participated in seven different field trips. The sale of native plants netted approximately \$100 for each of the societies. Talks were given on Alabama wildflowers and the geology of the Tishomingo area. A more detailed report will be given in a future newsletter.

PRAIRIE "PINE CONES"

Part of my responsibilities in teaching a plant taxonomy class consists of finding fresh plants for the students to key. So early one morning (around 6 AM) recently I drove to school by the "backway," hoping to encounter something of interest. I did find some plants, but still needed a few. As I neared the Blackjack community, I saw a yellow evening primrose. I thought surely it must be the common Oenothera laciniata which would be perfect for beginning taxonomists. I was extremely and pleasantly surprised to find instead Oenothera triloba, stemless evening primrose. This was a real thrill, since this was the first time I have seen this species in Mississippi. The colony consisted of several hundred individuals of this biennial. Most of the large yellow flowers were still open, though according to FLORA OF THE GREAT PLAINS they open around sunset. Even though the flowers, because of a long tube, stick-up several inches, the fruit are borne near the ground. Near some of the plants were scattered, bristly, pine-conelike clusters of capsules persistent from the previous year. I hope MNPS members will look for this species which is either very rare or overlooked.

Steyermark in FLORA OF MISSOURI says that this plant makes an interesting addition to the rock garden or perennial border. No promises, but I will try to get back in May to get some seeds for MNPS members willing to experiment. S. McDaniel.

MNPS- 1988-89 Officers

President: Felder Rushing, Jackson, 372-4651

Vice-President: Joe McGee, Hickory, 646-5402

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Editor and Trips Coordinator: Sidney McDaniel 325-7570

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MEMBER'S CORNER

Heard a great speaker? Discover a helpful way to propagate native plants? Or maybe just a comment on what you've been up to in your garden lately? Maybe you know of a unique area that other members might like to visit. This section is reserved for comments, anecdotes, etc. Send us your stories. Mail to Sidney McDaniel, MNPS Editor, Box EN, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

THE HILL EXPERIMENT - PART I

Last summer I took to experimenting with the native flora of my Starkville residence in Green Oaks subdivision (107 Dogwood Drive). The area, a drainage ditch at the top of a hill behind my house, was allowed to go "natural"—i.e. no mowing. The soil is a thin layer of clay, underlain by chalk—unsuitable for most shrubs, or even traditional lawn grasses. Because water drainage was inadequate during heavy downpours, I had to deepen the ditch—exposing the chalk and clay—to the delight of my 6-year old and his clay creation fantasies.

The ground cover was a few sorry clumps of fescue and bermuda grass. With digging, I had exposed some bare soil as well. Before I bought the place, the area had been mowed regularly. When I stopped mowing, I had to rope off the "natural" section, as the neighbor's hired-help couldn't seem to resist cutting it, even though it was my property.

In July and August, the ditch looked awful. Johnson grass was everywhere. I resorted to using a herbicide (POST) that killed the grasses, but allowed the other plants to thrive. In September and October the area was loaded with asters, white and dainty purple flowers, and butterflies, too! (I felt it was worth the temporary "uglies" after a neighbor's child told me that I had the only yard in the neighborhood with lots of butterflies this year).

This spring, I have had to clean out the dead aster stems. In a prairie, one would normally burn at this stage, but I'm not sure I could control the fire well enough to avoid killing other plants nearby. I've noticed lots of rosettes of potentially flowering plants, including my favorite, showy primrose (Oenothera speciosa). I know there are also a few glodenrods and asters in the bunch as well. I have planted some tall

sunflowers (Helianthus sp., grows to 10 feet in average soil). The sunflowers will also provide me with interesting items for floral arrangements, and help screen out my neighbor's yard— Vic Rudis

BOOK REVIEW

Not long ago someone gave me copy of the book 100 Great Garden Plants by William H. Frederick, Jr. (Timber Press, 2nd Ed., 1986). While the 216-page volume is not about native plants per se and isn't aimed at a specific region of the country, it does recommend in glowing terms 27 plants native to North America. I was impressed that 16 of these are native to Mississippi; some are widely used already in home planting, while a few are currently hardly used at all.

Four main sections— Large Trees, Small Trees, Shrubs, and Ground Covers— make up the body of the book. Altogether, 100 short essays describe plants which the author, a landscape architect, feels are the best for including in one's landscape or garden.

The essays make for lively reading. Frederick describes each plant vividly, pointing out characteristics we may have overlooked and includes remarks on each plant's faults as well as its virtue. There are also comments on the plant's cultural and historical perspectives, notes on whether the plants have special seasonal or structural interest, and suggestions on companion plantings to achieve desired color and texture combinations.

Among the 16 plants native to Mississippi included are many familiars, but who would have expected to find the lowly (some say noxious) devil's walkingstick (Aralia spinosa). A few years back the "Victory Garden" (shown on Mississippi ETV) featured this plant at a London flower show. It seems the British plant it in enormous containers for use as an indoor plant in banks and other building with vaulted ceiling (and plenty of light, one suppose). The surprise in the shrub category is inkberry or gallberry (Ilex glabra). Actually I shouldn't have surprised. With its ever-green leaves and black fruit it makes a fine alternative to the monotonous and overrated boxwoods.

Next time you are in a library, check out 100 Great Garden Plants if you crave botanical lore, need fresh landscaping ideas, or if you just like to read plant books. This one is quite interesting— Joe McGee

Itinerary
Mississippi Native Plant Society
&
Alabama Wildflower Society

Friday - 7:00 p.m. Social at Group Camp Cafeteria

Saturday

8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast - Group Camp Cafeteria

9:00 - 9:30 Geology of Tishomingo State Park

Dr. Wayne Canis
Professor of Geology
University of North Alabama

9:30 - 11:30 Field Trips

Birding: Dr. Paul Kittle
Associate Professor of Biology
University of North Alabama

Trees: Mr. Leon Bates
Botanist
Tennessee Valley Authority
Muscle Shoals

Ferns: Mr. Randy Warren
Graduate Student
Mississippi State University

Flowers: Dr. Steve Timme
Assistant Professor of Biology
University of North Alabama

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch - Group Camp Cafeteria

1:30 - 4:00 Field Trips

5:00 - 6:00 Dinner

6:00 - 6:45 Slide Show: **"Spring Wildflowers"**
Mr. Leon Bates
Botanist, TVA

7:00 - ? Plant Sale

Sunday

8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast

9:00 - 11:00 Hiking on your own

MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY and ALABAMA WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
SPRING MEETING and FIELD TRIP

Tishomingo State Park, Dennis, Mississippi
April 21, 22 & 23

Tishomingo State Park is one of the most beautiful parks in Mississippi for spring wildflowers, ferns, and mosses. The exposed rock outcroppings, ravines, glade-like areas, Haynes Lake, and Bear Creek provide habitat for hundreds of species of plants. If the 1989 spring is similar to the past springs at Tishomingo, well over 100 species of plants will be observed.

In order to coordinate the activities for the weekend, early registration and fees are required. Please check the appropriate blanks below and mail this sheet or a copy with fees to **Steve L. Timme, Herbarium - 5181, Department of Biology, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35630-0001** before 3 April.

LODGING:

- Group Cabins (sleeps 17; air-conditioned & central heat).
 Friday night \$6.00 per person You must provide you own linens.
 Saturday night \$6.00 per person
 Camping (Pay for at park)

Belmont Hotel in Belmont, MS:601-454-7948
Lodging may be available J.P. Coleman State Park (601-423-6515) or in Iuka, MS.

MEALS:

- Saturday \$14.40 per person for 3 meals. If you stay in the group cabins, you are required to purchase the Saturday meals. If you are lodging on your own and want to eat with the group, please check.
 Friday Night - Snacks will be available.
 Sunday - On your own or a Sunday breakfast can be purchased for \$4.80.

ENTERTAINMENT:

Friday Night: Wildflower Slide Show at 7:00 p.m.
Saturday Night: To be determined.

FIELD TRIPS:

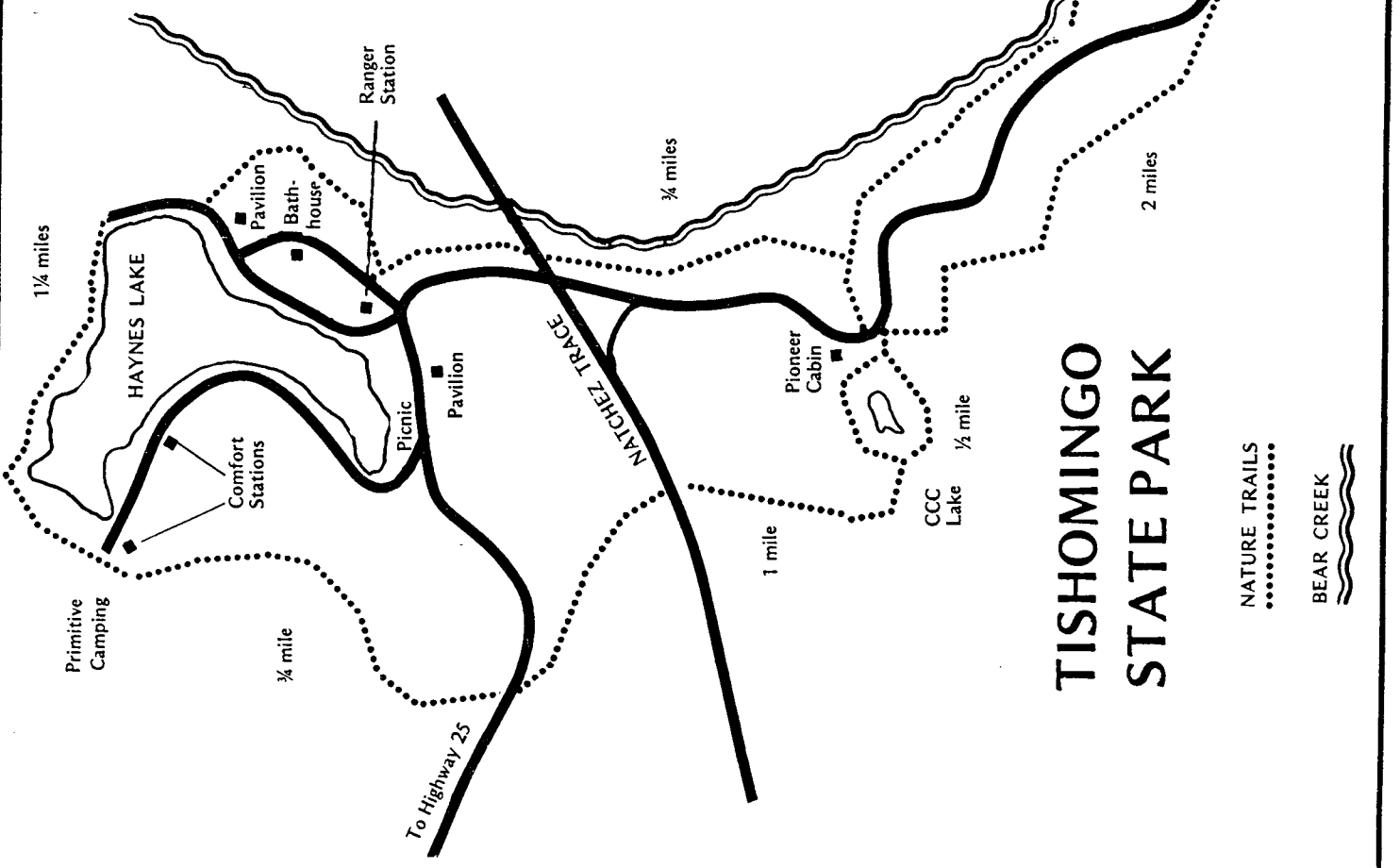
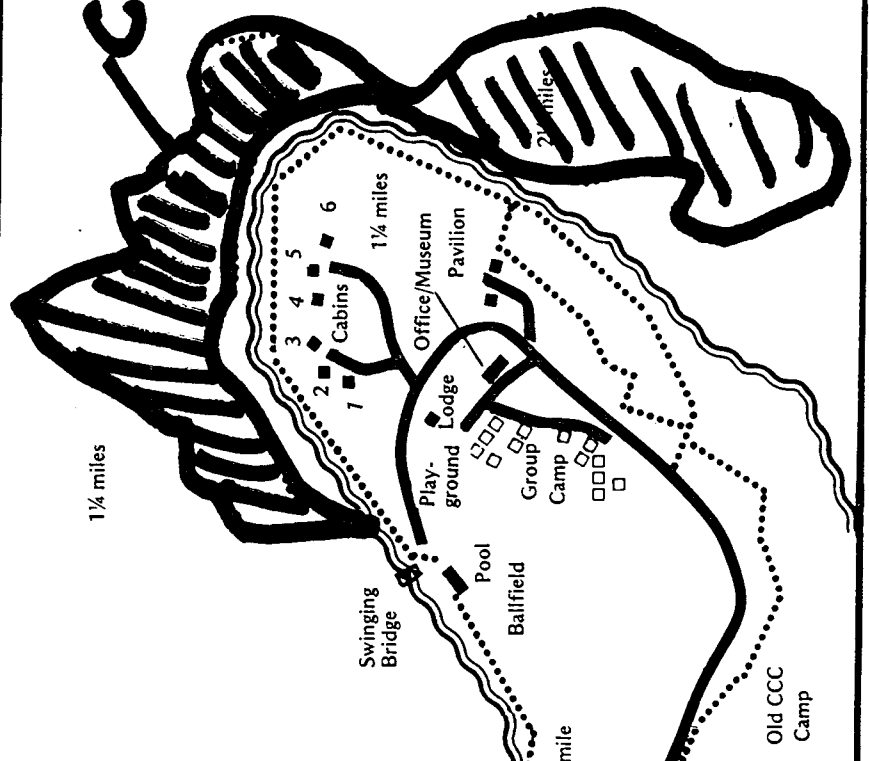
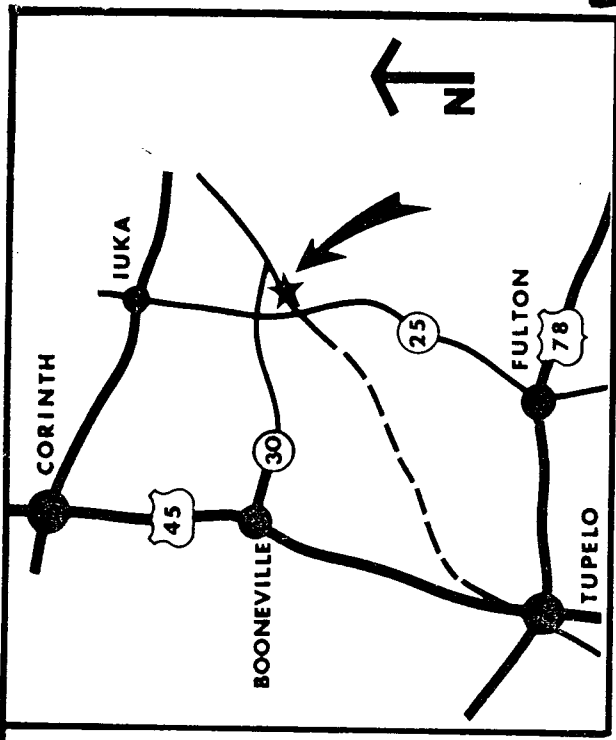
Numerous field trips to various parts of the park on Saturday; there will be several experienced individuals to lead the trips.

WORKSHOPS: Please indicate if you would like to participate in any of the following workshops.

- Field identification and observations of trees.
 Field identification and observations of ferns.
 Field Identification and observations of mosses.
 Discussions of the geology of northeast Mississippi.
 Field identification of birds.

Bring your plants to sell.

closed



TISHOMINGO STATE PARK

NATURE TRAILS
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BEAR CREEK
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