



WILDFLOWER NEWS

'Growing Nature's Garden'

JANUARY 2020



© Manna Parseyan

High bush cranberry, *Viburnum opulus* subsp. *trilobum* var. *americanum*

From Your Editor:

Happy New Year!

Welcome to the Wildflower News for January. We here at the Edmonton Native Plant Society wish you and your family a happy, healthy and productive 2020 with as much time spent enjoying and learning about our native plants as possible!

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LETTER:

Enjoy the newsletter; just posted it to our Devon Nature Club Facebook page. Love the way it features all seasons.
Karen

Thank you, Karen. We're really happy to know you are sharing it!

EVENTS - if you would like us to list your event that involves native flowers, please email us at engedmonton@gmail.com by the 20th of the previous month.

Edmonton Nature Club Plant Study Group:

Monday, January 13 - Chris Saunders will give a presentation entitled *A Strategic Approach to Weed Management in the Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary* and investigating new options for the biological control of Canada thistle, *Cirsium arvense*. Chris Saunders is a retired member of the City of Edmonton's Integrated Pest Management team and a board member of the Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary.

Monday, February 3 - "Understanding the nature of our trees" by arborist, Darren Dellezay.

Monday, March 9 - City of Edmonton ecological planners will provide an update on some of the City's "green" initiatives, including the Ribbon of Green, the new City Plan, and wildlife monitoring.

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Room L116, The King's University, 9125 50 Street.

Admission: Free, although membership in the Edmonton Nature Club is encouraged

NEWS... If you have a news item involving native plants that you would like posted, please email us at engedmonton@gmail.com

Wildflower Tour to Southwest Australia by Patsy Cotterill. Photos by P. Cotterill.

Our winter landscapes, clean and crisp, brown-grey or snowy-white, have their own beauty. But if we want some colour at this time of year we need to turn to indoor plants – or, flower photos from exotic places!

Here are a few photos from a September wildflower tour I took with Elisabeth Beaubien in southwestern Australia. All are taken from just a couple of roadside stops to view wildflowers on the way north from Perth to Cervantes. We were driving through the scrub plant communities of the Swan River coastal plain.



Firewood Banksia, *Banksia menziesii*.

Banksias are in the Proteaceae, a large and prominent family in Australia. The genus is named after Sir Joseph Banks who collected the first known (to Europeans) members of the genus in Botany Bay in 1770. The flowering spike consists of numerous tiny flowers only some of which get pollinated. I noticed that the large, woody, characteristic fruiting cones are now being used as craft ornaments in the tourist trade!



Common smokebush, *Conospermum stoechadis*.

Conospermum is another genus in the Proteaceae with clusters of small, tubular, often hairy, white or blue flowers. The smokebushes were an instant favourite with many of us on the wildflower tour.



Red-and-green kangaroo paw, *Anigozanthos manglesii*.

This kangaroo paw is the floral emblem of Western Australia. It is in the family Haemodoraceae and along with other members of the genus is widely cultivated, with spectacular displays in Kings Park gardens, Perth.



Common catspaw, *Anigozanthos humilis* (probably).

Anigozanthos species are pollinated by birds.



Conostylis species are known as cone flowers, although some species bear the name cottonheads, and are also in the Haemodoraceae.

They are endemic to (i.e., only occur in) southwestern Australia. have identified this specimen as *C. teretifolia*.



Geraldton waxflower, *Chamelaucium uncinatum*, was another of my personal favourites.

Bushes were absolutely covered with these small, rose-like flowers while we were there. Waxflowers are in the family Myrtaceae, another large Australian family including *Eucalyptus*, *Melaleuca*, and tea-trees (*Leptospermum* species).



Purple enamel orchid, *Elythranthera brunonis*.

Here we tend to associate orchids with wet places, where soil fungi permit their growth, but in southwestern Australia they seem to spring up in dry ground everywhere amid the bushes. This shiny specimen was no exception.



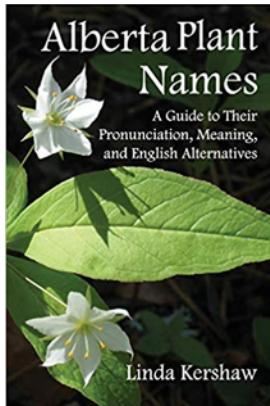
Likewise, the sundews (*Drosera* species; family Droseraceae) appear to grow in dry soils, although it is possible that the ground is seasonally wet.

Note that the glandular-hairy leaves are borne on slender stalks along with the conspicuously large flowers, not in rosettes as in our species. I have tentatively identified this plant as pink rainbow, *D. menziesii*.

Many of southwestern Australia's shrubs and some herbaceous plants are cultivated for ornament, not surprisingly. It would be wonderful if we could grow some of the same species, and likely somebody has tried, but I'm guessing we would need the dry, impoverished soils and likely the heat of Western Australia in order for them to thrive!

The region celebrates its wildflowers and has made a tourist industry out of them.

***Alberta Plant Names: A Guide to Their Pronunciation, Meanings and English alternatives* by Linda Kershaw** - book review by Cherry Dodd.



I am a gardener, not a botanist, and it seems that Linda Kershaw wrote this book just for me and other gardeners and naturalists intimidated by Latin names. I have always wanted to learn more about this “foreign language,” but never took the time to study a seemingly difficult subject.

I found *Alberta Plant Names* to be a dense but delightful book that cleared up many mysteries. I dove in and couldn't quit looking up interesting facts. This book is worth having for reference, if only for the small section that uses a fictitious Scottish clan to explain the difference between family, genus and species!

I describe this book as dense because there are only six pages of text. The rest consists of reference tables, tightly packed with information spilling out across the page. You can find out how to pronounce a plant name in both its commonly accepted English pronunciation (English Latin) and Reconstructed Ancient Roman Latin. Talk about impressing your friends!

From the set of tables entitled “Pronunciation and Derivation,” I discovered that I had been pronouncing the name of one of my favourite flowers, giant hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*), incorrectly all these years. *Agastache* is pronounced “a- GA-sta-kay.” Who knew! I also found out that the word is derived from two Greek words meaning “very much” and “spike,” as in many flower spikes. *Foeniculum* is Latin for sweet-smelling like hay.

The Pronunciation and Derivation section includes both genus and species names and gives an explanation of where the names originated. A name's origin could be a place, a plant or a person's name. It could be derived from Latin, Greek or Latin plus Greek. I had no idea that so many native species have been named for botanists and naturalists. Flodman's thistle (*Cirsium flodmanii*) is named for J.H. Flodman, the teacher and naturalist who discovered the plant for science. The plant's species name has -ii added to Flodman, which indicates “belonging to.” However, to confuse things, sometimes only one -i is used to indicate a species name. If the botanist that plant is named for is a woman, like Edith M. Farr, her name has -iae at the end (as in *Salix farriae*, known in the vernacular as Farr's willow).

The next section of tables, “Alphabetical Scientific Names”, allowed me to look up *Agastache foeniculum* and find out that the suggested common name was blue giant-hyssop and one of the accepted VASCAN (Vascular Plants of Canada national database) names was the one I have always used, giant hyssop. VASCAN and I don't always agree, so it was nice to see that we did on this occasion!

I looked up *Stellaria* and could instantly see which species were starwort, even though the common name is often chickweed. It's hard to get a gardener interested in growing starwort when it is called chickweed. The last set of tables puts the common name first so if you only have the common name you can find out the Latin name.

There were a couple of things missing that I had hoped to see. The first was longer lists of common names. The book lists only two for each species. Many species have at least four common names and it is very helpful to know them all. I would also like to see plants labelled as native or non-native.

The book is self-published and listed on Amazon (in case you can't find it in your local bookstore). It holds a lot of surprises and great nuggets of information. Definitely worth reading.

This article was originally published in The Blazing Star, the North American Native Plant Society quarterly publication, nanps.org

Websites of the Month:

Propagation Protocols

If you are seriously into growing native plants from seed, this site from *Restoration, Nurseries, and Genetics Resources* offers many techniques. It requires a bit of searching but the information offered from various growers is excellent. https://npn.rngr.net/npn/propagation/protocols/renderNPNProtocolListing?b_start:int=3030&-C=

Banff conservationist nominated for international award

Local Banff conservationist, co-founder of Y2Y and Nature Needs Half, Harvey Locke has been nominated for one of the world's leading conservation awards. <https://www.rmotoday.com/banff/banff-conservationist-nominated-for-international-award-1859904?fbclid=IwAR030zccjc5ULUkugnCPry9Zd7i-asVetiSyYZRZMvmqEY6Y-mLS541WOx8>

Lifetime ENPS Membership

You can now become an Edmonton Native Plant Society member for life. Memberships are \$20 and can be purchased by emailing enpgmembership@gmail.com or visit one of our booths at plant events in your area.

Aims of the Edmonton Native Plant Society:

- ❖ Promote knowledge of the Edmonton area native plants.
- ❖ Conserve our native plant species and their habitats.
- ❖ Preserve native plant species and habitat for the enjoyment of present and future generations.
- ❖ Educate individuals, business and local governments about native plants.

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Cherry Dodd, editor

Judith Golub, publisher

www.edmontonnativeplantgroup.org



Patsy Cotterill

Thorny buffaloberry, *Shepherdia argentea*, retains its fruits through winter