



Ground cover in a native plant garden in Rio Terrace. Besides the purple-red wild sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), 10 other species are represented. Can you find them? 2024-09-14. Photo: P. Cotterill.

In this issue:

Events

News

- ENPS at Green Drinks
- Flowering Rush Discovered
- ENPS at the Front Yards in Bloom Awards
- Alberta Environment and Protected Areas Survey

Advocacy

- River Valley Planning Modernization – Again

Articles

- Plant Rescues: An Ethical Dilemma?

- Poison Ivy vs. Wild Sarsaparilla

Photo Essays

- Fruits of September

Editorial:

Somehow this issue has conspired to be about conservation, which is not always the most inspiring topic, albeit an important one (see the News piece on the Alberta Environment survey, as well as the articles on River Valley planning and the Plant Rescues). Fortunately, since the weather does not follow human schedules (such as getting back to school and work), there is still plenty of scope for outdoor pursuits this month: gardening, plant exchanges, seed harvesting and purchase, planning for next season, land management activities and visiting natural sites. Again, we welcome pictures and comments on your native gardening experiences this summer. Please email them to: editor@enps.ca

Events

Bunchberry Meadows Fall Closure and Foliage Tours

Join the Nature Conservancy of Canada, on one of their many guided tours on offer, to witness the dramatic fall colours of Bunchberry Meadow's tamarack stands and learn about the diverse features of this conservation area. (Bunchberry Meadows is closed to the general public September 16 to October 30, inclusive.)

[Read more...](#)



Tamarack (*Larix laricina*) in fall foliage along a trail in Bunchberry Meadows Conservation Area, 2023-10-09. Photo: P. Cotterill.

Lichens of Astotin (Elk Island): A Guided Tour

On Sunday, September 29, as part of the ANPC Central Alberta Plant Study Group (CAPSG), a field trip to Elk Island Park will be held to introduce attendees to the lichens found around Astotin Lake. This trip will be hosted by Lichenologists Diane Haughland and Jose Maloles.

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News

ENPS at Green Drinks

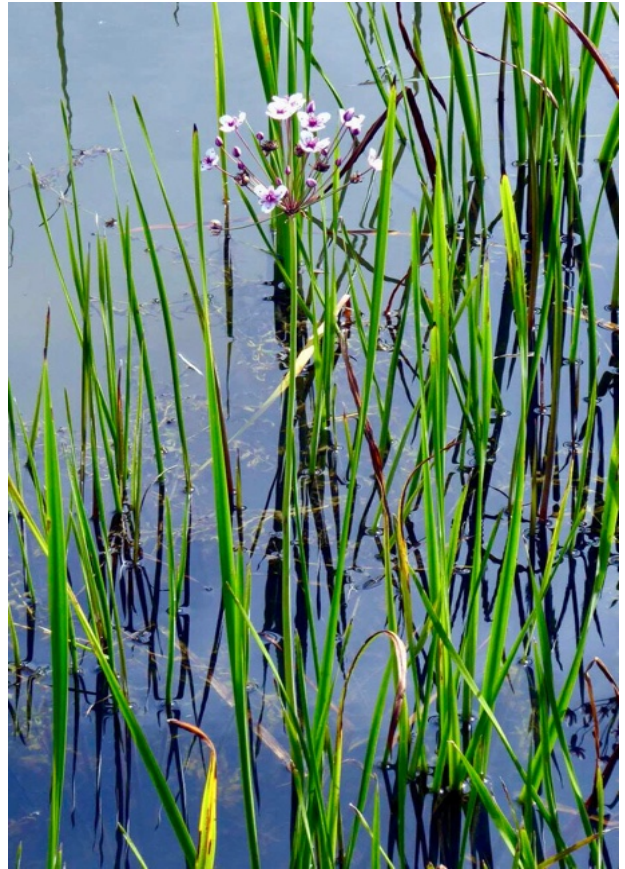
On September 9, the Edmonton Native Plant Society participated in "Green Drinks" at the Bent Stick Brewing Co., an event sponsored by **Waste Free Edmonton** and other local environmental advocacy groups. On the agenda was WFE's announcement of a new collaborative program aimed at encouraging Edmontonians to replace their lawns with pollinator-friendly plants. ENPS volunteers were on hand to provide information, and share links to the resources that we provide. A meeting of the various members of the coalition is planned for October and ENPS will be in attendance. Photo: S. Erkut.



Flowering Rush Discovered

Jiri Novak recently spotted this specimen of flowering rush, *Butomus umbellatus*, in the Sturgeon River at Gibbons Badlands Prairie on August 26. It is a Prohibited Noxious weed in Alberta. He reported it to the Alberta Invasive Species Council (AISC), who were already aware of infestations in the Sturgeon and elsewhere. If readers come across it, they should also report it to the AISC. It is not clear if attempts are being made to remove it, although Prohibited Noxious weeds are given priority for control in an attempt to exterminate them before they become established. For more information, check the following link:

https://abinvasives.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FDIP_FS-FloweringRush.pdf



Flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), in the Sturgeon River at Gibbons Badlands Prairie, 2024-08-26. Photo: J. Novak.

ENPS at the Front Yards in Bloom Awards

On September 12th, the Front Yards in Bloom awards were presented for the top three yards in six categories; balconies, edible yards, public spaces, tiny yards and natural yards. There were a number of other awards presented to volunteers that work to beautify the city through community, business and individual gardening efforts, such as community and pop-up gardens, partners-in-parks, urban forestry, winterscapes and invasive weed control, to name a few. It was also the 25th anniversary of the program, originally a collaboration between the Edmonton Horticultural Society, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the City of Edmonton. Kathleen Mpulubusi, ENPS Director and recently retired postal worker, gave a talk on the history of the program and how it has evolved over the last two decades. Mary-Jo Gurba-Flanagan, ENPS Director, and Kate Spencer, ENPS President, presented the awards for the natural yards category. Judges from ENPS helped narrow down the field for the natural yards category and the public voted on first, second and third places. ENPS also had an information table at the event, so we could encourage all the gardeners in attendance to add native plants to their yards. The awards were held at the beautiful and spacious Event Centre in Northeast River Valley Park, Edmonton's newest park, opened to the public in May, 2023. This was a celebration of the impact that beautiful outdoor spaces can have on a city.



The winner in the Natural Yards Category, FYIB, 2024. This property is located in the Pleasantview neighbourhood.

Editor's note: It is important to point out that the "natural yards" category does not require that a majority of the plants present be native to the Edmonton area, or even native to Alberta. Gardens with such plants are rated higher in the initial screening of the yards (undertaken by ENPS volunteers) to arrive at the final three nominees in this category, which are then voted on by the public. The stated requirements for this category (as given on the City's website) are as follows:

- A yard with native flowers, trees, shrubs or ground cover plants that attract local wildlife such as birds, bees, butterflies, and other insects;
- A guideline of at least 60% perennial varieties defines this category;
- Extra points during judging are given for native plants with an Alberta origin (bees love them).



ENPS Board Members Kate Spencer (L) and Mary-Jo Gurba-Flanagan (R) presenting the award, 2024-09-12. Photo: K. Mpulubusi.

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas Survey

The Alberta Ministry of Environment and Protected Areas is seeking input from the public to help inform a made-in-Alberta strategy that will guide how the province will maintain, conserve and sustainably manage our nature for years to come.

Nature includes the plants, animals and landscapes, their interaction and ecological processes, and the benefits, or ‘ecosystem services’ that people receive from nature. Ecosystem services are essential to people living in Alberta to sustain a healthy and prosperous way of life, such as abundant clean air and water, fertile soil for farming, flood and erosion control, wildlife habitat, carbon dioxide absorption, and supplying the natural resources that are the foundation of our economy.

Provide your input through the online survey by November 7, 2024, to ensure that the strategy reflects Albertans' diverse perspectives, values and priorities for nature. You can find the survey here:

<https://your.alberta.ca/nature-strategy/surveys/albertas-nature-strategy>

Editor's note: It is very IMPORTANT that those interested in CONSERVING our natural areas speak up, lest our voices be drowned out by those only interested in preserving economic opportunities.

Advocacy

River Valley Planning Modernization – Again

By Patsy Cotterill

The Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition (ERVCC), a group of environmental advocates who focus particularly on river valley issues, wants the public to write to Edmonton City Council, asking for mountain biking trails to be prohibited in river valley Preservation Areas. Should the ENPS, with its interest in preserving native flora, apply to be included as a “partner organization” in the trail strategy consultations?

[Read more...](#)



An illegal trail carved into the steep embankment above Whitemud Creek, near Brookside, June 2019. Photo: P. Cotterill.

Articles

Plant Rescues: An Ethical Dilemma?

By Patsy Cotterill

The first principle of conservation is preservation. ENPS has been involved in a few plant rescues, but we have to wonder whether "perhaps if we had not been so focused on 'rescuing' individual plants, we could have rescued an entire ecosystem."

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Meadow in Little Mountain Natural Area, ca. 1998. This area is now the Brintnell neighborhood. Photo: P. Cotterill.

Poison Ivy vs. Wild Sarsaparilla

By Patsy Cotterill

Western poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans* var. *rydbergii*) and wild sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*) are both native to the Edmonton area. These two plants have obvious similarities but should be carefully distinguished because poison ivy can cause a nasty case of dermatitis if cut surfaces of the plant come in contact with skin.

[Read more...](#)



Left: A patch of western poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans* var. *rydbergii*) in Whitemud Park South, 2024-09-02. Photo: M. Parseyan.



Right: Wild sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*) beginning to show fall colour in Whitemud Park South, 2024-09-02. Photo: M. Parseyan.

Photo Essay

Fruits Of September

The flowering season is finally coming to an end but the fruits of plants' seasonal labours are now in full evidence, as many species ripen their fruits in September.



Lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), Whitemud Park South, 2024-09-02. Photo: M. Parseyan.



Wild lily-of-the-valley (*Maianthemum canadense*), Pipestone Creek Conservation Lands, 2024-09-14. Photo: S. Neuman.

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Lifetime ENPS Membership

You can now become an Edmonton Native Plant Society member for life. Memberships are \$20. Purchase by email: membership@enps.ca, through our website: <https://www.enps.ca/become-a-member> or visit one of our booths at plant events in your area. ENPS members are also eligible for a free Lifetime Membership with Nature Alberta.

Aims of the Edmonton Native Plant Society

- Promote knowledge of Edmonton area native plants
- Conserve our native plant species and their habitat

- Preserve native plant species and habitat for the enjoyment of present and future generations
 - Educate individuals, businesses, and local governments about native plants
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