



Manna Parseyan

False mountain-willow, *Salix pseudomonticola*, in Whitemud Park

From your editor:

Welcome to the Wildflower News for April. Fingers crossed ENPS will be holding at least a couple of seed and plant sales this coming season. Notifications will be in upcoming issues of Wildflower News, on the ENPS Facebook page, and on our website, when dates and locations have been determined.

We really trust our readers and all our volunteers to adhere to the recommended actions to protect ourselves, our families and friends, and all others, and prevent the spread of COVID19 and variants.

Let's keep ourselves healthy, and go out and look for those encouraging signs of spring - the pussywillows, aspen, beaked hazelnut flowers? Crocus, coltsfoot pushing up? Three-flowered avens showing new spring leaves?

In This Issue:

Native Plants for Local Gardens

Events

- 30 Apr - 3 May - City Nature Challenge 2021

News

- First blooms of spring
- Big Island Provincial Park?

Articles

- Edmonton Willow Season 2020
- Restoration – Nature and the Uncertainty Principle: Part One
- Rambunctious Native Wildflowers

Websites of the Month

Native Plants for Local Gardens - seedlings grown by a few members of ENPS.

From Patrick Kyle: The *Geum triflorum* (L) were planted on the March 17th and were up on the 25th. The *Liatris ligulistylis* (R) were planted on March 18th and were up on the 27th.



From Manna Parseyan: Photos taken March 27. Meadow arnica, *Arnica chamissonis*; smooth fleabane, *Erigeron glabellus*; and northern bedstraw, *Galium boreale*.



From Liz Deleeuw: Photos taken March 25. Common tall sunflower, *Helianthus nuttallii*, wet cold stratified and planted in March; wild blue flax, *Linum lewisii*, wet cold stratified and planted in March; wild bergamot, beebalm, *Monarda fistulosa*, no stratification, planted in February.



So exciting to see this exuberant new growth! Well done Patrick, Manna, and Liz, and thanks for sharing some results of your labours.

Letters:

Thanks for the March Wildflower News (and all the other issues I've received). Very interesting newsletter, which must take ages to assemble. In the March issue, I was particularly interested in the Vetches piece. I didn't know that the tufted vetch was non-native, though I certainly know it as very aggressive, especially via rhizomes which spread it throughout our yard! Sigh.

Best, Mike Gibbins 🌱

I hope you're doing well. I just wanted to say great job on the newsletter and keep up the great work!
Faisel Ahmed

I enjoyed your article about vetch plants. I am learning more about them as I explore the beautiful wildflowers at my property near Elk Island Park. Attached is a photo I took of plants there.

Cheers,
Diana

WN: How lovely that you have purple pea vines, Lathyrus venosus!



WN: Thank you all for letting us know that you enjoy the Wildflower News and find articles of interest to you. It's great to get feedback!

EVENTS... *If you have events involving native plants that you would like posted, please email us at engedmonton@gmail.com*

30 Apr - 3 May - City Nature Challenge 2021 - Upcoming bioblitz in the greater Edmonton region.

Greg Pohl, a local biologist, involved with the Alberta Lepidopterists' Guild, has set up an Edmonton-area node for **City Nature Challenge 2021**, an international bioblitz event where cities take part in some friendly competition to see who can observe the most species, and get the most participants, all over the world. The timing isn't great for a northern city - **30 April to 3 May**; it was set up by people in southern California. But it's still a great opportunity to encourage people to get out and enjoy nature, and compile some valuable data at the same time.

Participation is via iNaturalist - all people need to do is take a photo of any organism with their digital camera or cell phone, and upload it to the iNaturalist site. Anyone with an account on the site can upload observations, and participate in identifying their own and others' observations. If you're familiar with iNaturalist, the Edmonton-area City Nature Challenge 2021 "project" is here: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2021-edmonton-metro-area>

Any observation in the **greater Edmonton area (including St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, Sherwood Park, Nisku, Leduc, Beaumont, and Devon)** that is uploaded between 30 April and 3 May 2021 will automatically be included in the tally of results.

If you're not familiar with iNaturalist, you can find more info about it here: <https://www.inaturalist.org>.

It's a fantastic free resource that turns naturalists' observations into valuable data for researchers, and keeps track of your own checklists. Note that Greg also set up a more general iNaturalist "project" covering all observations in the metro Edmonton area, for all dates, not just for that weekend. So far there have been almost 16,000 observations of 2227 species, by 1445 different people, captured by that project: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/metro-edmonton-biodiversity>

If you'd like more general information about the worldwide City Nature Challenge, you can find it here: <https://citynaturechallenge.org/>

Please help spread the word about City Nature Challenge 2021 to your naturalists' group, and consider participating as individuals or as an organisation. It may not be possible to plan large public events during the bioblitz, but it's still a great way for individuals to get out and enjoy nature safely and contribute biodiversity information.

*Note there is a second more locally-driven bioblitz later in the summer, the **Edmonton BiodiverCity Challenge**, tentatively set for **June 10-13, 2021**. Watch for information about that event as it develops.*

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

First blooms of spring - To reinforce the idea that spring really is on its way, and will soon reach us up here! So heartening to see. *With thanks to both Annette and Dan for giving WN permission to use their photos.*

Annette Le Faive posted photos of a prairie crocus that she observed at Bowmont Park, Calgary, on March 23, 2021. It seems Annette may have seen Alberta's very first prairie crocus, *Pulsatilla nuttalliana*, to show some petals in 2021 for those interested in following bloom times.





From a Y2Y tweet: Ki'piaapi (or 'soon old man' in Blackfoot language) "makes a brief appearance in the spring and represents the warmth and beauty of the yellow sun at its heart, the grace of the purple mountains all around and a heavy fur robe to keep warm."

From a little further south, Dan Johnson came across some moss phlox, *Phlox hoodii*, already flowering in the Oldman River valley, Lethbridge, on March 24, 2021.



* * * * *

Big Island Provincial Park? by Patsy Cotterill

Readers will be aware of the provincial government's recent announcement of plans for the creation of Big Island Provincial Park in southwest Edmonton's river valley. In my opinion, the 68-hectare area of floodplain is too small and too environmentally sensitive to accommodate a provincial park which implies considerable human recreational usage, especially if it involves a campground. The area would fare better environmentally as a natural area in combination with the adjacent Woodbend lands, as originally proposed by the Edmonton River Valley Conservation Society, or else under a private land conservancy. Use should be confined to nature trails and minimal facilities as at Bunchberry Meadows, with scope for Indigenous land uses.

The area includes an old oxbow channel with a marsh, wetlands, balsam poplar forest, open areas, and a very weedy foreshore. It requires considerable rehabilitation from past disturbance and continuing unregulated use, which is best done in the absence of the public. Public consultation on the plans is to take place in 2022.



Edmonton Willow Season 2020 Pictorial presentation of willow observations carried out by a team of willow enthusiasts in Whitemud North and Wagner Natural Area in 2020. Compiled by Jiri Novak, 2021.

Patsy Cotterill and Elisabeth Beaubien started tagging and tracking willows in Whitemud North Park in 2014. Varina Crisfield joined them for one season in 2015. An article in *Iris*, The Alberta Native Plant Council Newsletter, No. 77 November 2015, describes their explorations “Willow Watching Along Whitemud Creek, North Saskatchewan River Valley, Edmonton”. (https://anpc.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/IRIS_77_Nov_2015_FINAL_Email.pdf) A few visits to the “willows” were also undertaken in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Patsy Cotterill then located and tagged more willow specimens in Wagner NA and more frequent willow watching resumed in 2019, this time including new observers Manna Parseyan and Jiri Novak.

Far more observations were done and the respective data was recorded in 2020.

The team observed 13 species (49 tagged specimens) throughout the growing season and took 681 photos depicting phenophases of the tracked specimens.

There were 28 observations done in Whitemud North from 16-Apr to 14-Oct and 27 observations done in Wagner NA from 19-Apr to 14-Oct. That represents 55 trips in total although not every trip was attended by everyone.

Photographs were taken by Patsy Cotterill (PC), Jiri Novak (JN), and by Manna Parseyan (MP).

The complete set of observations for the 13 species involved in the study can be found on the Alberta Native Plant Council’s website: <https://anpc.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Edmonton-Willow-Season-2020.pdf>



Restoration – Nature and the Uncertainty Principle: Part One by Patsy Cotterill

In the early days of our organization, around the turn of the century, we called ourselves the Edmonton Naturalization Group (ENG), modelling our name on the term the City of Edmonton used when it planted native trees and shrubs in city beds, the better it hoped, to reduce the management costs associated with normal horticultural maintenance. The term has retained currency and generally means “artificially introducing native or natural species into a mix of horticultural and other exotic vegetation.” However, technically speaking, naturalization refers to the natural process whereby exotic species (or people) become established in a foreign land. This is the exact opposite of what we in the ENG were trying to do, which was to re-instate native species in their own land (the botanical equivalent of reconciliation!). We changed our name to the Edmonton Native Plant Group, and in 2017 became the Edmonton Native Plant Society (ENPS). Our aim of learning how to propagate native plants for transplantation into sites lacking a native flora or with an impoverished one is a vital aspect of restoration. Nevertheless, we saw our early relationship with nature as mostly one of collusion, rather than of the collision and uncertainty that seems characteristic of restoration practice.

Native Plant Gardening and the Seed Challenge

Our ENG sprang from the fact that in the 1990s Edmonton was in the midst of explosive suburban growth. This followed a huge annexation of undeveloped land in the northeast in 1982, with the result that pockets of remnant aspen parkland were slated for destruction. We somehow got ourselves a reputation for salvaging native plants from the path of the bulldozer. We replanted them in gardens, schoolyards, and the Oldman Creek Nursery on Clover Bar Road, where the City kindly allocated us growing space. Our idea was to encourage the public to grow native plants in their yards as a small measure to reduce the double whammy impact on the native populations, loss of habitat to development and their replacement by horticultural species in suburban gardens.

For the most part the transplants flourished in the similar fertile loam soils from which they had been taken and soon we had enough to give away; we could also harvest the seeds they produced, selling the surplus to the public. This is where our tinkering with nature got a little more challenging. How could we guarantee the seeds we sold would grow? We were up against the phenomenon of seed dormancy (a natural hedge-betting strategy to ensure that seeds don’t germinate at the onset of winter or all at the same time). And we found ourselves contemplating seed characteristics

such as viability and longevity. As Cherry Dodd puts it anthropomorphically: seeds have minds of their own! They don't, but they do have chemistry, which we poorly understand. Nor could we be sure that if our seeds germinated they would thrive and develop into transplantable plants. Nevertheless, we developed some experience with the different species' seed behaviour and are able to offer a selection of species that are relatively easy to grow. It would have been helpful if we had been able to set up a system of obtaining feedback from our purchasers and growers, e.g., batch A of species X from site Y collected on date x-x-x gave Z percentage germination and gave n number of transplantable plants, but this would have required a recording system beyond our capacity as volunteers.

By combining a search of the literature with our growing experience (no pun intended!) we were able to extend our range of both seed and plant offerings by using the technique of cold, moist stratification (placing seeds in a moist compost-sand mix in the fridge for 4-6 weeks) before sowing. We continue to sell seeds to people who want the satisfaction of growing their own or starting out conservatively with a small investment, but we generally feel happier when we sell or give away well-grown plants that will have better odds of establishing.

Looking back, I think we could say that members of the Edmonton Native Plant Society have combined gardening, nursery and landscaping expertise with general botanical knowledge to achieve modest success as a consultancy on native plants for gardens and small urban spaces; we are also a small-scale supplier of native plugs and seeds. We have made a small contribution to ecologist Douglas Tallamy's vision of converting much more man-made space into natural communities supporting food webs and ecosystem services, his idea of a "Homegrown National Park."

But could we be doing more? Growing native plants in gardens, using man-made landscaping designs, could be considered just another form of gardening, albeit using different species and helping to preserve natural biodiversity. Could we actually contribute to the re-creation of natural plant communities with their natural biodiversity and ecosystem function, in other words, to restoration? Clearly, operating on a landscape scale is beyond the capacity of a small volunteer society acting alone, but in collaboration with partners? The ENPS has already been approached on a couple of occasions for advice on City-initiated small-scale restorations. However, this is where the real uncertainty intrudes. Firstly, the expectations (or specifications) for the restoration may be unrealistic, determined by authorities who have little knowledge of restoration themselves. Secondly, this is where, in seeking to emulate nature itself, one enters into scientific *terra incognita*. The unknowns and variables are numerous, and good results cannot be guaranteed!



Prairie meadow at Little Mountain Natural Area, ca. 1999

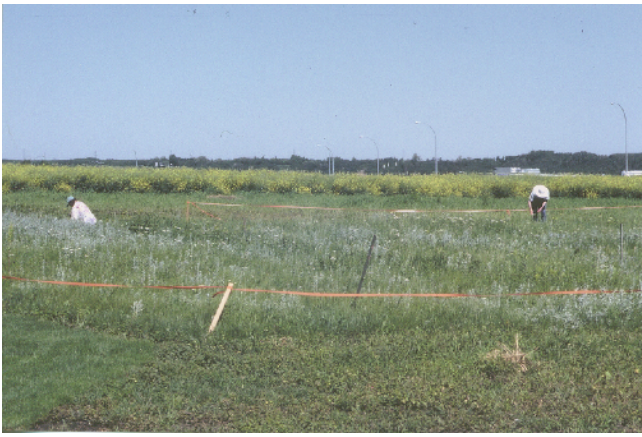


Saline hollow at Little Mountain

Little Mountain – Classic Restoration Failure

In fact, in its very early days the Group embarked on a salvage/restoration of sorts. I forget the details now, but by 1999 our strenuous and well-publicized efforts to save an aspen parkland remnant called Little Mountain – where the Brintnell neighbourhood in northeast Edmonton now stands – had failed, and the area was being bulldozed and burnt. Somehow, we managed to engineer a transplant of the prairie sod to an abandoned, recently cultivated field at the Waste Management Centre on Meridian Street. We were warned that it would fail, on the grounds that the sod cutter we employed would not cut the roots deep enough. This likely was not our biggest problem, however. Looking back, how naïve we were to think we could recreate, on a flat field, full of fertilizer, the plant diversity of Little Mountain, with all its habitat niches, its slopes and seeps, its saline soils (which is why it had not been cultivated in the first place), its mature mixedwood stands and wet meadows. The most aggressive species in the sod, those that are well-adapted to colonization, the prairie sage (*Artemisia ludoviciana*), the yarrow, the goldenrods and the Kentucky bluegrass, quickly took over, smothering all else. We tended the site for a few years but then abandoned it, accepting that Little Mountain's diversity had been finally lost. (It was amazing how quickly the original site went downhill, even before the brush piles were burnt. The forest species such a bunchberry and twinflower disappeared within days of the trees being cut down.) The whole experience was an endorsement of the maxim that the first principle of conservation

is preservation in situ. (A “State of the Prairie Technical Report” published by the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum (PCF) in September 2019 noted a loss of native cover in Edmonton between 1990 and 2010 of 8%, using one set of data.)



Working in the Little Mountain transplant site at Clover Bar, ca. 2005



Native transplants in a cleared area at Nisku Prairie, June 2014

Local prairie management and restoration

Since then, our restoration activities have been mainly associated with management activities in protected areas. At Fort Saskatchewan Prairie, the City of Fort Saskatchewan’s reserve on a 13.5 hectare stretch of sandy terrain paralleling the North Saskatchewan River, we try to beat back the smooth brome and other weeds and then plant native plant plugs in the newly cleared ground. Quite often they grow, but we haven’t succeeded in forming the same consolidated prairie sod as in some of the more natural parts of the prairie (usually on the south-facing slopes). Every year I ask myself whether our efforts are worth it; whether in fact the Prairie would do just as well without us. In fact, I wonder if we are actually doing harm, tracking in an extraordinary variety of weeds on our boots and gardening equipment or unearthing exotic treasure from the seedbank with our diggings. The same applies to Nisku Prairie, a much wetter prairie on clay loam, which we manage as volunteers for the Alberta Native Plant Council. Could we be in fact arresting natural successional development and is our continual disturbance actually reducing ecosystem resiliency? One begins to feel like an unqualified doctor tampering fatally with a patient who, although diseased, is still alive! I suspect that the good prairie patches that remain – and spur our continuing efforts despite lack of sound evidence that we are making a difference – do so because soil, topography and community conditions permit them to repel the invasion of non-natives. Yet, and here again the uncertainty principle kicks in, there is no evidence that such prairie remnants in proximity to human habitation can repair themselves without human intervention. Some land stewards do not appear to realize this. Lack of knowledge and application of appropriate management adds up to an uncertain future for grassland or aspen parkland remnants.

Restoration province-wide

By the 1990s rehabilitation of public land in the Boreal Natural Region of Alberta was well under way, directed towards the reclamation of degraded land occupied by mines, oilsands and oil wells, even of cutlines to improve habitat for endangered woodland caribou. Along with policy and regulations to mandate this, the provincial government also stipulated that reclamation/restoration should be done with native species where possible. This spurred research collaborations between academia, industry and government to provide plant stock, particularly forest and wetland species, that could establish in early successional conditions. Around the same time prairie restoration efforts were also taking place in the southern parts of the Prairie Provinces, mainly carried out by coalitions of non-profit organizations, agricultural (rangeland) and government partners. Ecologist John P. Morgan stands out as achieving considerable success in recreating tallgrass prairie in southeastern Manitoba. He worked on an agricultural scale, using farm machinery to cultivate, sow and then harvest fields of native grasses.

In Saskatchewan the Prairie Conservation and Action Plan (PCAP; two of our ENPS members spoke at their conference in February this year) involves some 30 agencies representing producers, industries, provincial and federal governments and non-profits working to restore prairie habitats and conserve species at risk. The Alberta PCF (www.albertapcf.org) liaises with them on similar goals.

However, in the rough fescue grasslands of the Central Parkland it seems that restoration has been less successful. Botanist and ecologist Cheryl Bradley, speaking at the Alberta Native Plant Council conference in 2003 noted that “Rough fescue grasslands, once disturbed and/or invaded by non-native species, are less likely to be restored to [a] natural condition than other grassland types.” She gives the example of an oil well site in Foothills Fescue Parkland still dominated by smooth brome and Kentucky bluegrass after 22 years. Smooth brome and Kentucky bluegrass

are the major constituents of both Fort Saskatchewan and Nisku Prairies. Some research literature suggests that eliminating these two invasives is likely a lost cause.

Urban and peri-urban restoration in Central Parkland

Most germane to our experience is what is happening regarding restoration in the densely settled Central Parkland region of Alberta where we live. My impression is, not much. Most of the land in this natural subregion is privately owned, so government regulations for public lands do not apply. The economic factor to spur prairie health as in the rangelands of southern Alberta and the foothills is lacking. The priorities of municipalities lie elsewhere. In the case of rural municipalities, for example, Leduc County which owns Nisku Prairie, it is agriculture, and for the City of Fort Saskatchewan, land owner of Fort Saskatchewan Prairie, it is in providing parks services for people. Even the provincial government's Natural Areas seem to attract little restorative effort as opposed to simple maintenance of infrastructure such as trails. The cities of St Albert and Calgary appear to be more restoration-minded; in the latter case it has had some success in the popular trend towards creating habitat for pollinators. I struggle to think of any successful restoration attempts in Edmonton. Management plans do exist for several of Edmonton's natural areas, but I am not aware of any in operation. The PCF's "State of the Prairie" technical report of September 2019 suggested that attention should focus on urban areas where human exposure to prairies is greatest (and necessary for development of a conservation ethic), recommending "A project tailored to better understand the state and change of native ecosystems within urban boundaries and the implications of expanding urban boundaries on native ecosystems..." One can hope that such a project will materialize and eventually lead to greater interest and investment in both conservation and restoration. However, I believe that significant change in this direction will require a combination of several factors: political will and therefore budgets, more partners, more expertise, and a better developed culture of stewardship and ecological volunteerism among our citizens.

My guess is that both the municipal landowners of Nisku and Fort Saskatchewan Prairies are happy to let ENPS garden on their properties because we provide some free (or cheap) weed control. Maintaining natural, resilient prairie is not their main goal, the land itself having little value in traditional economic accounting. To maintain grasslands it is necessary to emulate the cycles of fire and grazing that in the past took place naturally or were caused by Indigenous peoples' burning of the prairies. Yet neither land owner is willing to countenance prescribed burns. They are dismissed reflexively as threats to housing (a residential development in the case of Fort Saskatchewan Prairie, acreages at Nisku). Lack of these natural forces, replaceable now by management simulations, makes the long-term future of these remnant grasslands in settled areas very uncertain.



Fort Saskatchewan Prairie looking north. The best natural prairie patches exist on top of the knolls and south-facing slopes of the reserve, which has well-drained sandy soils. However, smooth brome rules in the moister hollows and north-facing slopes, and is difficult to get rid of. More on smooth brome in a future article.

In part two of this article, I will explore some of the further uncertainties of restoration, as revealed by research, look at some relatively local restoration projects, and touch on changing ideas with respect to restoration.

References

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https://www.albertapcf.org/rsu_docs/state-of-the-prairietechnical-report_final-including-summary.pdf

Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum. www.albertapcf.org Based out of Lethbridge.

John P. Morgan publications/presentations: https://www.pcap-sk.org/docs/15_nprwpresentatio/2014_NPRRW_John-Morgan-Full.pdf

A guide to small scale prairie restoration: how to grow your own patch of native prairie (for schools and community groups) No date, but probably around 2000. Contains some excellent references. https://www.npss.sk.ca/rsu_docs/documents/a-guide-to-small-scale-prairie-restoration-for-schools.pdf

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All photos by the author.

Rambunctious Native Wildflowers by Cherry Dodd

Rambunctious native wildflowers - this is just a kind way of saying "native, but invasive." However, sometimes invasive native plants might be just what you need in certain situations. If you live on an acreage and you want to naturalize, or you are in the city but need a patch of ground covered fast, then these plants are for you. All of these plants have some lovely features. Some are edible, some are just plain gorgeous, and some, like Fireweed, are edible and gorgeous. So let's get started.

There are a lot of plants in this category so this will be a two part article. The second part will be in the May issue.

Fireweed, *Chamaenerion angustifolium*



ENPS

When London, England, was bombed during the second world war, fireweed appeared and started growing in the ruins. No fireweed had been growing in the area before the bombing, it appeared as if by magic. In Canada the same magic often occurs after a forest fire.

The newly opened burnt areas are carpeted by fireweed. It seems to spring up out of nowhere. My theory is that there is a network of underground roots that can stay dormant for many years until conditions are once again favourable for growth. I do not know if this is true or not.

In your yard fireweed will spread by underground rhizomes into a large patch. It's a magnificent plant, often 2 meters or more tall and covered with spikes of

pink flowers from July on. The blooming season is long and can last into fall. Very often you can see flowers and ripe seeds on the same flower spike. This species will grow in sun or semi-shade and so is quite adaptable. Deer love fireweed, it's like candy to them. The plants that are browsed will grow right back as they are used to being eaten. If you are planting for bees, fireweed will attract leaf cutter bees. Look for oval circles in the leaves. Fireweed dies back to the ground in fall and appears as new shoots in the spring. These shoots are edible. They can be cooked like asparagus and are said to taste like asparagus. I haven't tried them, so if you have eaten them let me know your opinion. Eating the shoots would be a good way to control the size of the patch. Fireweed hasn't self-seeded in my yard but you can grow it if the seed is stratified.

Rhombic-leaved Sunflowers, *Helianthus pauciflorus* subsp. *subrhomboideus*



ENPS

One of my favourite plants. The seeds are a favourite with birds and a large patch of plants will attract goldfinches. These sunflowers are sturdy plants that are short for a sunflower, 60 cm to 120 cm tall. They are very fast spreaders.

One plant will become 10 plants the next year and the patch will have 100 or more plants by year three. However they are slowed down quite a bit if they have to compete with turf grass. The showy flowers are similar to the flowers of common tall sunflowers.

They are pure yellow with a darker centre and bloom from early August to September. If you want to tell the two species apart, look at the leaves.

Rhombic-leaved Sunflowers, true to their name, have fairly wide leaves

whereas Common Tall Sunflowers have narrow leaves. Rhombic-leaved sunflowers spread by rhizomes, and it is fairly pull out the long rhizomes if you have too many plants. Each plant has a corm that is easy to detach so they are no problem to transplant. This species doesn't often self-seed, but can be grown from seed. It's very adaptable and can be grown in any type of soil.

Fringed Loosestrife, *Lysimachia ciliata*

Fringed Loosestrife is a ground cover that is useful because it is so versatile. It's an attractive plant with glossy green foliage and small yellow bell-shaped flowers. The foliage turns a lovely bronze colour in fall. It's not low like most

J. Golub



ground covers; it is medium height, 30cm to 60cm, but like most ground covers it will keep expanding and form a dense cover of vegetation. It is happy to grow in wet areas, or with normal moisture, and in shade, or semi-shade or sun. It's useful for shade areas where not much else will grow.

It's easy to transplant, just cut out a plug from the patch and pop it into its new home. However it is hard to get rid of once it is established because it has a matted network of roots and rhizomes just under the surface, and it will regrow from a small piece of root. This seems like a defect, but this trait makes it a great choice for erosion control, especially around a pond or wetland. Fringed loosestrife doesn't self-seed. I haven't tried growing it from seed so I don't know if it is difficult. According to https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=LYC the seeds need light for germination.

Common Yarrow, *Achillea borealis*

C. Dodd



So many people have complained to me that their yarrow plants spread too quickly or self-seeded everywhere. However in my yard my one yarrow plant died out without producing seedlings. It seems that the same species can act differently in different peoples yards.

As ever, native plants always surprise me. You cannot take anything for granted, and I find that is such a refreshing change from garden cultivars which are all bred to behave in exactly the same way.

Yarrow does spread via short underground rhizomes and it can double its size in a year. The photo shows a yarrow plant at Bunchberry Meadows in the spring of 2020. There is only one flower stalk from last season, showing that the plant was small.

However, new shoots are marching out in all directions in readiness for the coming season. Yarrow is an attractive plant with slender fern-like foliage and white flat-topped flower clusters. If you come across a yarrow with pink flowers it is usually an escaped cultivar, or a cross between a native yarrow and a cultivar. Yarrow has a lot

medicinal uses and is an insecticide as well. Starlings line their nests with it to kill parasites. Yarrow does self-seed, but strangely, it is hard to grow from seed. It needs light and sometimes takes a while to germinate.

Websites of the Month:

Leslie Small brought this to our attention, and we thought you might like to see it too:

Northwest Profiles: "Swamp Farmers" (Wetland Conservators)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfjmA_t5dwc

Jillian and Cody Shearer have made it their business to grow and propagate plants used to create and restore wetlands. Located in southern Alberta, K&S growers help create areas for biodiversity and animal habitat while supporting the healthy watersheds of the region. <https://ksgrowers.com>

Podcasts titled *In Defense of Plants*. The host covers a very wide variety of topics, including native plants, some of which Natasha thought might be of interest to WN readers. <https://www.indefenseofplants.com/podcast>

From Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y):

Listening to the land A Blackfoot language revitalization project shows how land, plants, animals and language are deeply interconnected. Increasingly, conservation is recognizing the importance of not only learning from Indigenous communities and knowledge-holders, but also trusting Indigenous leadership. A recent example where conservation is seen through a different lens is one of Y2Y's 2020 partner grantees — the Blood Tribe Land Management's Land Conservation Relationships project in Alberta's Eastern Slopes.

<https://y2y.net/blog/listening-to-the-land/>

Guide brochure for conservation, culture and education Through this project, the [Naapi's Garden guide brochure](#) was created. The pamphlet shares information about Blackfoot Territory plants that are key to Blackfoot peoples' food systems, and that have deep relationships with grizzly bears and bison.

Alberta Native Plant Council Info-Email April 2021

Lots of courses, webinars, seminars and other events listed related to wetlands, botanicals, soils and more. There is also info on the May Plant Count, a tutorial on using iNaturalist and lots more:

<https://mailchi.mp/3e27d19ed203/anpc-info-email-october-1441259?e=9ebe3b8ef4>

Lifetime ENPS Membership

You can now become an Edmonton Native Plant Society member for life. Memberships are \$20 and can be purchased by emailing EdmontonNPSociety@gmail.com or by visiting one of our booths at future 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.

Please send compliments, concerns and complaints to engedmonton@gmail.com.

To unsubscribe, or subscribe, email engedmonton@gmail.com

Cherry Dodd, editor

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www.edmontonnativeplantgroup.org



Multiple eruptions of Meadow Blazingstars (*Liatris ligulistylis*) in Natasha Stair's kitchen! Planted March 10; photographed March 27.