



# WILDFLOWER NEWS

## From your editor:

As we write, a little late owing to illness among the editorial team, we celebrate May, one of the best months of the year for gardeners, and lovers of plants and nature in general. The trees have leafed out, shrubs are in flower and wildflowers of diverse species appear in the ground cover (see our collages of spring wildflowers below, gathered from members' submissions to the ENPS Facebook Group). Good luck to all our growers and plant observers for a growing season of balanced precipitation, moderate temperature and sunshine. *(And very little in the way of smoke and mosquitoes would be nice too! S.N.)*



## In this issue:

**Events**

**News**

**Spring Blooms in  
Edmonton**

**Articles**

- **New ENPS Website**
- **Buttercup's Urban Farm**
- **Plant Profile:  
Common Juniper**

Pin cherry (*Prunus pensylvanica*), Patricia Ravine, 2009-05-25. Photo P. Cotterill

## Events

Please visit our new website for the latest information on native plant related events in our area:  
<https://www.enps.ca/news-events>

## News

### ENPS Native Plant Sale

We have a date for the first ENPS native plant sale of the season!

Saturday, June 1st, 2024, 11:00am to 1:30pm

Parking lot in front of **Wild Birds Unlimited**

at 12204 107th Avenue NW, Edmonton

Arrive early for best selection!



### Front Yards in Bloom: Gearing Up for the 25th Anniversary Season!

Get involved: Volunteer with Front Yards in Bloom

Join Edmonton's Front Yards in Bloom team in celebrating the hard work of your fellow community members. Volunteers assist by preparing and delivering nomination packages, as well as photographing the nominated sites. By volunteering, you see who has gone that extra mile in creating beautiful and innovative spaces, and provide input during the first round of judging. Information about volunteering can be found at [FrontYardsinBloom.ca](http://FrontYardsinBloom.ca).

Nominate your neighbourhood

Over its 25 years, the Front Yards in Bloom program has expanded its categories to celebrate and drive creativity, innovation and stewardship throughout our community. From edible yards to natural yards, and even balconies in bloom, there's a category for everyone to showcase their own garden. **Mark your calendars - nominations open May 21st and close June 30th!** Don't miss your chance to nominate your neighbours, family members and friends in categories like General Yard, Natural Yard, Edible Yard, Tiny Yard, Balconies and Public Spaces. Learn more and submit your entry at [FrontYardsinBloom.ca](http://FrontYardsinBloom.ca) or by calling 311.

ENPS is once again collaborating with the City of Edmonton to promote yards that take a more "natural" approach in their landscaping. We invite our members to establish their own natural yards, and to nominate yards in the community that fall within the guidelines. To be nominated in the "Natural Yard" category, a yard should meet the following criteria:

- have native flowers, trees, shrubs, including ground cover plants, that attract local wildlife such as birds, bees, butterflies, and other insects;
- at least 60% perennial species;
- extra points during judging are given for native plants with an Alberta origin (bees love them!).

Yards in the natural category are judged by the **Edmonton Native Plant Society**.

## ANPC Native Plant Garden Challenge

The 2024 Alberta Native Plant Council (ANPC) Native Plant Garden Challenge has launched!

By joining this Challenge, ANPC members dedicate as little as 1 m x 1 m of their gardens to native plant species that support pollinators and enhance the biodiversity of our local communities. These actions help educate others and more importantly demonstrate that our outdoor spaces are, and can be, an important part of our local ecosystems.

Note that there is a private Facebook Page dedicated to this challenge, which is also open to the public: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/532074481403507/>

In addition, the new ANPC website includes a revamped Member's Portal with the Challenge resources - and most importantly a toolkit on how to get started with your pollinator garden efforts and native plant supplier discounts!

[https://anpc.ab.ca/?page\\_id=7244](https://anpc.ab.ca/?page_id=7244)

More generally, the revamped ANPC website has sooo much more information about native plants in Alberta:

<https://anpc.ab.ca/>

ANPC encourages you to actively participate in Challenge discussions and share your initiatives, your successes and your challenges. Your input and enthusiasm will be invaluable as we work together to achieve our goals. ANPC members have access to the Challenge Toolkit, which you can access on the members only area of the main ANPC website. Non-members are welcome to participate by joining the Facebook page.

If you have any questions, ideas, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to [challenge@anpc.ab.ca](mailto:challenge@anpc.ab.ca).

The following suppliers are generous supporters of the Native Plant Garden Challenge and have offered a 15% discount on the first \$200 of plant material purchased (some conditions may apply so check before you shop):

Medieval Manor Gardens: <https://www.mmgardens.ca/>

Arnica Wildflowers: <https://www.facebook.com/ArnicaWildflowers>



I'VE JOINED THE  
**NATIVE PLANT  
GARDEN  
CHALLENGE**



We challenge you to plant just one square meter of your garden with native plant species. Benefits:

- Water wise
- Low maintenance
- No fertilizers needed
- Support pollinators
- Beautiful blooms

TODAY WE ARE  
ENJOYING:

JOIN US TO RECEIVE YOUR TOOLKIT: [www.anpc.ab.ca](http://www.anpc.ab.ca)

Printable sign from the Toolkit, for display in your garden.

**Wildflower News editorial board:**

**Patsy Cotterill, Susan Neuman, Kate  
Spencer, Melanie Watson**

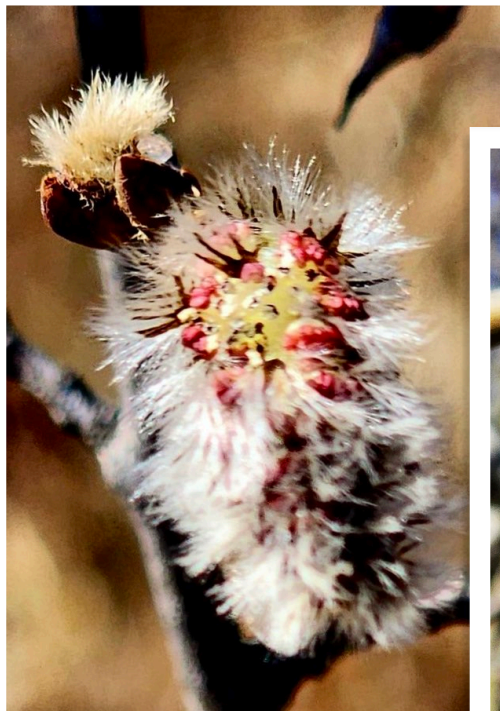
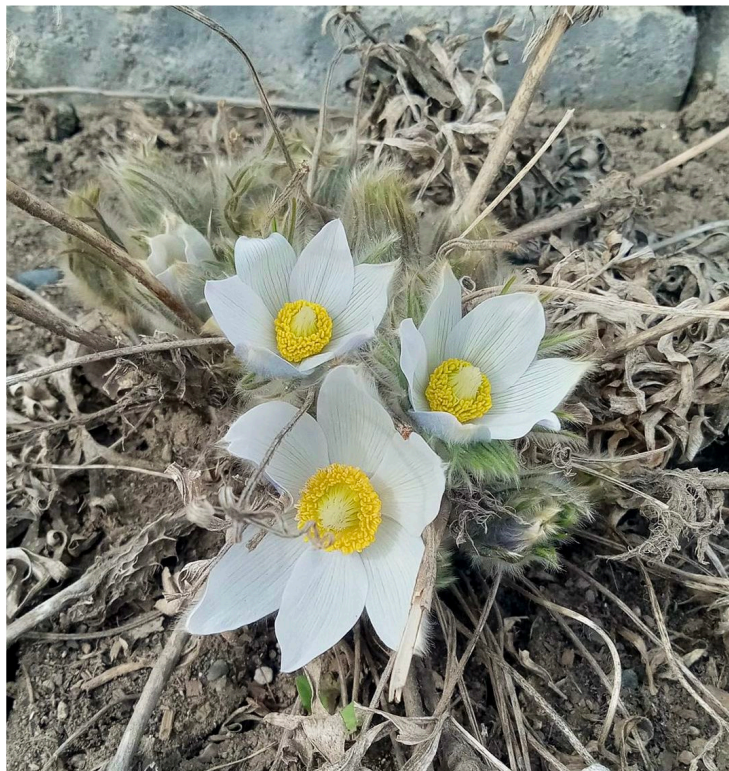
Patsy Cotterill, editor | Susan Neuman,  
publisher

[www.enps.ca](http://www.enps.ca)

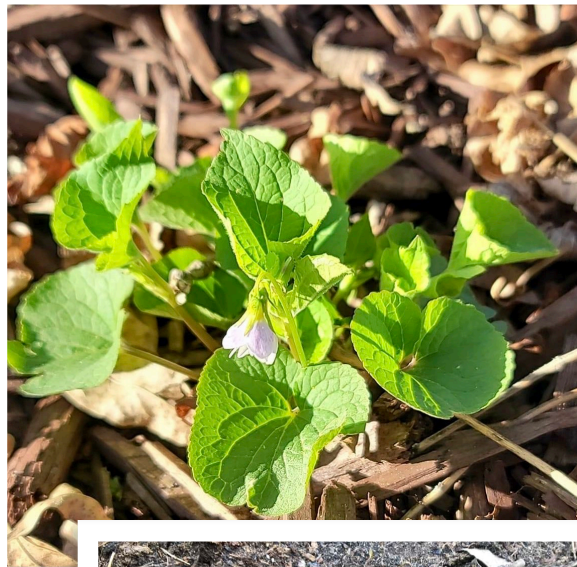
Please send compliments, concerns and  
questions to [info@enps.ca](mailto:info@enps.ca)

To unsubscribe, or subscribe, email  
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## Spring Blooms from the ENPS Facebook Group



Clockwise from top left: prairie crocus (*Pulsatilla nuttalliana*) D. McGuire Lavalley; prairie buttercup (*Ranunculus rhomboideus*) N. Preiss; female aspen catkin (*Populus tremuloides*) K. Mpulubusi; male aspen catkin K. Mpulubusi; three-flowered avens (*Geum triflorum*) M. Ryan.



Clockwise from top left: Rosy pussytoes (*Antennaria rosea*) S. Panteluk; hay sedge (*Carex siccata*) S. Panteluk; western Canada violet (*Viola rugulosa*) K.J.Chew; early blue violet (*Viola adunca*) S. Clair; fairy candelabra (*Androsace septentrionalis*) P. Kyle; golden corydalis (*Corydalis aurea*) S. Neuman.

## Articles

### ENPS Website Launch

By Kate Spencer and Natasha Stairs

[www.enps.ca](http://www.enps.ca)

After a year of hard work, and much learning on the part of the Website Team, we launched our new website in April. It is full of information on Edmonton area native plants and is intended to be a comprehensive resource for all audiences.

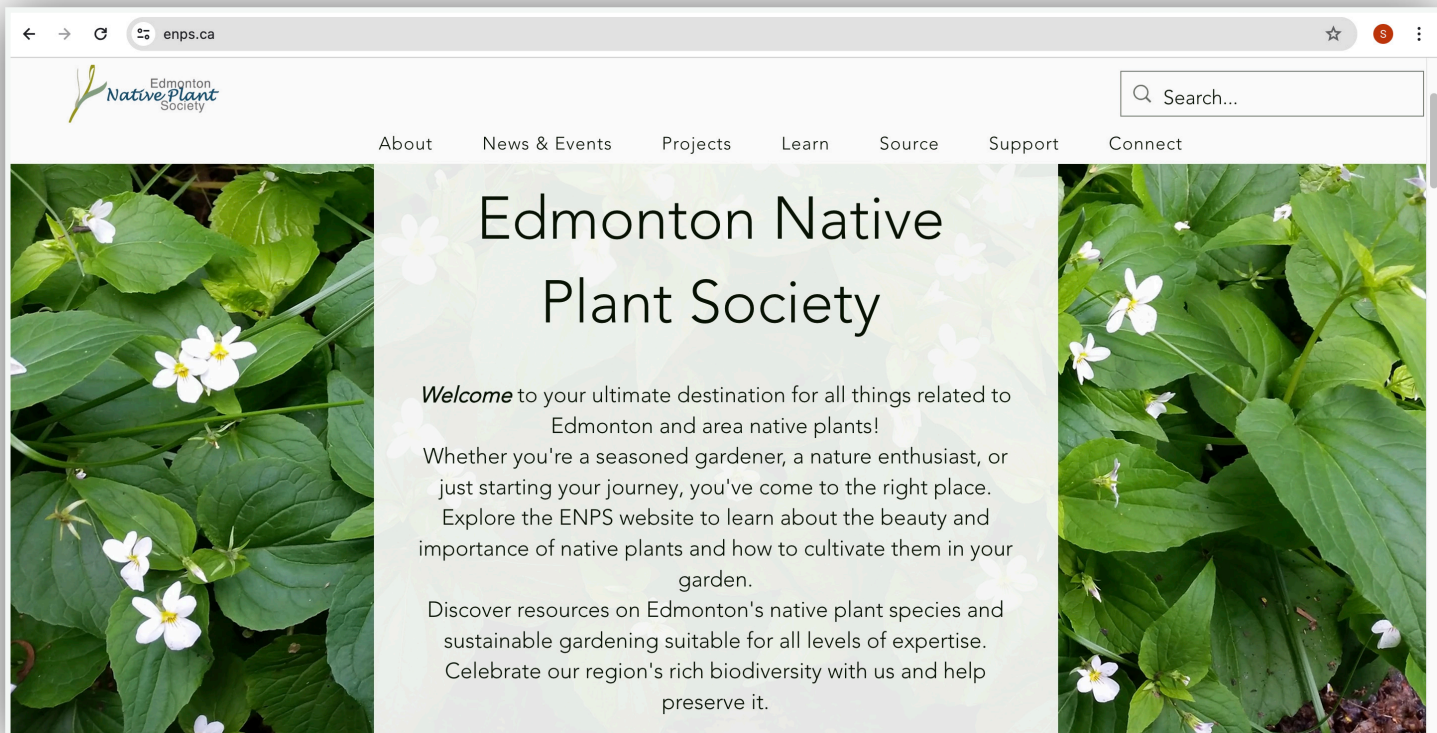
Our **Projects** page has descriptions of our many active projects with which we could always use a helping hand! You can register to volunteer directly on each project page.

Another special feature is the **Wildflower News Archive** which can be found on the **Learn** page. Search by season, year or keyword to find articles going back to 2013. If you aren't already subscribed, you can sign up to get the newsletter at the bottom of each page. Also on the **Learn** page are downloadable planting guides and links to a number of plant databases and other related organizations. There is a **Bookshelf** with a focus on botany and gardening with native plants by (mostly) Alberta authors.

If you are looking to purchase native plants or seeds, check out the **Source** page. You can even sign up to become an ENPS member on the **Support** page.

Our **Plant Database**, where you will be able to learn more about gardening with native plants, is still to come so stay tuned!

Note: If you do a Google search for “Edmonton Native Plant Society”, the first result to show ([enps.vercel.app](http://enps.vercel.app)) is the old website that is no longer being updated. Please use the link given at the top of this page.



## ENPS Project Profile: Buttercup's Urban Farm

*Text and photos by Liz Deleeuw*

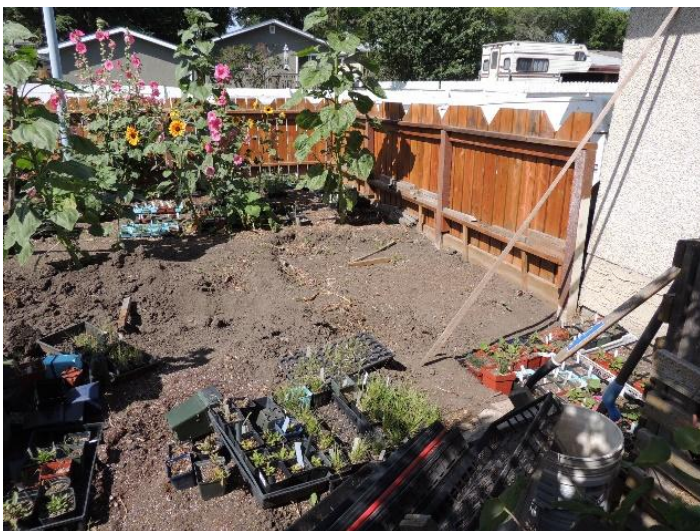
Arguably the pre-eminent project for ENPS (as it is our main source of native plant stock and, through their sale to the public, the main source of income for the Society), Buttercup's Urban Farm (my back yard) is the place where seedlings and plants are nurtured and stored while they wait to be sold or used in ENPS restoration projects. Through the years, literally thousands of plants have moved through my back yard. We have held many volunteer events there as well, at which volunteers assist with potting up seedlings, labeling them, and washing pots prior to sales events.

### History

Just after the year 2000, the John Janzen Nature Centre native plant demonstration bed became my first project with the then Edmonton Naturalization Group (now ENPS). Faithful volunteering at the bed

commodity they are today and they did not move quickly. Arch Greenhouses had been growing native plants for urban gardens for some time but the plants were not widely available. The Old Man Creek Nursery project, run by Cherry Dodd, also provided a supply of plants to volunteers, and helped to maintain the genetics of landscapes that were sadly being bulldozed in the name of progress.

Through the 2010s I found myself gathering native plants in my garden. I had a need to know I had the species close by, and that I was able to access them. I had no idea of the sources of all the seed we collected, and I thought that I could devote my vegetable garden to growing species for seed. It was the start of a collection of knowledge that constantly grew. What my back yard eventually became was more of a nursery of plants that we would then offer for sale. I had worked at a perennial nursery in Ontario and used that knowledge to set up my production. Initially we



Converting my back yard vegetable garden into a nursery, August 2015.

got me into other projects with the group, and eventually I was part of the "core" of the loosely organized group of volunteers. We met at kitchen tables and quaint cafes. We went on amazing field trips exploring many terrific remnants of local nature. We sat at many community events with our then state-of-the-art display. At events we sometimes had a handful of native plants to sell or give away. Native plants were not yet the

wanted to sell the plants and other items at City of Edmonton events but we were told we would need a business license to do this. Well, when we called about getting the license it was suggested that we designate my property an "urban farm". We did that and got the business license. It allowed us to sell plants at all kinds of other events. All of this happened while I still held down a full-time job.

Somewhere during this time the Edmonton Naturalization Group became the Edmonton Native Plant Group, and then later the Edmonton Native Plant Society. In my back garden a cold frame was constructed and the nursery grew. In addition to

My original concept, of collecting “species” in my yard, has now grown into something I would never have imagined back then. Our current plant sales are usually completely sold out, and demand for native plants has prompted some of the larger



A cold frame allows me to give the plants an early start in the spring and to extend the season in the fall.



Seedlings, grown inside under grow lights, waiting to be potted up.

the outside growing operation, I began starting seedlings indoors. Every late winter/early spring my living room and downstairs shelves became full of seedlings under grow lights. Some are stratified, and those that do not require stratification are directly seeded into potting mix. Most of those seedlings get potted up through the summer, and are overwintered in the back garden. Some established seedlings are sold at plant sales as well.

Edmonton garden centres to contemplate growing local native plants. I am semi-retired now and enjoy spending the early mornings of spring and summer outside, with the plants that are now going to be "collected" in other people's yards.



Buttercup's Urban Farm today ...



Seedlings being potted up, at a volunteer session in the early years.



## Plant Profile: Common Juniper

Text and photos by Patsy Cotterill

Varieties of common juniper (*Juniper communis*) are commonly planted in gardens as landscaping shrubs but this coniferous evergreen in the cypress family (Cupressaceae) is also native to Alberta. It can be found locally in open areas or forest edges in the river valley. Its more usual habitat, however, is dry, open or rocky areas in the foothills and mountains, and I wonder if our local specimens are truly native or rather garden escapes. Nevertheless, the junipers growing in my front yard as ground cover, between spruce, lodgepole pine and native deciduous shrubs, are from the river valley. I took cuttings a few years ago and had a nursery overwinter them, applying rooting hormone and bottom heat to stimulate root growth.



Prostrate form of common juniper, common throughout Canada, in Terwillegar Park, 2022-06-12

Common juniper occurs throughout the Northern Hemisphere, i.e., it is a circumpolar species. It usually reaches tree size in Eurasia and eastern North America but in Alberta and across Canada it is a low, spreading shrub; our variety is var. *depressa*, reaching 150 cm high and 3-4 m across. The leaves are linear, up to 15 mm long and 1.6 mm wide, pointed and somewhat prickly at the tip, glaucous (whitish) green and arranged in whorls of three.

Cones are borne in leaf axils along the branches, with male and female cones on separate plants. The yellowish pollen cones, consisting of trios of scales bearing pollen sacs, appear in spring. The seed cones are round to ovoid, 6-9 mm in diameter, and consist of thick, closed scales in 1-3 pairs. They take two years to mature after pollination and turn from glaucous-green to purplish-black when ripe.

According to the garden blog “The Spruce” (<https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-grow-and-care-for-common-juniper-5080172>), common juniper can be grown from seed using cold, moist stratification for 120 days, with a suggestion to sow plenty because germination is low. Pots should be placed in a sheltered place to overwinter. To grow from cuttings, stems 10-15 cm long, taken in late summer, should have their leaves stripped off and their ends dipped in hormone rooting powder before potting up in a mix of sand, perlite and potting soil. They should be placed in a sheltered location and kept warm until roots develop (6-12 weeks). (I presume that inside a house would also be suitable.) A cold frame would be ideal. Please let ENPS know of your results if any of our readers try either of these methods!



Left:  
Pollen cones releasing spores,  
Rio Terrace garden, 2023-05-20.



Right:

Developing female cones,  
Jasper National Park,  
2011-09-15.