



Mississippi Native Plants and Environmental Education



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

Volume 29 Number 4 Winter passes and one remembers one's perseverance - Yoko Ono Winter 2011-12

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

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Your Editors' Christmas Greeting

How to make a Geode or an Heirloom Christmas Tree Ornament

If you have the luxury of children in your home for Christmas consider making a Christmas tree ornament with them while teaching them a little about geology.

A geode is typically a sphere-shaped hollow rock that contains quartz or other crystals. Geodes form in spaces between rocks, inside cavities in volcanic rocks or other holes. Over time, minerals in the water flowing through the space will crystallize and eventually the hardened matrix surrounding the crystals is freed from the softer parent rock leaving a rounded rock with crystals hiding inside. I once found half of a geode where it had formed in a pocket in a sandstone cliff and worked it loose with my fingers - then, as an after-thought, I searched for and found the other half in the weeds at the base of the cliff. Most natural science museums have small geodes you can purchase and break and these make good stocking stuffers as a follow-up to making a geode Christmas tree ornament.

Carefully break holes in several eggs near their middle and clean. The eggs can be used to make an omelet or breakfast casserole. My favorite anthropogenic geode has a nickel-size hole broken out of one side where several colors of crystals are visible and it reminds me of the exquisitely decorated Russian Fabergé eggs. Dissolve as much Epsom salt as will dissolve in about 16 ounces of warm water. Stir constantly and add some food coloring if you like. Carefully transfer the water to another glass retaining any settled salt in the first glass. Fill each egg shell with the salt water and place the shells in an egg carton, to hold them while the water slowly evaporates leaving large salt crystals, in a cool location. You may want to use an ice pick to punch a small hole in the top and insert a string to use as a hanger. Seal this hole with wax to prevent the water from draining. It will take a few days for the water to evaporate so start this early. When all of the water has evaporated your geode is ready! Now, you can attach it to tree or repeat the process adding colored crystals. The process can be repeated in the same shell adding different food coloring to the super concentrated salt solution making even more beautiful geode ornaments.

While the water is evaporating you may want to use part of another egg carton and help your children or grandchildren make and decorate boxes to protect their geode ornaments from year to year. Be sure to put the date on each ornament.

With more astute children you should quickly point out you are using an evaporate mineral from the halite mineral class to demonstrate a process that makes quartz in the silicate class!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your editors!

Greetings Fellow MNPS Members! by Dr. Lelia Kelly, MNPS President

I am honored to serve as your new MNPS president. For those of you who do not know me, I would like to tell you a tad about my background. I was raised in the hills of northeast Mississippi on a family farm. I am the middle child of 5, which may explain some of my strange character traits—I got trouble from both directions! The younger siblings would blame me for “putting them up to it,” and the two older boys used me as the guinea pig for their contraptions and daredevil escapades.

My mama was a teacher and my daddy a civil engineer, both left an indelible mark on my life. Mama encouraged exploration coupled with a work ethic—we were always doing mama’s projects around the “place” as she called the farm. Daddy sparked and applauded my little moments of creativity and kept us all laughing with his endless puns and jokes. He always had a zest and joy for life, even in times of hardship, which I have tried to emulate.

Being a tomboy, most of my childhood was spent roaming the wooded hills and hollows in Alcorn County. My idols were Sargent Rock or Tarzan. I did not care a whit about being Jane or Barbie. Given a choice I would rather head to the woods on an “explore” like Winnie the Pooh would say, than sit in my office working the computer or phone. I say all this to let you know that the natural plant world of our Mississippi woods and fields holds a lifelong fascination for me and has been the guiding force in my choice of career in horticulture.

I currently work for Mississippi State University Extension Service as the Consumer Horticulture Specialist. My office is at the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Verona. I have been married to the same man for 28 years and have 2 living sons, James and Philip. We lost our oldest son, Chris last year.

John Guyton tells me that my presidency should have a theme. I am still working on that, but for now what I would like to concentrate on is reviving interest in our Society and increasing membership. There are several ways to do this. Promoting what we do, what we are, and the benefits of membership to the general public is one way. I intend to encourage development of new local chapters of our society and to try to resurrect some chapters that have become inactive. I will work with the education chair and the field trip chair to promote our educational opportunities and encourage participation in these events and programs.

I do a lot of traveling around the state in my capacity as State Consumer Horticulture Specialist and my Extension duties can easily work in tandem with my goals as your president. There is a growing interest in landscape sustainability and environmental stewardship among our Extension clientele and I see the Mississippi Native Plant Society as playing a major role in contributing to the knowledge and body of information that will help fill this need.

I once was accused of being a “plant evangelist.” I took it as a compliment. I will need your help and support to get this Mississippi Native Plant Crusade going!

Greetings MEEA and Others, by Terri Jacobson, MEEA President

We had a great MEEA conference at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science with approximately 47 people (24 teachers) attending. Thanks to the planning committee of Laura Beiser, Angel Rohnke, Deb Veeder, Janet Chapman, Clay Burns, Chuck Jepsen, Cherry Miller and Peggy Guyton for a terrific job. Thanks to the presenters and to those who donated and bought items for the silent auction. And, finally, thanks to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality for funding the teacher scholarships and the Central Mississippi Conservation and Development Council for administering the funds.

MEEA is such an exciting group – so full of dedicated, knowledgeable and enthusiastic people – so full of possibilities. We have an important task in the field of environmental education: introducing and fostering growth in the stewardship of our natural world. As President of MEEA, I plan to continue the Envirothon partnership and wish to expand our partnership with the Mississippi Geographic Alliance. Besides our shared newsletter, I hope MEEA can collaborate more with the Mississippi Native Plant Society also.

Looking back on previous newsletters, I noticed the past presidents of both organizations seem to agree that it is crucial; now, to connect (or reconnect) people to nature - to the plants and animals and the ecological processes that sustain us. As MEEA past president Laura Beiser stated in her first presidential letter, we must continue teaching about “ecological restoration” and help students “develop a sense of place.” MNPS past president Mac Alford challenged his group “to reach out to at least one school and get children involved with native plants.”

Connecting people of all ages to nature is a professional and personal mission of mine. Working as a wildlife biologist and environmental educator I feel lucky to be able to do this through my job with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I am eager to continue this nature mission during my MEEA presidential term and take up Dr. Alford's challenge and call both organizations to action.

MNP & EE finally made it to 2007 (Word 2007) by the Editors

We have been producing the newsletter using WordPerfect, but the time has come to change. It is the only thing we still do in WP. When Dr. Mann's computer with WP was recently decommissioned we decided to go ahead and use a Word version we have been tinkering with for a year or so. This is the first edition in Word. You can expect it to change a little over the next few issues as we learn how to do a few things that were so easy in WP! We have changed the font to 11 point Calibri and 14 point Cambria headings and think it will be easier to read.

Editors Note: the holly clipart on the back cover is courtesy of Florida Center for Instructional Technology, College of Education, University of South Florida. <http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/index.htm>

The MNPS Newsletter Archives are Nearing Completion and We Need Your Help by John and Peggy Guyton

At the annual MNPS meeting when Jennifer Buchanan described her interest in phenological data for Mississippi we immediately realized the field trip plant reports in our newsletters may contain useful species lists including some blooming dates, though they would not necessarily be the first date of bloom... The newsletters may contain other data or information that could be useful so we have begun working on compiling an archive. We hope to have the first version finished before the end of the year. The individual newsletters will be in PDF format and an expanded index is being built in Excel.

While waiting out tropical storm Lee on the Gulf Coast we began scanning and building an electronic newsletter archive and made considerable progress. Several things became immediately apparent. We have a complete set from the Katrina Edition and Vol. 23 No. 2 forward but there may be some older newsletters that we do not have. The following list contains all of the newsletters currently in the MNPS archives. The MNPS archives were given to us by Bob Brzuszek and Dr. Debora Mann contributed a significant number and filled a few gaps. Please check your back issues (older than the fall of 2005) for any editions not listed below. If you find some, please let us know. We would enjoy having a copy of them for the archives. If you are aware of a member who is not currently active who may have saved their back issues please contact them or supply us with their name.

1980 # 1 May	1987 November	1994 September	2006 Vol 24 Issue 1 Spring
1981 2 Feb	1988 March	1996 Fall Vol 16 Iss 4	2006 Vol 24 Issue 2 Summer
1981 August	1988 June	1996 Spring Vol 16 Iss 2	2006 Vol 24 Issue 3 Fall
1981 October	1988 December	1996 Winter Vol 16 Iss 1	2007 Vol 24 Issue 4 Winter
1982 June	1989 April	1997 Fall Vol 17 Iss 4	2007 Vol 25 Issue 1 Spring
1982 September	1989 August	1997 Spring Vol 17 Iss 1	2007 Vol 25 Issue 2 Summer
1982 December	1989 December	1997 Summer Vol 17 Iss 3	2007 Vol 25 Issue 3 Fall
1983 March	1990 February	1997 Winter Vol 17 Iss 1	2007 Vol 25 Issue 4 Winter
1983 June	1990 May	1998 Winter Vol 18 Iss 1	2008 Vol 26 Issue 1 Spring
1983 September	1990 August	2000 Fall Vol 18 Iss 2	2008 Vol 26 Issue 2 Summer
1984 March	1990 December	2001 Summer Vol 21 Iss 3	2008 Vol 26 Issue 3 Fall
1984 June	1991 February	2001 Winter Vol 19 Iss 1	2008 Vol 26 Issue 4 Winter
1984 October	1991 May	2002 Fall Vol 20 Iss 4	2009 Vol 27 Issue 1 Spring
1985 March	1991 August	2002 Summer Vol 20 Iss 3	2009 Vol 27 Issue 2 Summer
1985 June	1991 October	2002 Win Vol 20 Iss 1 and 2	2009 Vol 27 Issue 3 F & W
1985 September	1992 February	2003 Spring Vol 21 Iss 2	2010 Vol 28 Issue 1 Spring
1985 December	1992 March	2003 Winter Vol 21 Iss 1	2010 Vol 28 Issue 2 Summer
1986 March	1992 June	2003-04 Fall Vol 21 Iss 4	2010 Vol 28 Issue 3 Fall
1986 June	1992 December	2004 Fall Vol 22 Iss 4	2010 Vol 28 Issue 4 Winter
1986 September	1993 April	2004 Spring Vol 22 Iss 1	2011 Vol 29 Issue 1 Spring
1987 January	1993 October	2005 Sept. Nature News	2011 Vol 29 Issue 2 Summer
1987 May	1994 February	2005 Fall 2005 Katrina Ed	2011 Vol 29 Issue 3 Fall
1987 August	1994 May	2005 Vol 23 Issue 2 Winter	2011 Vol 29 issue 4 Winter

Climate is what we expect, weather is what we get! — Mark Twain

A Silk Moth Winter Walk or a Cocoon Scavenger Hunt by John Guyton, Ed.D.

Searching for moth cocoons would make a great winter walk at a nature center or in a deciduous forest with your children or grandchildren. It might also add an interesting twist to a hunting trip. Many of the large silk moths feed on broadleaf trees and there could be a great variety of cocoons since each species has a characteristic shape. A drawn out sack may belong to a Cecropia (*Hyalophora cecropia*) and a leaf wrapped cocoon, a Promethea (*Callosamia promethea*). The Luna (*Actias luna*) spins a beige ball of silk. Bagworms (*Thyridopteryx ephemeraeformis*) produce cocoons that are pointed on each end with incorporated plant material as a disguise. You should make notes as to the type of plant each was spotted on in your field notebook and include a sketch or take a picture. If you have children a scavenger hunt may be in order. You may want to select a couple cocoons to keep over the winter for a spring release.

You can place the cocoons, still attached to a twig to suspend them, in a wide mouth gallon jar with cheese cloth across its top. Sheltered porches, out of direct sunlight, are suitable places to overwinter them. Scan the internet for more specific instructions because they range from keeping them on the back porch to zip plastic bags in the refrigerator. If you are a collector you already know raising your own is a good way to get excellent specimens. Of course photographs of cocoons would make a very useful collection.

As each cocoon is collected check field guides to identify the moth that made it and note the date of the find in your and your children's field notebooks with pertinent data as well as maps and sketches. Latitude, longitude, elevation and weather could be noted. Note the plant you found it on and consider a night hike next spring to see a moth in the wild. Also stop by the internet and see what their caterpillars look like and learn their host plants.

Silk is stronger than steel, flexible even when cold, bends and stretches without distortion and is lightweight. And they come in a wealth of shapes and colors. It has many possible uses from protecting pupa overwinter in the wild to the arrow-proof tunics of Genghis Khan's warriors. Arrows that pushed the tunic into wounds could be more easily removed by pulling on the tunic. The Mississippi Entomological Museum has an incredible collection of cocoons from around the world. Not to distract from moths silk, the American Museum of Natural History has an eleven by four foot golden textile woven from the silk of one million spiders in Madagascar that may be the most beautiful cloth ever woven. Check it out at www.amnh.org/exhibitions/spidersilk.

Each cocoon produces a relatively small amount of silk, however it can be fun to harvest a little. The best results are obtained by killing the pupae in boiling water. Moths damage their cocoons when they emerge as adults severing the continuous strand in many places. If you are harvesting the invasive exotic gypsy moth cocoons you should collect every cocoon you see and kill all the pupae! Begin by boiling the cocoons in water with a little soda ash or Arm and Hammer detergent for about 45 minutes. You will notice the water taking on the color of the cocoon. When the fibers begin to separate you are ready to begin teasing it apart using toothpicks. Watch for the end of the silk just as the cocoon begins to separate. Keep the cocoon wet while winding the silk on a toothpick or a plastic spool. Be patient - the Cecropia moth cocoon contains about a mile of silk! If your cocoon already has a hole in it you can gently twist the ends of the silk strands together.

Handbook for Butterfly Watchers by Robert Michael Pyle (ISBN 0-395-61629-8) would make a fine winter read by the fireplace and inspired the above suggestion for a winter hike. The Genghis Khan factoid was from Mike Edwards and appeared in National Geographic, December 1996.

Southeastern Prairie Symposium, May 14-17, 2012 at Mississippi State University

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, Mississippi State University, and Wildlife Mississippi will co-host a symposium for natural resource professionals and scientists involved in the ecology, management and restoration of southeastern prairie habitats. The primary goal of this symposium is to synthesize effective approaches to prairie restoration and enhancement throughout the region by identifying broad-scale generalities in management practices and biota while recognizing differences at the specific ecosystem level. Three concurrent sessions focusing on management, the natural biota, as well as working grasslands will unite researchers, biologists, and managers from across the southern United States (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC TN and TX) and increase communication among state, federal, and non-governmental partners in prairie habitat management.

Invited speakers will bring participants to common ground on the topics of prairie remnants, conservation, and working grasslands. Submitted papers by scientists and resource professionals will be presented to inform participants on prairie restoration and enhancement advances. An edited volume based on symposium presentations will be produced. Additionally, a technical manual focusing on effective regional prairie restoration techniques, lessons learned, and future needs may be produced. The symposium will conclude with a panel discussion on needs and approaches to guide future prairie restoration and enhancement efforts. Learn more at www.cfr.msstate.edu/wildlife/prairie.

Restoring Black Belt Prairies on the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi **by JoVonn G. Hill, John A. Barone, and Lisa McInnis**

Prior to European settlement, the Southeastern United States had several regions with abundant grasslands or prairies. One such region, called the "Black Belt," extends southward in an arc from McNairy County, Tennessee, through east-central Mississippi, and then east to Russell County, Alabama. Historically, the Black Belt was a heterogeneous landscape of prairies intermixed with several types of forest, and not a continuous swath of grasslands. Surveys conducted by the General Land Office in the 1830's and 1840's suggest that in the Black Belt region of Alabama and Mississippi, prairies once covered about 144,000 hectares. Since that time, more than 99% of these prairies have been lost to agricultural and urban development. Remaining prairies are threatened by further development, erosion, and the encroachment of eastern red cedar, *Juniperus virginiana* L. The Mississippi Natural Heritage Program gives Black Belt Prairie remnants a ranking of S1, meaning they are "critically imperiled" within the state due to extreme rarity or other factors that make their biota vulnerable to extirpation.

Botanical surveys of Black Belt prairie remnants have documented over 200 species of plants including several rare or critically imperiled species. Like the tallgrass prairies of the Great Plains, these communities are dominated by warm season grasses such as big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), side oats gramma (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), and a species of dropseed (*Sporobolus* spp.). The most prominent forbs include four species of milkweed, (*Asclepias* spp.), lemonyellow false goldenaster (*Heterotheca camporum*), prairie coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*), five species of blazing star (*Liatris* spp.), three species of rosinweeds (*Silphium* spp.), two species of prairie clover (*Dalea* spp.), Illinois bundle flower (*Desmanthus illinoensis*) and prairie mimosa (*Neptunia lutea*) among others.

Over 1,160 species of moths, 118 species of bees, 53 species of ants and 33 species of grasshoppers inhabit Black Belt prairie remnants. Populations of many species in these taxa as well as several species of beetles and leafhoppers are considered disjunct from populations in the Great Plains. Two species of insect, a moth and a large flightless beetle, are endemic to the Black Belt prairie, meaning they are found there and nowhere else in the world.

The Natchez Trace Parkway intersects the Black Belt in Chickasaw, Lee, and Pontotoc Counties in northeast Mississippi. Along the Parkway, small prairie remnants and scattered populations of prairie plants still occur. A significant threat to these remaining prairies is the spread of eastern red cedar, which has invaded most remaining prairies sites, presumably due to a reduction in natural fires. Beginning in 2009, the Park Service's Fire Effects Crew in collaboration with scientists from the Mississippi Entomological Museum at Mississippi State University began an experiment evaluating the cost effectiveness and ecological consequences of different management strategies as part of an effort to restore and expand these prairies. The experiment has four treatments: 1) a burn treatment, in which remnant sites were burned to decrease the density and growth of eastern red cedar; 2) a hand-thinning treatment, in which cedar trees were cut down and removed; 3) a combination treatment in which the cedars were removed and then the remnant burned; and 4) a control, in which there was no active restoration. The restoration value of these differing management strategies is being evaluated based on changes in the plant, ant, and grasshopper communities. These three focal taxa represent different trophic levels and have a variety of ecological roles. By examining these three groups simultaneously, the experiment is assessing the ecological effects of the different strategies across different trophic levels.

The restoration of these particular prairie remnants is important given the imperiled nature of this habitat and the high visibility and educational opportunities that the Natchez Trace Parkway offers. Currently, there is a roadside pull-off on the Trace called the "Black Belt Overlook." The view and interpretive sign here indicates the important agricultural aspects of the region. Several remnant prairies being restored are across the road from this pull-off and will offer a unique opportunity to educate the public on the natural heritage of this region.

MNPS Constitution Amended

At the annual meeting the MNPS amended the constitution to make the president's term two years putting MEEA and MNPS on the same cycles and offering the possibility of enhanced collaboration. It will also provide the president with more time to advance the theme of their presidency.

***Anything green that grew out of the mold
Was an excellent herb to our fathers of old.
—Rudyard Kipling***

John and Peggy Guyton Recognized for their Sustaining Influence on MNPS

During the annual meeting at the University of Southern Mississippi, Dr. Mac Alford, MNPS President, presented John and Peggy Guyton with a Robin Whitfield watercolor as a token of the MNPS's appreciation for their sustaining influence and activities.

Buttercup Flats Field Trip Report Submitted by: Gail Barton

On May 28, 2011, MNPS ventured to South Mississippi. Our group contained members from Vicksburg, Jackson, Wiggins, Meridian and Hattiesburg. Dr. Mac Alford led us first to Buttercup Flats, a pitcher plant bog near Wiggins, where we observed the following. Those marked with * were in bloom. Many thanks to Dr. Mac Alford for leading a wonderful field trip and for proofing the Latin names used here.

Colic root - <i>Aletris aurea</i> *	Orange candyroot – <i>Polygala lutea</i> *
Choke cherry - <i>Aronia arbutifolia</i> (= <i>Photinia pyrifolia</i>)	Yellow candyroot - <i>Polygala nana</i> *
Longleaf milkweed - <i>Asclepias longifolia</i>	Blackjack oak – <i>Quercus marilandica</i>
Honeycomb aster – <i>Balduina uniflora</i>	Meadow beauty - <i>Rhexia alifanus</i> *
Indian plantain – <i>Cacalia</i> sp.	Yellow meadow beauty - <i>Rhexia lutea</i> *
Pine barren sedge – <i>Carex turgescens</i>	White topped sedge – <i>Rhynchospora latifolia</i> *
Pineland daisy - <i>Chapalia tomentosa</i>	Winged sumac – <i>Rhus copallinum</i>
Whorled coreopsis – <i>Coreopsis major</i>	Yellow pitcher plant - <i>Sarracenia alata</i> *
Sundew – <i>Drosera brevifolia</i>	Parrot pitcher plant - <i>Sarracenia psittacina</i> *
Lady's hatpin – <i>Eriocaulon compressum</i>	Littleleaf sensitive briar - <i>Schrankia microphylla</i> * (= <i>Mimosa microphylla</i>)
Rattlesnake master – <i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i> *	Skullcap – <i>Scutellaria integrifolia</i> *
Woolly berry - <i>Gaylussacia mosieri</i>	Laurel greenbriar - <i>Smilax laurifolia</i>
Rayless sunflower - <i>Helianthus radula</i>	Roundleaf greenbriar - <i>Smilax rotundifolia</i>
Pineland mallow - <i>Hibiscus aculeatus</i>	Sweet goldenrod – <i>Solidago odora</i>
Large leaf gallberry holly – <i>Ilex coriacea</i>	Apalachicola Indian grass - <i>Sorghastrum apalachicolense</i>
Gallberry holly - <i>Ilex glabra</i>	Sphagnum moss – <i>Sphagnum</i> spp.
Yaupon holly – <i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	Pencil flower – <i>Stylosanthes biflora</i> *
Gopher apple – <i>Licania michauxii</i> *	Horse sugar – <i>Symplocos tinctoria</i>
Goldcrest - <i>Lophiola aurea</i> *	Goat's rue - <i>Tephrosia virginiana</i>
Sweetbay – <i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	False asphodel - <i>Tofieldia racemosa</i>
Southern wax myrtle - <i>Morella cerifera</i>	Small's noseburn - <i>Tragia smallii</i>
Southern bayberry – <i>Morella caroliniensis</i> (= <i>M. heterophylla</i>)	Shiny blueberry - <i>Vaccinium myrsinites</i>
Blackgum – <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Darrow's blueberry - <i>Vaccinium darrowii</i>
Wild sweet William – <i>Phlox</i> spp.	Baldwin's yellow eyed grass - <i>Xyris baldwiniana</i> *
Longleaf pine – <i>Pinus palustris</i>	

After touring a sandhill near Mars Hill Church and lunch in the shade near the church we walked the trails and found:

Sandhill milkweed - <i>Asclepias humistrata</i>	Sand post oak – <i>Quercus margarettae</i>
American beautyberry - <i>Callicarpa americana</i> *	Dollar leaf -- <i>Rhynchosia reniformis</i>
New Jersey tea - <i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	Twining Snoutbean – <i>Rhynchosia tomentosa</i>
Bull nettle - <i>Cnidocolus stimulosus</i> *	Little bluestem – <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
Flowering dogwood - <i>Cornus florida</i>	Saw palmetto - <i>Serenoa repens</i>
Prairie clover / summer farewell – <i>Dalea pinnata</i>	Sarsaparilla vine - <i>Smilax pumila</i>
Yankee weed - <i>Eupatorium compositifolium</i>	Sweet goldenrod – <i>Solidago odora</i>
Carolina Jessamine - <i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Patterson daffodil - <i>Stylisma pickeringii</i> *
Roundleaf bluet - <i>Houstonia procumbens</i>	Southern daffodil - <i>Stylisma humistrata</i> *
Gopher apple – <i>Licania michauxii</i>	Poison oak – <i>Toxicodendron pubescens</i>
Prickly pear – <i>Opuntia humifusa</i>	Tree huckleberry – <i>Vaccinium arboreum</i>
Devil wood - <i>Osmanthus americanus</i>	Elliott's blueberry - <i>Vaccinium elliotii</i>
Longleaf pine - <i>Pinus palustris</i>	Shiny blueberry - <i>Vaccinium myrsinites</i>
Bluejack oak – <i>Quercus incana</i>	Deerberry - <i>Vaccinium staminium</i>
Turkey oak – <i>Quercus laevis</i>	

The MEEA and the MNPS Elect Presidents

Laura Beiser has finished a stellar term as the MEEA president and turned the president's notebook over to Terri Jacobson. During her term she led MEEA through two outstanding conferences, one at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Moss Point and the second at the Mississippi Natural Science Museum in Jackson. A hallmark of her presidency was a partnership with the Mississippi Envirothon that involved training Envirothon teachers during conference sessions. During the banquet at the Cabot Lodge she was presented with a plaque by Dr. John Guyton, representing the awards committee, for the vision of her presidency and her leadership.



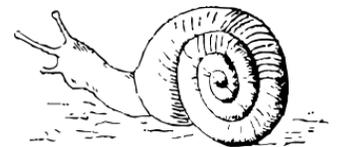
Terri Jacobson is a wildlife biologist/outreach specialist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service Mississippi Ecological Services Field Office in Jackson. Connecting children to nature is very important to Terri and one way she accomplish this service directive is leading summer camps. Through a partnership with Millsaps College in Jackson, she is an instructor for two summer camps for children, Nature Detectives and Birding for Kids. Two other camps for which she is a developer and staff member are Mississippi State University's Bug and Plant Camp and the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Camp. Terri also leads Private Eye in Mississippi and serves on the Clinton Community Nature Center Board. She has indicated an objective of her presidency will be to encourage outdoor classrooms.

At the Fall MNPS meeting Dr. Mac Alford, Assistant Professor and Curator of the Herbarium at the University of Southern Mississippi turned the presidency over to Dr. Lelia Kelly, Consumer Horticulture Specialist and State leader of the Master Gardener Program with the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Lelia has suggested landscape sustainability and environmental stewardship are growing interest in Mississippi and very appropriate for the MNPS. She is also interested in revitalizing regional affiliates of the Mississippi Native Plant Society.

Observing Nature = Making Connections: A Book Review by Terri Jacobson

We can connect to nature at different levels. But all nature connections require us to take time for observation. To make the best, most lasting connections, one must slow down, taking the time to really look and listen; to use our four senses; to look closely, really examine something up close; and to spend more observation time, to take mental or written notes; to wonder, ask questions, hypothesize, propose answers and find answers through research and experimentation or investigation.

The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating by Elisabeth Tova Bailey is a book about making nature connections. It is about one person connecting to one snail. It is about illness, isolation, and discovery and insight. It has mystery, sex, poetry, and science. One reviewer on Amazon summed it up by saying the book is about healing. I say this book is a journey.



A co-worker lent this book to me and I am glad she did. This is a book that you may want to rush to finish but I suggest that you read it unhurried to appreciate the words and imagery; to savor each chapter.

I love this small book! I learned more about gastropods and in particular I learned about the woodland snail, *Neohelix albolabris*. I enjoyed reading what the old naturalists wrote about snails. Did you know that the direction of the spiral of the snail's shell may coil either clockwise or counter clockwise? And that it is easier for some spiraled snails to mate? Did you know that snails have teeth? Lots of teeth! That a snail chewing on a piece of paper will leave a rectangular shaped hole? I have a greater appreciation for snails now. In next summer's Nature Detectives Camp, we will take a closer look at snails, I can promise you that. Hopefully all the campers will hear the sound of a wild snail eating.

I plan to purchase several books to give as gifts for friends and family. Sharing this true story is one way to help others learn about the marvels of nature and maybe inspire them to step outside to make their own discoveries. Although written for adults, it would be appropriate for middle and high school aged students too. Elisabeth Tova Bailey's book won the John Burroughs natural history medal in 2011.

Right and Left-handed Marine Snail Shells by Dr. John Guyton

Snail shells can be right or left-handed. To tell the difference, hold them vertically with the apex of the whorl up and the aperture or siphon canal toward you. If the siphon canal is on the right such that your right hand could naturally enter it wrapping around the inside, it is a right-handed, or dextral, shell and vice versa for a left-handed, or sinistral, shell. Left-handed forms are very rare and considered by many to be lucky.



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Coastal Plains MNPS meets every 4th Monday in Gulfport. Contact President Edie Dreher at 228-864-2775 or mail to 100 24th St., Gulfport, MS 39507.

Join MNPS, MEEA or both!

MS Environmental Education Alliance

eeinmississippi.org

The Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance conducts an annual fall conference and occasional workshops.

MNP&EE

Mississippi Native Plants & Environmental Education is the quarterly newsletter of the Mississippi Native Plant Society & the Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance.

Deadline for Articles
Winter - November 10
Spring - February 10
Summer - May 10

MEEA's Website: eeinmississippi.org

MPPS Website: mississippinativeplantsociety.org

THE MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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