



MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANTS

Newsletter of the Mississippi Native Plant Society

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 1: SUMMER 2023

Mission: The MNPS was formed in 1980 to provide a forum for learning about our state's ecosystems and the plants that exist within them. Our goal is to provide educational opportunities and to encourage the conservation and utilization of native plants.

CONTENTS

1. Article: April is MS Native Plant Month
2. Native Plant Month (cont.)
3. Trip Report: Bonita Lakes
4. Trip Report (cont.)
5. Article: Spotlight: Hattiesburg, MS Nature Spots
6. Hattiesburg Nature Spots (cont.)
6. Article: MMNS 2023 Pollinator Day
7. Article: Spotlight: Clinton Community Nature Center

.....

2023 MNPS BOARD:

Nadine Phillips
President
Toby Gray
Vice President
Debora Mann
Secretary/Treasurer
Eli Polzer
Newsletter Editor
Nate Venarske
Webmaster
Gail Barton
State Field Trip Chair
Dr. Victor Maddox
Northern Field Trip Chair
Pat Drackett
Southern Field Trip Chair

APRIL IS MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT MONTH!!

Debora Mann, MNPS Secretary/Treasurer

With overwhelming bipartisan support, the Mississippi Legislature on March 6, 2023, passed a bill that Governor Tate Reeves signed into law designating April Mississippi Native Plant Month. This makes Mississippi the second state in the nation after Ohio to enact such a law.

The effort to promote Native Plant Month in Mississippi was spearheaded by Lyn McMillin and Hollidae Morrison, Chairs of the Mississippi Native Plant Month Initiative of the Garden Club of Jackson. They had previously worked with the Governor's office to draft a gubernatorial proclamation declaring April Mississippi Native Plant Month in 2022. Their efforts to promote native plants are part of the National Native Plant Initiative of the Garden Club of America (GCA), which seeks to have proclamations in all 50 states declaring April Native Plant Month. GCA member Nancy Linz of Ohio also successfully worked to have the U.S. Senate pass resolutions in 2021, 2022, and 2023 declaring April National Native Plant Month.

While proclamations and resolutions must be renewed every year, the passage of this law means that Native Plant Month will be recognized indefinitely by the State of Mississippi. Writing about the motivation for promoting this legislation, Lyn stated, "We know native plants are essential for healthy and diverse ecosystems and critical for clean air, water, and soil stability. We understand that the intricate relationships between local flora and fauna are highly specialized and cannot be replaced with ornamental, non-native plants. Landscapes today often contain plants collected from around the world, but many of our insects and caterpillars have not evolved quickly enough to be able to eat these strange foods.... Educating the public about the importance of native plants is critical for the future of our planet. Doug Tallamy's book, *Bringing Nature Home*, said that 'Knowledge generates interest, and interest generates — (continued p. 2)



April is

NATIONAL NATIVE PLANT MONTH

National Native Plant Month Logo
nationalnativeplantmonth.org

MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 1: SUMMER 2023



(cont. from p. 1) ... APRIL IS MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT MONTH

compassion.' Going further, compassion then leads to motivation, and motivation leads to ACTION."

Congratulations and thanks to Lyn, Hollidae, and the Garden Club of Jackson for their tireless efforts championing this legislation in order to promote the appreciation and preservation of native plants.

The **2022 Mississippi April Plant Month Proclamation** (Fig. 1) states:

AN ACT TO DESIGNATE EACH APRIL AS "MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT MONTH" IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE HERITAGE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIVE PLANTS FOR CLEAN AIR, WATER AND SOIL STABILITY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, native plants are essential for healthy and diverse ecosystems and are critical for clean air, water, and soil stability; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi is home to more than 2,700 native plant species which include trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, and wildflowers; and

WHEREAS, native plants are well-adapted to Mississippi's soils, wetlands, temperatures, precipitation, and environmental conditions; and consequently, are the best at conserving and protecting our environment and adapting to its changes; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2021, The U.S. Senate passed Senate Resolution 109, declaring April as "National Native Plant Month"; and

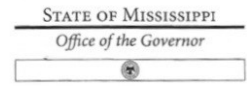
WHEREAS, according to Senate Resolution 109, "native plants are indigenous species that have evolved and occur naturally in a particular region, eco-system, and habitat"; and

WHEREAS, according to the Mississippi Native Plant Society, native plants preserve our rich biological heritage; provide shelter, as well as, nectar, pollen and seeds that serve as food for native butterflies, insects, birds, and other wildlife in ways that non-native plants cannot provide; provide diversity in form, texture, and color to fit any landscape style, and, are hardy and easy to grow once established; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi's rarest native plants include four species that are federally listed under the Endangered Species act of 1973; Price's Potato-Bean, American Chaffseed, Louisiana Quillwort, and Pondberry; and

WHEREAS, it is important to recognize the value of Mississippi's native plants and encourage public awareness of the many benefits they provide to Mississippi's economy, and to pollinators, and to the health of Mississippi's environment.

We are fortunate to live in a beautiful state where native resources are valued. Spread the word and let's keep sewing these seeds, together!!



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, native plants are essential for healthy and diverse ecosystems and are critical for clean, air, water, and soil stability; and
 WHEREAS, Mississippi is home to more than 2,700 native plant species which include trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, and wildflowers; and
 WHEREAS, native plants are well-adapted to Mississippi's soils, wetlands, temperatures, precipitation, and environmental conditions; and consequently, are the best at conserving and protecting our environment and adapting to its changes; and
 WHEREAS, on March 25, 2021, the U.S. Senate passed Senate Resolution 109, declaring April as "National Native Plant Month"; and
 WHEREAS, according to Senate Resolution 109, "native plants are indigenous species that have evolved and occur naturally in a particular region, eco-system, and habitat"; and
 WHEREAS, according to the Mississippi Native Plant Society, native plants preserve our rich biological heritage; provide shelter, as well as, nectar, pollen and seeds that serve as food for native butterflies, insects, birds, and other wildlife in ways that non-native plants cannot provide; provide diversity in form, texture, and color to fit any landscape style; and, are hardy and easy to grow once established; and
 WHEREAS, Mississippi's rarest native plants include four species that are federally listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973: Price's Potato-Bean, American Chaffseed, Louisiana Quillwort, and Pondberry; and
 WHEREAS, it is important to recognize the value of Mississippi's native plants and encourage public awareness of the many benefits they provide to Mississippi's economy, and to pollinators, and to the health of Mississippi's environment.
 NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tate Reeves, Governor of the State of Mississippi, do hereby proclaim April 2022, as

MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT MONTH

in the State of Mississippi and urge all citizens to educate themselves about the importance and rich history of Mississippi's native plants and the many benefits they provide to pollinators, in preserving our rich biological heritage and aiding in the prevention of flooding and erosion and helping to maintain and preserve the health of Mississippi's economy and environment.


IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.
 DONE in the City of Jackson, on the 27th day of April, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and sixty-sixth.

 TATE REEVES
 GOVERNOR



Figure 1. Signed 2022 MS April Native Plant Month Proclamation



John Gwaltney
clasp cone flower

John Gwaltney
spotted touch-me-not

Doug McGrady
American chaffseed

H. Zell
eastern purple cone flower

Fritz Reynolds
goat's rue

Proclamation Signing

desotocountynews.com

MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 1: SUMMER 2023



FALL TRIP REPORT: BONITA LAKES PARK, LAUDERDALE COUNTY, MS

Gail Barton, State Field Trip Chair

On Sunday morning following the MNPS annual fall meeting, a small group of MNPS members and Friends of Bonita Lakes members gathered for a field trip at Bonita Lakes Park and Watershed in Meridian, Mississippi.

Bonita Lakes is a 3300-acre park in the city limits of Meridian Mississippi. Bonita is a public green space that serves as a sort of “Central Park” for the city. The park contains 3 lakes and numerous trails that are widely used for low impact recreational activities like paddling, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and picnicking. The City of Meridian is planning to establish an arboretum at Bonita Lakes.

Our group met at the boat launch about 9 am and began to walk through upland woods on Ring Road, a gravel pedestrian and bike trail. We then proceeded to an adjacent steeper equestrian trail that ran downhill along an ephemeral creek and drainage area. Heather Sullivan (Heritage Botanist - Mississippi Museum of Natural Science) was our trip leader. Others attending were Peter Loos, Deb Mann, Jennifer Heffner, Gail Barton, Nell Covington and Suzie Pool.

We walked about 2 miles and spent three hours on the trails compiling the following plant list.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Quercus alba</i>	white oak	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	American beech
<i>Quercus velutina</i>	black oak	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	sweetgum
<i>Quercus pagoda</i>	cherrybark oak	<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	sassafras
<i>Quercus falcata</i>	southern red oak	<i>Rhododendron canescens</i>	sweet azalea
<i>Quercus stellata</i>	post oak	<i>Crataegus pulcherrima</i>	beautiful hawthorne
<i>Quercus</i> x spp.	hybrid oak	<i>Crataegus marshallii</i>	parsley hawthorne
<i>Quercus austrina</i>	bluff oak	<i>Vaccinium arboreum</i>	tree huckleberry
<i>Quercus margarettae</i>	sand post oak	<i>Vaccinium elliotii</i>	Elliott’s blueberry
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	northern red oak	<i>Prunus americana</i>	American plum
<i>Oxydendrum arboretum</i>	sourwood	<i>Prunus mexicana</i>	Mexican plum
<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>	cucumber magnolia	<i>Rhus copallinum</i>	winged sumac
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	southern magnolia	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American holly
<i>Magnolia macrophylla</i>	big leaf magnolia	<i>Cartrema americana</i>	wild olive/devil wood
<i>Rhododendron canescens</i>	sweet azalea	<i>Symphoricarpos orbiculatus</i>	Indian currant coralberry
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	red maple	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	American beautyberry
<i>Carya glabra</i>	pignut hickory	<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>	eastern baccharis
<i>Carya pallida</i>	sand hickory	<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Carolina jessamine
<i>Carya tomentosa</i>	mockernut hickory	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	buttonbush
<i>Carya carolinae-septentrionalis</i>	Carolina shagbark hickory	<i>Vitis/Muscadina rotundifolia</i>	muscadine grape
<i>Castanea alabamensis</i>	Alabama chinkapin	<i>Morella cerifera</i>	southern wax myrtle
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	eastern red cedar	<i>Apocynum cannabinum</i>	Indian hemp
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	tulip poplar	<i>Smilax pumila</i>	sarsaparilla
<i>Prunus serotina</i>	black cherry	<i>Smilax glauca</i>	cat greenbrier

MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY


VOLUME 38, NUMBER 1: SUMMER 2023

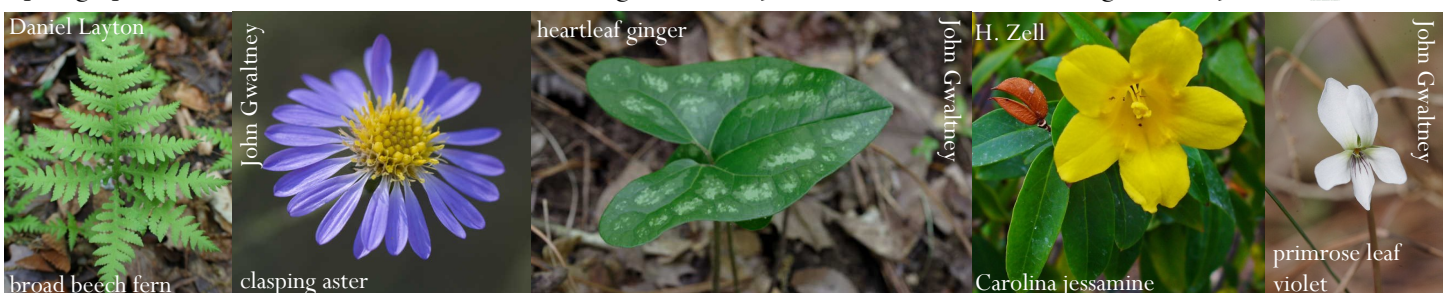


(cont. from p. 1) ... BONITA LAKES PARK

Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Smilax rotundifolia</i>	common greenbrier	<i>Phorodendron leucarpum</i>	mistletoe
<i>Cocculus carolinus</i>	Carolina snailseed	<i>Sceptridium biternatum</i>	grape fern
<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Carolina jessamine	The following species occurred in the moist drainage area adjacent to the equestrian trail.	
<i>Dichanthelium boscii</i>	Bosc's panic grass		
<i>Saccharum alopecuroides</i>	silver plumegrass	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	ironwood
<i>Arundinaria</i> spp.	switch cane	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	sweetbay magnolia
<i>Tridens flavus</i>	purpletop grass	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	eastern hop hornbeam
<i>Chasmanthium sessiliflorum</i>	wood oats	<i>Quercus nigra</i>	water oak
<i>Scleria triglomerata</i>	whip nutrush	<i>Alnus serrulata</i>	hazel alder
<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>	Cherokee sedge	<i>Euonymus americanus</i>	strawberry bush
<i>Pluchea</i> spp.	camphorweed	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	witch hazel
<i>Symphotrichum dumosum</i>	bushy aster	<i>Itea virginica</i>	Virginia sweetspire
<i>Symphotrichum patens</i>	clasping aster	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	elderberry
<i>Viola walteri</i>	prostrate blue violet	<i>Bignonia capreolata</i>	crossvine
<i>Tipularia discolor</i>	crane fly orchid	<i>Hydrangea barbara</i>	hydrangea vine
<i>Hypericum hypericoides</i>	St. Andrew's cross	<i>Mimulus alatus</i>	winged monkey flower
<i>Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium</i>	rabbit tobacco	<i>Sanicula</i> spp.	snakeroot
<i>Antennaria</i> spp.	pussytoes	<i>Viola primulifolia</i>	primrose leaf violet
<i>Tragia cordifolia</i>	stinging nettle	<i>Athyrium asplenoides</i>	southern lady fern
<i>Hexastylis arifolia</i>	heartleaf ginger	<i>Lorinseria areolate</i>	netted chain fern
<i>Medicago arabica</i> *	spotted medic	<i>Osmundastrum cinnamomeum</i>	cinnamon fern
<i>Dichondra caroliniana</i>	pony foot	<i>Pelazoneuron kunthii</i>	southern shield fern
<i>Elephantopus</i> spp.	elephant's foot	<i>Phegopteris hexagonoptera</i>	broad beech fern
<i>Mitchella repens</i>	partridge berry	The above was a good find as it can be an indicator of the presence of rare species, such as ginseng and lady slipper orchid.	
<i>Euphorbia apocynifolia</i>	false flowering spurge		

The plants listed above are all native unless noted with an asterisk*. We did see some invasive exotic plants of concern that should be eradicated if possible, including Chinese tallow tree (*Triadica sebifera*), mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*), Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) and Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*).

We hope to return to the site for another field trip in spring when the wild azaleas are blooming to look for spring ephemeral wildflowers and for ravine sedge (*Carex impressinervia*) and Boott's sedge (*Carex picta*). 



MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 1: SUMMER 2023



SPOTLIGHT: HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI NATURE SPOTS

Linda Barber Auld/ “NOLA Bug Lady”, Frank & Sara Gladney Memorial Garden @ Gloster Arboretum

June 8, 2023, was a delightful and exciting adventure day spent with Mac H. Alford, Professor of Botany and Curator of the Herbarium at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM)! My hiking buddies—Diane Lafferty, Shane Dixon, and Larry Morgan—accompanied me first admiring a gorgeous wildflower patch at a Highway 98 roadside. Many native plants were blooming including green milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*) growing in



rose gentian

Eric Hunt



common buckeye

Thomas Barnes

scattered patches. We saw rose gentian (*Sabatia angularis*), tickseed (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), tall poppy mallow (*Callirhoe papaver*), and fleabane

(*Erigeron strigosus*) to name just a few. Areas on the other side of the highway and just a bit farther down the same side where we were had already been mowed. While wandering around the pretty wildflowers, we discovered another blooming milkweed that Mac identified as pineland milkweed (*Asclepias obovata*). A buckeye, gulf, and variegated fritillary butterflies were all seen siphoning nectar on the slender vervain (*Verbena rigida*) blossoms.

Next, we drove to the nearby Longleaf Preserve at Lake Thoreau Environmental Center (associated with USM). The gorgeous sight of a lush, green carpet of assorted plants and ferns under the towering, majestic longleaf



Gulf fritillary on slender vervain

Linda Auld



savanna meadow beauty Tim Ross

pinus inspired us to meander to see what surprises we could find. First, we spied two species of goat’s rue (*Tephrosia virginiana* and *T. spicata*) mixed with meadow beauty (*Rhoxia alifanus*). At least a half-dozen barred yellow butterflies were investigating their host plant, pencil flowers (*Stylosanthes biflora*), which was prolific in that area. We stopped briefly to watch a flirting pair. Beautiful male pipevine swallowtails were also patrolling and looking for a mate. A three-foot black cherry tree (*Prunus serotina*) flush with new growth attracted a red-spotted purple butterfly to lay eggs. A good-sized patch of blooming few-flowered milkweed (*Asclepias*

*lanceolata**) was growing in a low section next to hat pins also known as flattened pipewort (*Eriocaulon compressum*) and a fern assortment of bracken (*Pteridium pseudocaudatum*), southern shield (*Pelazoneuron [Thelypteris] kunthii*), Virginia chain (*Anchistea virginica*), royal (*Osmunda regalis*) and cinnamon (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*) — (continued p. 6)



Linda Auld


Botanical friends exploring in Hattiesburg

MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 1: SUMMER 2023




(cont. from p. 5) ... HATTIESBURG NATURE SPOTS

as well as vanilla leaf, also known as deer's tongue (*Trilisa odoratissima*). A few steps farther I spied something I rarely see, *Crotalaria sagittalis*, the bella moth caterpillar host! A pearl crescent butterfly was fluttering around looking for aster to lay some eggs. Really hot and lunchtime, we decided to go to a local store where we listened to stories about Mac's Africa trip...food, culture, animals, and of course plants. We returned to the forest with hopes to see New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*), caterpillar host for mottled duskywing butterfly. Mac remembered having seen it growing at a powerline during previous hikes with his students. No luck but we did see more *Asclepias obovata*. At one point along the trail, we discovered the trio of poison—oak (*Toxicodendron pubescens*), ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), and sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*)—all at one spot growing right next to wild yam (*Dioscorea villosa*) and native passionflower (*Passiflora lutea*). False nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*), host plant for red admiral and question mark butterflies, was growing profusely in the ditches along the trail but no butterflies were spotted. Walking a different trail back to the car we saw both male and female ebony jewelwing damselflies perched on tree branches that were hanging over the meandering creek. Carolina satyrs were bob-bob-bobbing along the forest floor as a red-banded hairstreak was poised on a tree branch grinding its tails. Mac pointed out tiny green adder's-mouth orchids (*Malaxis unifolia*), which had no flowers but fruits alongside a grouping of native pipevines (*Endodeca [Aristolochia] serpentaria*). Later and farther along the trail, one female pipevine swallowtail was very busily tasting leaves, searching for a spot to lay eggs. Twelve species of butterflies and 17 species of birds were documented. Thanks to Mac Alford for sharing his infinite knowledge with us! 

2023 POLLINATOR DAY AT MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

Debora Mann, MNPS Secretary/Treasurer

During March of each year, the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in Jackson hosts Pollinator Day, when organizations from around MS come together to provide an entertaining and educational morning of exhibits, crafts, stories, and games celebrating pollinators and exploring ways we can help conserve pollinator populations. The Mississippi Native Plant Society returned to the event for the first time since March of 2020. At our exhibit this year, kids (as well as parents and teachers) “oohed” and “aahed” over Dr. John Guyton's extensive insect collection. John and Peggy Guyton also brought microscopes that visitors used for a close-up view of pollinating insects and flowers of native plants that they pollinate. They marveled at such wonders as a wasp's compound eye or the extensible proboscis of a butterfly. The event was very well attended, as many school children were on Spring Break. It was as much fun for us to see the excitement and enthusiasm of so many young visitors as it was for them to see so many pollinators up close. 



MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 1: SUMMER 2023



Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles highlighting nature centers, parks, arboreta, or other natural areas in Mississippi that are open to the public and that feature native plants in some way. If you have a favorite such spot that other members of the MNPS would enjoy, let us know by contacting MNPS Newsletter Editor, Eli Polzer at elpolzer@gmail.com.

SPOTLIGHT: CLINTON COMMUNITY NATURE CENTER

Audrey Harrison, President, CCNC, & Prentiss Cox, Past President, CCNC

Tucked away in a residential neighborhood in the heart of Clinton, the Clinton Community Nature Center features more than two miles of shady trails winding through 33 acres. From the 1820s, when the land was taken from Native Americans, to about 1940, the land was farmed for corn and cotton. When the Mississippi Legislature established a free public school system in 1872, a small parcel was set aside for a school. From soon after 1872 until 1935, the Sumner Hill School, which became an African American school, operated on this parcel. In the 1940s the land was added to the Price Dairy, and after the Dairy closed in about 1956 the land was allowed to lay fallow and became a second-growth forest. In 1994, land for the Center was donated to the recently-formed Clinton Community Nature Center Association Inc. by the descendants of Walter and Lulie Price, who had established the dairy farm in about 1916. Subsequently a half-acre was donated by the Quisenberry family to complete a section of the historic Natchez Trace. In the six decades since the land was last farmed, trees have grown and formed a canopy, wildflowers have emerged, and additional natives have been planted, most of which are labeled.

Visitors can walk a section of the trail that follows the original footpath of the Natchez Trace. The grounds also include a play forest for children, butterfly garden, natural amphitheater, plant propagation center, maintenance-storage buildings, and Price Hall, which houses the welcome center, office, and meeting room.

Special events include Nature Day, which is held in April and offers nature-themed activities for all ages, as well as a native plant sale. Additional plant sales are held during the year. Another popular event is the Lightning Bug Walk, which is held in May when fireflies known as Snappy Syncs (*Photuris frontalis*) light up the forest with their synchronous flashing.

The Center is open 7 days a week from 7:00 a.m. until sunset. Admission is free of charge but donations and memberships are welcome. Come join us! Learn more at:

Clinton Community Nature Center, 617 Dunton Road, Clinton, MS 39056
601-926-1104 • <https://www.clintonnaturecenter.org>



all images: CCNC

Mississippi Native Plant Society Membership Application



Renew or Join Today!

Name _____

New Renewing

Address _____, _____, _____

PO or Street Address

City

Zip Code

Email _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Individual or Family \$10 Student \$7.50

Sustaining \$15 Contributing \$35 Life \$125

Newsletter preference: Email or Regular mail (USPS)

Return form to: Dr. Debora Mann, 114 Auburn Drive, Clinton, MS 39056-6002

The MNPS is dedicated to the study, appreciation, and preservation of native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees. Check out our Facebook Group and join us!! You can also become a member at <https://www.mississippinativeplantsociety.org/>.

The MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

c/o Dr. Debora Mann

114 Auburn Drive

Clinton, MS 39056-6002

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Mississippi
Native
Plant
Society