

MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANTS

The Newsletter of the Mississippi Native Plant Society



Fall 2000

Volume 18 Issue 2

From the President:

As members of The Mississippi Native Plant Society we are presently challenged with regaining our focus on promoting the conservation of native plants and their habitats in Mississippi. I hope everyone views this as an opportunity to become more attuned to nature, which in this materialistic world, seems to be retreating from our consciousness more and more. With joy and admiration, let's renew our engagement in the natural world with other plants and animals that also make Mississippi home. After a two year interim, it is time to pick ourselves up, dust off our boots, and activate: let's get involved with initiatives that provide educational opportunities, environmental advocacy, and enjoyment of the Mississippi outdoors. Holding native plant sales, participating in nature walks, and botanizing on field trips has been our bread and butter.

The wide distances between members is a major drawback to maintaining a cohesive and active membership. With the increase in gas prices, one hesitates before traveling halfway across the state to visit a natural area. This has caused low attendance at most of our field trips. One of the last MNPS field trip was to the Bibb County Glades in Alabama. Can you believe, eight new plant taxa were recently discovered at this site? The site is now considered one of the greatest botanical discoveries of the twentieth century in America. I considered it an imperative that club members got a chance to see this remarkable place. The Bibb County Glades are a national treasure. Thankfully steps are being taken by The Nature Conservancy to conserve this unique and diverse assemblage of rare species. Attendance at the Bibb County outing was satisfactory, but there were less than a handful of members at the other scheduled trips.

Native plant societies in other states such as Texas have functioned quite well by the formation of local chapters. Chapters are able to concentrate on local issues and activities at backyard gardens, parks and natural areas. Although I believe MNPS would function better through the formation of chapters, it is too early to setup chapters. To do so will take a concerted effort among members to get it accomplished. We need to get the statewide club up and running before the development of local chapters. Write, call, or e-mail ideas for club activities.

The newsletter has been the glue that held the society together. We heard many good things about its publication and the hard work of our editor. Alas, one person can not do it alone. The editor was saddled with many difficult newsletter tasks of formatting, printing, addressing, and mailing. The urgent requests for members to submit news articles went unanswered, leaving the editor to almost single-handedly write the news. The last newsletter published was Winter 1998 issue. With the

The Mississippi Native Plant Society is a non-profit organization established in 1980 to promote the preservation of native and naturalized plants and their habitats in Mississippi through conservation, education and utilization.

MNPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Ron Wieland
MS Museum of Natural Science
2148 Riverside Dr.
Jackson, MS 39202
(601) 354-7303 (D)
(601) 981-7731 (E)
E-mail ron.wieland@mmns.state.ms.us

VICE-PRESIDENT VACANT

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Debora Mann
114 Auburn Dr.
Clinton, MS 39056-4966
(601) 974-1415 (D)
(601) 924-4966 (E)
E-mail manndl@okra.millsaps.edu

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Lynn Libous-Bailey
PO Box 357
Stoneville, MS 38776-0357
(662) 686-5312 (D)

discontinuance of the newsletter, the club remained inactive for over two years. The club remains financially strong so dues will not be reissued until sometime next year. The period on club inactivity will be discounted when determining dues.



In early September, the secretary-treasurer, Debora Mann, a concerned botanist, Heather Sullivan, and I got together to discuss ways to forge a new beginning. The suggestions were to schedule a MNPS field trip and produce a small newsletter. The newsletter could be photocopied to keep the costs down (rather than sending it to a printer). Heather volunteered to assist in formatting the newsletter, while I responded to get a field trip scheduled. Also, we are looking into developing a free web page for advertising club activities. Here goes!

Nature Outing: A field trip is scheduled for October 14, 2000 in the Bienville National Forest, at Grand Sir Area, near Raleigh, MS. Meet at 11:00 AM at Shongelo Roadside Park, a well marked park, 5 miles north of Raleigh on Highway 35. A short meeting will be held for reorganization and the election of officers. If anyone has suggestions for candidates please call or e-mail nominations to the president. For those wanting to car pool from Jackson, also contact the president. Eldon Guymon and I will be serving as guides to the area. The Grand Sir area is an old growth, dry-mesic, upland, mixed hardwood-pine forest. There are a surprisingly diverse group of upland oaks that occupy the site with shortleaf pine. Nine species of oaks have been encountered, including bluejack oak, normally restricted to the longleaf pine region in the southern part of the state. If time permits we will travel to the Smith County prairies or an old growth bottomland forest on the Leaf River near Pineville, situated several miles northeast of the Grand Sir area. For a day of fun in the forest, bring walking boots, a lunch, insect repellent, and a rain coat, if rain is predicted.

Hope to see ya there!

**Mississippi Native Plants
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Mississippi Native Plants is the quarterly publication of the Mississippi Native Plant Society.

Winter (Issue 1)	December/January/February
Spring (Issue 2)	March/April/May
Summer (Issue 3)	June/July/August
Fall (Issue 4)	September/October/November

Deadlines for the Winter Issue are as follows:
Articles—**October 15** Calender of Events—**October 30**

Deadlines for the Spring Issue are as follows:
Articles—**January 15** Calender of Events—**January 30**

Native plants abound in the new Museum of Natural Science! Come see how we use native plants in our aquarium design, from water trickling down southern maidenhair ferns and liverworts into the Pickwick Lake aquarium to jasmine and oak-leaf hydrangea overhanging our Woodland Ravine aquarium. You'll be amazed by our realistic fabricated plants in our terrestrial dioramas.

Come visit us soon!



Mississippi Native Plant Society
2148 Riverside Dr.
Jackson, MS 39202

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