



Mississippi Native Plants and Environmental Education

Newsletter of The Mississippi Native Plant Society and the Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance



Volume 24 Issue 1

Spring is nature's way of saying, "Let's party!" ~Robin Williams

Spring, 2006

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

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The Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance promotes environmental education, supports the work of environmental educators and encourages the adoption of earth-friendly lifestyles leading to the sustainability of natural resources.

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We Are Going on Some FIELD TRIPS!

We are headed back to the field! MNPS has a rich history of getting into Mississippi's most incredible places. MEEA members are encouraged to join us and see for themselves the best the environment has to offer! We have a lot of trips being planned and are looking for special places all over the state. So, if you have a secret spot we should see, give Marc Pastorek, Matt Miller or John Guyton a call or email.

The Red Hills Lignite Mine tour on Friday February 24 will be after a MEEA Board meeting and MNPS members are encouraged to come see the lignite mining operation. We have heard incredible reports about the restoration of strip mined area and petrified wood encountered in the process. MEEA Board members, our meeting is scheduled from 9:00 AM - 11:00. Lunch will be served from 11:00 AM - 12:00 (noon) and the tour will last from 12:00 (noon) - 3:00 PM or 4:00 PM. RSVP John Defillipo lizardking700@yahoo.com or 662-241-6917.

The next day should be a trifecta! We have three exciting stops on today's adventure northwest of Eupora in Webster County. The Old Cove is a very deep ravine with incredible plant diversity. Many of Mississippi's heritage plants will be seen on this tour and you will get some exercise! The Old Cove has been called Mississippi's Grand Canyon. We will also visit a xeric blackjack oak forest with 200 year old trees that are only about 6 inches in diameter. Finally we will visit Magnolia Cove to see a beech tree with a 200 foot crown spread! We may have a state champion tree here.

RSVP is from the French répondez s'il vous plaît and means "reply please" so "Please RSVP." That said, let us know which trips you will be participating in. Call or email John Guyton and let him know, jguyton@cableone.net; work 228-546-1021; home 228-872-5323; or cell 228-324-4233. Keep these numbers with you and on the day of the field trip do not hesitate to check in or call for directions on John's cell. When you RSVP we will give you directions and meeting locations. If it is necessary to cancel a trip for low attendance or inclement weather we will call you as soon as the decision is made.

Rediscover Environmental Education MEEA and the Ivory-billed Woodpecker

Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance 2005 Conference March 24 - 26, 2006
Twin Lakes Conference Center, Florence, MS

Lee Moore - The Arkansas Nature Conservancy rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker
David Oberst - Monarchs Migration and Discovery

Lashanda Colbert - MS Dept of Ed. Science Specialist, Overview of science curriculum
\$ 50.00 Registration Grant offered to ten teachers (first time attendance only)

Environmental Education Courses: Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, Waste in Place
C.E.U. credits available

Field trips: High and low ropes, Rock climbing, Canoeing, Hayless hay ride, Bonfire

For conference information contact: John DeFillipo, MS Museum of Natural Science, 4391 South Frontage Rd., Columbus, MS 39701 Tel. 662-241-6917 or Lizardking700@yahoo.com

Dear MEEA Members,

It is almost time for our annual conference and I think John DeFillipo has an excellent one planned. I am especially looking forward to Lee Moore's presentation on the Ivory Billed Woodpecker and David Oberst's discussions of the monarch's migrations. Environmental education has always been closely tied to science and the Mississippi Department of Education Science Specialist Lashanda Colbert's overview of the science curriculum should provide us with some interesting insights. The nocturnal activities sound pretty good too with a hayless hay ride, nocturnal creatures, a bonfire and story telling. MNPS members are welcome! The MEEA Board is meeting at the Red Hills Coal Mine on February 24. If your schedule permits, join us. After the meeting we will tour the area. On Saturday, February 25 we will be touring several of Mississippi's great natural areas. See you at Twin Lakes!
Best Regards, Matthew Miller, MEEA President

Dear MNPS Members,

Thanks to everyone who pitched in to organize our first field trips and to those who have helped get the ball rolling for our humdinger Fall shindig. It looks like my desire to see some more of Mississippi's wild plants and people might come to fruition. A steering committee has formed to plan for our first field trip. It will coincide with the MEEA board meeting February 24 and 25. Bob Brzuszek will serve as our guide on Saturday's adventures. Other knowledgeable plant people have expressed an interest in tagging along. I am looking forward to seeing these unique natural area. I hope to see you there. There has been discussion of viewing a couple of the many prairies at Bienville National Forest near Forest, MS. Details of this trip will be in the next newsletter. We are working on a mid April field trip to the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in extreme southeast Mississippi. We are currently asking members to suggest field trips and the most advantageous time to view them. Our goal for the number of field trips is five. If you have a suggestion regarding this topic or other Society activities, please feel free to contact me. Speaking of suggestions, check the upcoming native plant sales and other events noted through out this newsletter. If you know of one that is not listed let us know and we will include it. We are discussing a Spring meeting in Jackson and the possibility of a Jackson area MNPS chapter. The details for our tentative **October 7 annual conference** are coming together. Several stellar speakers have agreed to provide us with infotainment. One of them, Dr. Charles Allen will discuss and provide an array of edible native plant concoctions. So bring with you a ready set of taste buds. Gail Barton and Peter Loos will relay techniques for obsessive compulsive backyard propagation. Bob Brzuszek will run with the topic "Organizing a Wild Garden." Finally, thanks to all of you "behind the scenes" people in our group. You've provided us with this newsletter and many ideas and many good ideas for the Mississippi Native Plant Society website. The flame of this society is burning brightly. Come visit with us this year and stoke the fire of knowledge in your heart. Be there or be square! See you soon.
Best Regards, Marc Pastorek

MSU Crosby Arboretum Native Plants Sale April 1 & 2

Senior Curator of the Crosby Arboretum Melinda Lyman has announced that April 1 & 2 will be the MSU Crosby Arboretum's Spring Plant Sale. After making your selections, remembering to purchase a native to save for when you unexpectedly need a gift, take a leisurely stroll around the arboretum. Lyman and her incredible staff have been working hard to clear and restore over 4 miles of trails featuring over 700 species of native plants including trees, shrubs, wild flowers and grasses after Katrina's visit. Bring your camera, the pitcher plant bogs should be beautiful. For those who are wondering, Pinocote Pavilion, designed by internationally acclaimed architect Fay Jones, survived Katrina. The MSU Crosby Arboretum is located near Picayune, MS. For more information, email or call Melinda Lyman at mlyman@ext.msstate.edu or 601-799-2322.

Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Work Days

Jennifer Buchanan, educator with the Grand Bay NERR, has requested help harvesting and planting Juncus. The black needle rush will be harvested during the week of March 6 and replanted during the week of March 20. In addition to restoring a marsh a study will be initiated to determine how well Juncus functions in treating the water recharging aquifers. For more information or to volunteer call or email Jennifer at 228-697-0553 or jen.buchanan@dmr.state.ms.us. There is an excellent visitor's guide *Selected Plants of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge* on the Internet at:

<http://www.dmr.state.ms.us/Coastal-Ecology/GBNERR/field-guide/field-guide.htm>

MNP&EE is the newsletter of the Mississippi Native Plant Society and the Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance.

MNP EE is a quarterly publication.

Deadlines for Articles

Winter (Dec - Feb) - November 15
Spring (March - May) - February 15
Summer (June - August) - May 15
Fall (Sept - Nov) - August 15

Entomology Camps

June 18-22 – Wall Doxey State Park, Holly Springs & July 16-20 – Newton County
For adults (CEUs available) and youth (over age 10) who want to learn about insects from experts. Cost \$160. Contact Dr. Mike Williams at mrvms@ra.msstate.edu, 662-325-2986 or Dr. John Guyton at jguyton@ext.msstate.edu or 228-546-1021 for more information.

MNPS/MEEA Book Club

No, we don't have a book club but we do report on books we find useful and think MNPS and/or MEEA members will be interested in. The first below is by an MNPS member and MEEA members will find the second, by our friends at Green Teacher, very useful. The editors are excited about both! Gail Barton, author of *Lessons From Katrina* in this issue, also has an excellent book, see the note at the end of her article.

The Gardener's Guide to Mississippi Wildflowers and Other Native and Naturalized Plants: An Anthology

MNPS & MEEA members get a 20% discount on *The Gardener's Guide to Mississippi Wildflowers and Other Native and Naturalized Plants: An Anthology* by George H. Dukes, Jr. (hard cover, 400 pp, ISBN 0-9655380-6-0). The book includes color photographs of 400 native and naturalized plants found in Mississippi and is arranged in sections on border, bedding, and ground cover plants; trees; shrubs and vines; wet gardens; mosses and liverworts; and novelty plants. It is available from Poplar Petal Publishing Company, 5955 Highway 18, Dukes Drive, Brandon, MS 39042 or 601-825-5322. The discounted price is \$39.95 plus \$4 shipping and handling. This is the fourth book in Dr. Dukes' Mississippi Natural History Series which also includes *Trees of Mississippi and Other Woody Plants*, *Mushrooms of Mississippi and Other Fungi and Protists*, and *A Mississippi Woodland Fern Portfolio*.

Teaching Green: The Middle Years

Green Teacher is pleased to announce the publication of the 240 page *Teaching Green: The Middle Years*. Subtitled *Hands-on Learning in Grades 6-8* this large format paperback contains over 50 of the best teaching strategies and activities contributed to *Green Teacher* magazine during the past decade -- all updated and revised for this special anthology.

Teaching Green: The Middle Years was designed to serve as a complete "green" teaching resource for those working with middle school-aged youth, inside or outside of schools. Readers will find a wealth of kid-tested ideas contributed by educators from across North America and covering a wide spectrum of environmental topics, from biodiversity to resource consumption to green technology. They include practical projects and new learning strategies that will inspire educators seeking innovative ideas for incorporating green themes into their programs.

Teaching Green: The Middle Years costs \$22.95 plus \$4.50 shipping. It can be ordered online at www.greenteacher.com, by calling toll-free 888-804-1486, or by mailing a check to: Green Teacher, PO Box 452, Niagara Falls, NY, 14304. Tim Grant & Gail Littlejohn, Co-editors

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Twenty Leaden Rules to Make Sure Your Project Sinks!

The MNP&EE editors have known Tim and Gail for years and we know their work. We are particularly excited about this book because middle school appropriate activities can easily be scaled up or down for a wide range of audiences.



Strawberry Plains Audubon Center's 1st Native Plants Sale

Strawberry Plains Audubon Center is having their first official native plant sale! The date is Saturday May 20th. There will be guest plant vendors as well as guest speakers, tours and wagon rides on the property. "We want this annual plant sale to grow and eventually we envision Strawberry Plains Audubon Center to be an important source of native plants for northern Mississippi and western Tennessee throughout the growing season. This plant sale is a great way to promote the use of native plants in the landscape by making the plants available to the public. It is also a great way to answer peoples questions and offer ideas and/or advice," says Kristin Lamberson, staff person at Strawberry Plains. For detailed information on schedule check the website: msaudubon.org (will be available closer to date of plant sale) or call Kristin at 662-252-1155.

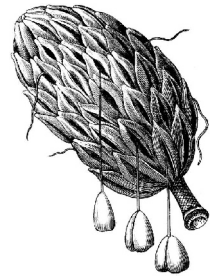
Coastal Plains Chapter Reports In, Post Katrina by Edie Dreher

On the morning of August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina blasted the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Luckily members of the MS Native Plants Coastal Plains chapter lived north of the railroad and every effort has been used to locate members. All members contacted received roof damage and many trees downed. A lot of hard work has gotten our homes and gardens in fair condition.

Clower/Thornton Nature Area is on the north side of the railroad tracks and received very heavy debris from devastated houses south of the tracks. The trails were covered with fallen trees and not passable. Raised walkways over bogs, picnic tables and benches were damaged, identification markers of trees and plants were blown away. Nature area signs were blown down. The city of Gulfport has cleared the trails on city property. Trees downed throughout the area are fuel for wildfires. Help is needed to move the debris carefully to avoid damage to existing vegetation. Donations of any wildflower seeds, native plants and flowering trees are needed. From the looks of other devastated areas of the Mississippi Gulf Coast we feel blessed that our loss was not worse and we will work together to bring beauty back. Mother nature is trying to recover as evidenced by the appearance of wild flowers and new leaves on the trees several weeks after the disaster.

Lessons From Katrina by Gail Barton

I'm proud to admit that I'm a tree hugger from way back. I love trees so much that I allowed two large loblolly pines to reach maturity less than 8 feet from my front porch. During Katrina, my husband and I were so afraid of those behemoths that we wouldn't stay in our house. We weathered the storm hunkered down in the basement of our rental house next door. As it turns out, the monster pines that inspired us to evacuate survived Katrina without dropping a single limb. The ridge of our rental house, on the other hand, was crushed by a sweetgum.



As a reward for their extremely good behavior, we cut both pines a couple of months later. Their sad stumps measure about 30" across and serve now as pedestals for two of Richard's bonsai trees. So . . . like many other homeowners, we are replacing big trees with smaller ones!

Since Katrina, several of my plant buddies have commented that they plan to "reevaluate policies about trees next to houses." The following table is a product of those discussions. This list of recommended native trees for post-Katrina landscapes was compiled with the help of *El Presidente* Marc Pastorek and Peter Loos, former President of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Most of these trees were selected for their diminutive stature. They are large enough to provide some shade but too small to present much of a threat to a dwelling. A few larger trees were included because they are extremely resistant to storm damage. Those marked with * are fairly easy to find in the nursery trade. To find the others, you will probably have to seek out a specialty or mail order nursery. Unless indicated all will fare well in average garden soil and in sun or part shade. For the sake of space, a few species with similar traits are listed together.

Meanwhile, let me temper my statements by saying that big trees still make my heart go pitter patter. My back yard is ruled by two white oaks over 100 feet tall. They are, however, downhill from the house.

I recently designed a landscape for a client who, like me, is a little gun-shy about big trees. I proposed a grove of medium sized red maples for color and quick effect. I sited them near enough to the house to make an impact but not close enough to be threatening. Like other tree huggers with damaged roofs, I am struggling to find the middle ground.

Gail Barton has taught Horticulture at Meridian Community College for over 23 years. Her book *Basic Gardening: A Guide For the Deep South* is available for purchase at www.gailbarton.com or can be mail ordered for \$30.00 from Flowerpress, P. O. Box 4865, Meridian, MS 39304. The editors have Gail's book and have found it an enjoyable read and an excellent reference.

Native Trees For Post-Katrina Landscapes

Common Name(s) Latin Name	Mature Height	Landscape Features	Potential Problems, Comments
Chalk Maple <i>Acer leucoderme</i> Florida Maple <i>Acer barbatum</i>	25'	Like their sugar maple kin, these maples are slow growing and strong Fall color is brilliant orange	May hold dried leaves during winter
Ironwood <i>Carpinus caroliniana</i> American Hophornbeam <i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	25'	Good yellow fall color Fruit feeds wildlife Ironwood (<i>Carpinus</i> spp.) tolerates moist or well drained soils. Hophornbeam is an upland species.	Both are likely to be difficult to find in nurseries. Best if grown as understory trees in some shade. Ironwood has smooth muscular bark and hophornbeam is flaking.
Eastern Redbud* <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	25'	Magenta flowers in late winter Yellow fall foliage Fairly quick growth	Can be short lived Seeds itself throughout the landscape
Granthus Graybeard* Fringe Tree <i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	15'	White drooping spring flowers Blue berry-like fruit feeds wildlife May look more like a shrub than a tree	Slow growth rate Dioecious - Must be pistillate (female) with a staminate (male) plant nearby to produce fruit
Native Hawthorns - Mayhaw* (<i>Crataegus opaca</i>) Green Haw <i>C. viridis</i>) Parsley Haw <i>C. marshallii</i>)	25'	Showy white spring flowers Attractive red apple-like fruit Nice bark Provides shelter and forage for wildlife Mayhaw tolerates boggy soil and bears fruit that makes excellent jelly.	Parsley Haw & Green Haw have thorns Flowers have an unpleasant scent Parsley Haw grows best in shade Green Haw adapts well to most habitats.
Titli, Leatherwood <i>Cyrilla racemiflora</i>	15'+	White drooping fragrant summer flowers Interesting twisted trunks with pretty bark Multi-trunked small tree reminiscent of crape myrtle Evergreen w/ scattered red and yellow winter leaves	Often produces suckers from the roots Brown drooping seed clusters may be unsightly Indigenous to coastal wetlands – Hardy through the rest of the state in well drained or wet soil Hard to find in nurseries
Silverbell <i>Halesia carolina</i> <i>Halesia diptera</i>	25'	Dangling white bell-shaped flowers grace trees in spring Bark is showy. Yellow fall color Native Snowbells (<i>Styrax</i> spp.) have similar landscape features with perhaps showier flowers	Found in the wild as an understory – Best in partly shaded landscapes with good woodland soil. May look more like a shrub than a tree.
Possumhaw Holly* <i>Ilex decidua</i>	15'	Showy red berry-like winter fruit attracts the lovely cedar waxwing and other birds Pioneer species – adaptable to most garden situations	Dioecious. Buy a named variety or a plant with a few berries to insure fruit production. 'Council Fire' and 'Pocohontas' are good varieties for Mississippi
Southern Magnolia* <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	60'	Cup-shaped fragrant white summer flowers Showy cone-like fruit provide red pulp-covered seed for wildlife Mississippi's state flower Very resistant to storm damage Evergreen Dwarf variety 'Little Gem' attains 20' in 20 years.	Large and imposing – Use dwarf 'Little Gem' in small gardens Litter problems – Hide the evidence by retaining lower limbs instead of limbing up
Southern Crabapple <i>Malus angustifolia</i>	20'	Pink to white fragrant flowers in late winter Small apple-like fruit for wildlife Attractive scaly bark	May have problems with rust
Black Gum, Black Tupelo <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	40'+	Fantastic red fall color Very resistant to storm damage Good bee forage	Blue berry-like fruit attracts wildlife but is only produced on pollinated pistillate trees
Mexican Plum <i>Prunus mexicana</i> Sloe Plum, Flatwoods Plum <i>Prunus umbellata</i>	20'	White flowers appear before leaves in Spring coinciding with redbuds Showy bark Purple 1" plums attract wildlife and can be used for jellies, etc.	Normally these 2 species do not sucker from the roots and forms colonies like Chickasaw plum
Indian Chery Carolina Buckthorn <i>Rhamnus caroliniana</i>	15'+	Handsome Foliage Showy red to black fruit feeds wildlife	Seedlings are dispersed around the landscape.
Pond Cypress <i>Taxodium ascendens</i>	60'	Similar in appearance to bald cypress but with a narrower more upright habit. Generally does not produce knees. Good bronze fall color Very resistant to storm damage	More difficult to find in nurseries than its bald cypress cousin. Slower growth rate than bald cypress leads to stronger denser wood.

* fairly easy to find in the nursery trade

The Perfection of Nature's Garden by Kristin Lamberson, Interpretive Gardens Specialist, Strawberry Plains Audubon Center

On a day in mid-January a co-worker and I took a walk along a small levee at the Duck Pond area located in Holly Springs, Mississippi. The levee divides a wetland from the pond itself. The wetland is alive with birds, river otter, muskrat and beaver activity plus hosts a great diversity of plants. The pond itself has visiting waterfowl, shorebirds, muskrat or beaver (might have been nutria, our binoculars weren't strong enough to discern), basking in the sunlight, turtles and great blue herons. The pads of water lily were unfurling just below the water surface and chunks of its ropey root structure had broken away to float on top. However, what really caught our eye was the incredible planting along the 8-foot margin between the levee and the pond. In that narrow band grow alder, swamp dogwood, swamp rose, buttonbush, river oats, rushes, more grasses, cross vine and a slew of dormant herbaceous plants. These plants also grow in and around the wetland but here they are packed together in one area, allowing for a great display. The alder are dripping with catkins and last years seed clusters, the swamp rose is loaded with beautiful red hips. This plant community, growing in the optimum location is ideal for birds. It gives shelter and a yearlong supply of food, it also offers itself as a wonderful nesting site during the spring and summer. The plants are allowed to entangle, sucker, mix and mingle. It is a wild and wonderful mess!

We as gardeners, naturalists, conservationists and environmentalists cannot top this type of planting...it is perfect! How are we, the lovers and promoters for the use of native plants, to promote them when we ourselves often don't accept the natural order (or seeming disorder) of things...the perfection of nature's garden. What would happen if we let the fence-row go back to sumac, elderberry, rough-leafed dogwood, goldenrod, aster, butterflyweed and trumpet creeper? Better yet, what if we pushed for and encouraged this type of planting at our homes (which many folks are doing), making this our landscape. It would become a haven for pollinators (this includes butterflies and hummingbirds), songbirds and other animals looking for a great place to visit and/or live. We need more examples of nature's landscape in our human inhabited areas and we, the lovers of native plants, must set the example. When folks start complaining that your messy and unkempt yard is ruining the neighborhood (and chances are they will) you can lovingly offer them a nice beverage and a seat in your garden. Most often the beauty and perfection of nature's planting will speak for itself, but sometimes we must help interpret. So we sit with the neighbor and point out the thrashers, the cardinals, juncos, towhees and sparrows feeding underneath the plants that this past summer offered nectar for hummingbirds and butterflies. You can tell them that you don't have an "insect problem" for there is a balance in this landscape...everything is eating everything! You may mention that in the summer while they (the neighbors) are spending their weekends mowing the lawn and trimming the shrubs you are resting in your hammock listening to the sweet music of songbirds (and the racket of their mower and trimmer) who are building nests in your trees and shrubs. By taking the time to explain the thought behind your choice of landscape often the once-worried neighbor begins to realize that you have actually incorporated a bit of science into the process. Invite them back to see your visiting hummingbirds sip nectar from flowers and to watch the yellow-billed cuckoos eat fall webworms from your trees! Let nature be your guru and your landscape tutor, learn all she has to teach...she is perfect and she is the best gardener you'll ever meet.

A Correction, of Sorts - And That Is Why We like Scientific Names! by the editors

Many of you have heard us caution that children are more quickly turned *off* by scientific names and *on* by the stories plants have to tell and here is where that rub stops. Marion Sansing, whom we quoted in *MNPS Members Speak Out* (2005, Katrina Special Edition), mentioned the other day it was not the Devil's Walking Stick but the Hercules Club that tingled the tongue making it useful for toothache. And she is correct, however... The common names are much confused and used interchangeably. As Marion points out, the bark of the Hercules Club, *Zanthoxylum clava-herculis* is chewed for relief. The berries of the *Aralia spinosa* (Hercules Club or toothache tree) are similarly reported to relieve toothaches (caution advised). Of course acupuncture is also said to have analgesic effect and both species may offer this solution. Both trees are rather interesting landscape options and would offer a degree of security if planted outside your daughters bedroom windows with a good stand of Mahonias!

Aralia spinosa grows in damp rich woods and fields is often called prickly elder, Hercules club and toothache bush or tree. It grows to about 30 feet. The bi or tri-pinnate leaves are incredible, often 3 to 6 feet long, prickly and borne on long petioles. The white flowers are arranged in numerous umbels, forming a large panicle that resembles a club - hence *its* moniker, Hercules club. Swallowtail butterflies really enjoy the flowers! The thin, ash-colored fragrant bark has a bitter taste and along with the roots and berries were used medicinally by early settlers and the Native Americans for many problems, including toothache.

The other thorny tree, the toothache tree or Hercules club (*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*; *Zanthoxylum* is Greek for yellow wood and *clava-herculis* means club of Hercules) that causes much confusion also goes by many names including prickly-ash (not an ash), pepperbark and tickletongue. Kind of a give away that it is useful for toothaches. Chewing the bark or leaves produces a numbness in the mouth and tongue and is reportedly effective in relieving toothache. The bark is gray-brown with spine tipped corky pyramidal projections. That the plant is in the citrus family is easily discerned by its odor when the leaves are crushed. Bees love the yellow-green 5 petaled flowers.

Where Have All the Hedges Gone? by John Guyton, Ed. D., State Environmental Education Specialist MSU Extension Service, Coastal R & E Center

This title just hedged out, *Good Hedges Make Good Neighbors*. The latter predicated on the etymology of garden as an enclosed space protected from animals or people. The hedges of my youth included a painstakingly groomed privet hedge complete with arched doorways and the overgrown hedge down the side of our yard that contained pomegranate, fig, Jerusalem artichoke, garlic, pecan and pear trees, althaea and a rambling rose.



Fences are an unsatisfactory and disfunctional modern substitutes. Hedges were probably originated by our ancient ancestors to protect their vegetables but they can serve several functions including serving as wildlife corridors or green ways through neighborhoods, security barriers, windbreaks, to reduce noise or filter dust, as a formal hedge or as an informal utilitarian planting. A Photina hedge became immortalized when Waveland, Mississippi police clung to it while hurricane Katrina's storm surge destroyed their town. There are several ideas to consider when planning your hedge. First and most important is how will it be used? Manicured hedges have their place but I favor the 18th century old English hedge of working farms. These diverse hedges were utilitarian in nature with fruit trees and other edibles, medicinal plants, plants useful for dyeing, for carving and plants included for their colors and aromas.

If you have particularly irritating or trespassing neighbors you may consider plants such as Osage orange or bois d'arc (*Maclura pomifera*), devil's walking stick (*Aralia spinosa*), green briar (*Smilax*), blackberries, Acacias, pyracantha (*Pyracantha*), mahonia (*Mahonia*) or prickly pear (*Opuntia*)! We have seen walls of ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) and organ-pipe cacti (*Lemaireocereus marginatus*) effectively used in Mexico. It would be fun to plant a row of easily grafted trees such as apple, pear, red mulberry or saffrafr and graft each to the one next to it as an interesting and unusual fence or hedge.

For a screen, cottonwoods will grow to 60 feet in three to four years providing a quick screen. Sycamores grow a little slower and are also deciduous. Deciduous trees are a great choice for a hedge on the south side of a house since they will let the winter sun through. You may need to intersperse them with pines and other evergreens for a more solid screen. Hollies and laurels might also be a good choice. Elder has been called an instant fence and the birds will love it. Similarly, evergreens on the northwest will deflect cold winter winds and help you save on energy bills.

Our most important medicines come from plants and during the last 150 years our connection with the land has steadily deteriorated as has our use of hedges. Many medicines are actually based on plants historically grown in hedges. Do a little research on hedges and medicinal plants. Pick a plant, discuss it with your physician, incorporate into your hedge and begin experimenting. With a little experimenting, you can be making your own lozenges and tea from Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), an old world mint now naturalized in the US. Mullen (*Verbascum thapsus*) has been an important plant since ancient times and will play out its two year drama in your hedge with a basal rosette of large, thick, fuzzy leaves the first year and a hairy flower stalk the second with yellow flowers that bloom randomly from spring through fall. The Puritans thought mullein was an important enough plant to bring to the New World and it followed the settlers. Historically famous, soothing, mucilaginous mullein tea has a long history as a treatment for coughs and colds. The dried leaves can be smoked in a tobacco pipe to treat asthma or bronchitis. In a dire emergency the large tough leaves may be better than a trip to the big box store for toilet paper!

Hedges have to be trimmed and therein lies another of their most enduring features - a sustainable source of firewood or wood for other purposes. Coppice correctly and a tree can have a lot more than nine lives. Most broadleaf trees will regrow when cut and actually results in a significant greater harvest than the initial tree provides. Coppicing has been used to produce firewood for millennia so include some ash, alder, birch, hazel, hornbeam, oak, willow, sycamore, cottonwood or maple in your hedge and quit paying \$50 per truck load for firewood.

As your hedge begins to take shape and you begin to enjoy the benefits of plants our ancient ancestors eked out of the wilderness, give wood carving a try or build a wattle fence around your compost pile. Experiment with different blends of wood in your fireplace. Don't forget to share what you are doing with your neighbors. You might temper the discussion by mentioning the benefits to birds and other wildlife or sharing a home remedy. Enjoy.

The 3rd Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference will be hosted on May 25-28, 2006 by the Stephen F. Austin University Pineywoods Native Plant Center in Nacogdoches. This conference is in association with the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference at Western Carolina University. Speakers will address topics such as East Texas ecosystems, landscape use of plants, invasive and exotic plants, and conservation efforts. Field trips will allow you to enjoy the local flora and the hands-on workshops will include topics such as edible native plants, plant propagation, photography, and plant identification.

<http://pnpc.sfasu.edu/>

MS Native Plant's Society Membership Application or Renewal Form

Join the organization devoted to the study and appreciation of wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees native to the state of Mississippi. **Join Today!**

<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	Name _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Student: \$7.50		County _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual or Family: \$10.00		Address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining: \$15.00		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing: \$35.00		Telephone _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Life: \$125.00		email _____

Please return this form with check to: MNPS, Inc., C/O Dr. Debora Mann,

Gulf Coast Chapter MNPS: Meets every 4th Monday at various locations near Gulfport. For more information contact president, Edie Dreher at 228-864-2775 or mail to 100 24th St., Gulfport, MS 39507.

***Starkville Area Chapter:** For meeting times and information, contact Bob Brzuszek at rbrzuszek@lalc.msstate.edu or phone 662-325-7896.

Visit the MNPS, Inc. Web site at: groups.msn.cm/mississippinativeplantsociety

Join MNPS, MEEA or Both!

Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance Membership Application

Join state alliance devoted to environmental education and the affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education. **Join Today!**

Name: _____ New Renewal

School or Organization: _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

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- | | | |
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| Membership Category | Committee Interests: | Return this application, with your check or money order, to MEEA, C/O John DeFillipo, MS Museum of Natural Science, 4391 South Frontage Rd., Columbus, MS 39701 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$10.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (\$5.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Nomination | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Institution/Business (\$50) | <input type="checkbox"/> Awards | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life (\$150.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$150 - \$1,000+) | <input type="checkbox"/> MEEA Board | |

The Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance conducts an annual conference and occasional workshops. They are preparing to assist colleges of education meet the new EE standards required for NCATE accreditation. For information on upcoming activities watch the newsletter or contact President Matt Miller.

Help make the MSU Crosby Arboretum's & Strawberry Plains Audubon Center's native plant sales huge successes! See you at the Mississippi Environmental Education Conference, March 24 - 26, 2006 at Twin-Lakes in Florence

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