

The Orchid Case

by Richard Labossiere (a.k.a. Officer Orchid), Wildlife Investigator, CWS, Winnipeg, MB
photographs by the author

Having been a wildlife enforcement officer for over 20 years and having also seen just about everything when it comes to the illegal take, possession and smuggling of wildlife, I must say that this particular two-year investigation into the illegal import of rare and endangered Asian Tropical Lady Slipper Orchids was by far the most interesting and demanding .

It all started on March 2, 2000 at the Winnipeg International Airport. I received a call from a Canada Customs Inspector that a “very large” shipment of orchids had just arrived at air cargo. The Customs Inspector indicated that the importer of record was a local orchid nursery and that the country of export on record was Taiwan. I decided to head on over to the airport and take a little closer look at these intriguing plants. During the short drive to the airport, it dawned on me that I knew very little about orchids and knew even less with respect to the identification of these plants. Now what? I needed to find someone who could assist me in the identification of the orchids and who could also do this identification on plants that had no blooms. Did I forget to add that there were over 2000 of these little plants in the shipment? It now looked like my day would be full—and far from boring!

Accompanied by my inspection kit, a few books on orchid identification, an orchid expert, a Canada Customs Inspector, and my green thumb, we dove right into the 13 boxes of or-

chids, looking for anything out of the ordinary. After having opened the second box in the shipment, and spreading out some of the orchids located in the box, we noted some very small leafy bare root orchids. These plants appeared to have been sandwiched in between much larger orchids within the box. My orchid expert quickly identified these smaller plants as *Paphiopedium* (Paph) species. My orchid expert also explained why he felt the orchids in question were Paph species, and highly endangered.

In total, we located 211 Paph orchids in the shipment and when we compared the Taiwanese CITES export permits to the shipment, we noted that the shipper (also a board member of the Winnipeg business) had not included any of the Paph’s on the permits, but—lo and behold!—there were 211 “*Cypripedium formosanum*” orchids listed on accompanying CITES paperwork. As the *Cypripedium* is an Appendix II orchid under CITES, only a Taiwanese export permit would be required to import these particular orchids into Canada. It became apparent to us that somebody was trying to pull the wool over our eyes in an attempt to bring into Canada these endangered lady slipper orchids. Before too long, the manager of the orchid nursery in question was at air cargo hoping to pick up his prized plants. Needless to say when he saw a couple of uniformed officers rifling through his orchids, he knew something was up! After having cautioned and chartered the importer, I asked him why the Paph orchids were in the shipment. After initially denying knowledge of their very existence in the shipment, the importer decided



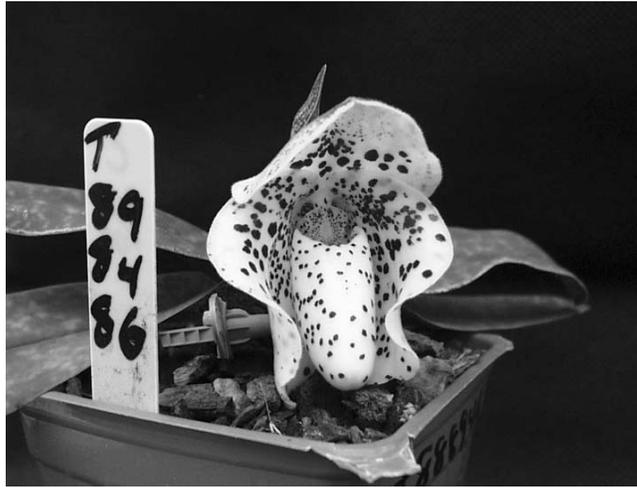
Open shipping container bound for Ottawa

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his best defense was to claim that the Paph's were not species but rather hybrids. If the plants were indeed hybrids, they would have been downgraded to Appendix II under CITES. Believing in the motto "if in doubt—seize", I decided to seize all 211 Paph orchids as well as 538 hybrid orchids used to conceal the Appendix I plants in three separate boxes. Fortunately I have a really good relationship with the Winnipeg Plant Conservatory because they were quickly inundated with all of the seized orchids. The Conservatory quickly set up a separate greenhouse to house the plants and I in turn installed individual serial numbered tags onto each of the 211 Paph's. Within a few days I also shipped 18 of the seized Paph's to the Calgary Zoo for care and control. I did this because I also believe in another motto: "don't put all your eggs in one basket" or in this case "don't put all your seized orchids in one greenhouse"!

Now, with 20+ years of wildlife investigations under my belt, I thought this would be a fairly open and shut case—NOT! Because all 211 Paph orchids were void of flowers, there was absolutely no way of proving that these plants were indeed CITES Appendix I listed species. After having consulted with numerous experts on orchid identification, I quickly found out that the only way I could prove that these orchids were pure species was to wait for them to flower—which I was also told could take as much as two years to occur! DNA was not an option because none of the forensic labs anywhere in the world (I know because I think I called every single one of them) had orchid DNA capabilities. The waiting game was now on—fortunately it only took 3 months for the first of the seized Paph's to bloom. A second seized Paph bloomed in October of 2000. The first bloom was identified as a *Paphiopedilum conco-bellatulum*. I learned that this is a natural hybrid in the wilds of China. This identification also led me to believe that these Paph's may have been wild collected rather than grown from seed in a greenhouse. The second plant which bloomed was a *Paphiopedilum armeniacum*—a pure species and definitely Appendix I under CITES. Unfortunately, during a weekend evening when the greenhouses were closed, an orchid enthusiast decided he or she should collect this very beautiful *Paph. armeniacum*. The following day I went to



Paph blooming

the Winnipeg Police Department to report the theft and after word got out in the orchid underworld that Winnipeg's finest were looking for an orchid thief, the flower mysteriously returned to the conservatory—less the flower. The flower had been cut off from the plant and only the pot and plant, complete with seizure tag, remained. I then decided that further security measures needed to be implemented in order to ensure that future orchid thefts would not occur. I quickly purchased two very large wire dog kennels and all seized Paph's were placed in the two locked kennels. This was another first for me: having to put orchids under lock and key so that they did not "walk" away!

During the winter of 2000/2001 numerous Paph's managed to bloom and all were sent by air (first class) to an expert for identification. Before long, the expert who identified the plants had positively identified 29 of the seized orchids as *Paphiopedilum conco-bellatulum*, *Paphiopedilum armeniacum*, *Paphiopedilum micranthum*, *Paphiopedilum bellatulum* and *Paphiopedilum malipoense*—all being listed as CITES Appendix I. During the course of the next year and a half, a five cautioned interviews were taken of the importer and search warrants were executed at

the place of business, the residence and the company vehicle associated with the business. Computer records were subsequently analyzed and numerous individuals were interviewed. Records seized suggested that 3 prior Paph imports from Taiwan had taken place from as far back as 1997. In February of 2002, the business and all three board members of the corporation were charged with numerous counts under the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRIITA) as well as the Customs Act. Even after we had laid all the charges, one thing still bothered me: even though we could

prove that these were species and not hybrids, all of my Canadian experts were reluctant to say beyond a shadow of a doubt that the seized Paph's were from wild stock. To me this was important: if I could show the courts that the plants had originally been collected from the wild rather than being greenhouse grown, this would go a long way in getting heavier penalties against the violators.

Well, patience finally paid off because in November of 2002, I was blessed with the opportunity to attend COP 12 in Santiago, Chile. This international CITES conference takes place somewhere in the world every two or three years and I had whined long and hard enough that my boss decided to ship me down to Chile for the two week conference. Fortunately I had my laptop with me because once I had arrived in Santiago, I came across Dr. Noel McGough from the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) in England as well as Ger Van Vliet from



Caged Orchids

the CITES Secretariat in Switzerland. Both individuals are world-renowned with respect to their knowledge of plants and once I had showed them some of the digital pictures of the seized orchids, both quickly suggested that the plants were indeed wild collected. As I only had a dozen or so pictures of the seized Paph's on my computer hard drive, both plant experts requested I send them, as well as Dr. Philip Cribb from the RBG, my complete digital photo inventory of the 211 seized orchids. In December of 2002, I received a detailed report, authored by the three experts, which explained—plant by plant—why they believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that the plants in question had been originally taken from the wild, put into a greenhouse setting for one or two years and then shipped to Canada. The experts pointed out leaf damage and leaf discoloration on old leaf growth as well as root damage in order to show that the plants had been originally plucked from the wild.



Another Paph in bloom

Armed with this expert documentation on wild collection, it was not long before the business decided to plead guilty to WAPP-RIITA and Customs act charges. On July 31, 2003 Ever Spring Orchid Nursery (Manitoba) Ltd. was fined a total of \$15,000 in a provincial court in Winnipeg. They were convicted of illegally importing endangered orchids into Canada and for falsely declaring the plants on import. The courts also determined that \$5,000 would go to the non-profit group *Friends of the Conservatory*, to build an educational display at the Winnipeg Plant Conservatory in order to house the seized orchids. The display would be used as a venue to educate the public on orchid conservation. The corporation was also ordered to display CITES informational pamphlets in their greenhouse showroom for a three year period. The final court order stipulated that Ever Spring Orchid Nursery contact the Cana



Discoloured leaf

dian Wildlife Service at least three days in advance of any future orchid imports by their company.

Over the course of the lengthy investigation, I managed to speak to just about everyone in the orchid world (well it felt like it anyways). I received tremendous assistance from orchid experts in many countries, both enforcement and non-enforcement personnel, and without the assistance of these individuals this investigation would have likely fizzled. To date, this orchid prosecution has been the largest such case in Canada.

Needless to say, because of this investigation, I have learned plenty about orchids. Due to my new expertise in this field, my co-workers and friends have dubbed me "Officer Orchid". I would have preferred a more masculine-sounding handle! ❁

ANPC Small Grant Program

The ANPC Small Grant Program provides funds for research, study and appreciation of native plants supporting plant conservation. The application form can be obtained through ANPC webpage:

www.anpc.ab.ca/contact.html

or by e-mail:

info@anpc.ab.ca

or by writing to ANPC at the following address:

Alberta Native Plant Council
Box 52099, Garneau Postal Outlet
Edmonton, AB
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The Alberta Native Plant Council

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Puzzling Pairs—*Symphoricarpos*

by Lorna Allen
photographs by the author

Another puzzling pair is the *Symphoricarpos* twins; best known in Alberta as buckbrush (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*). The key in the Flora of Alberta separates them based on flower characteristics. The flowers are clumped, larger and with style and stamens sticking out in



Buckbrush flower

buckbrush, while in snowberry there tends to be fewer flowers in a clump, and neither stamens nor styles are exerted. These characters work very well when you have flowers—but what if you don't?

This troublesome twosome can be quite difficult. If you look at the table of characters, below, you will see they are both shrubs up to about 1m tall, both many-branched, and both have more or less rounded leaves. Overall, though, snowberry tends to be a smaller, more delicate plant. Leaf sizes do overlap, but buckbrush leaves tend to be bigger, and they also tend to be thick, leathery and blue-green in colour. The leaves of snowberry are usually smaller, more delicate and more of a yellow-green. It is my impression that buckbrush leaves occasionally have a wavy edge—but I do not ever recall seeing snowberry leaves with other than a rounded edge. If your specimen has fruit, the two once again become easy to sort out. The few small, rounded, plump white berries of snowberry give it its name, both common and scientific (the *albus* of the scientific name means white). Buck-



Buckbrush fruit

brush berries look quite different. The clumped flowers usually turn into a group of clumped berries that are more oblong than rounded. And the berries never become pure white. When unripe, they are a dry-looking greenish white, and when ripe they turn purplish.

Information in the table below comes mostly from the description in *The Flora of Alberta* (1992) supplemented by informa-



Snowberry flowers



Snowberry fruit

tion in *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia*, Vol 2. (1998).

References

Douglas, G.W., G. G. Straley, D. Meidinger, and J. Pojar. 1998. *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia*, Vol 2. British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and Ministry of Forests. Victoria, BC. 401 pp.

Moss, E.H. revised by J.G. Packer. 1992. *Flora of Alberta*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario. ❀

Character	Buckbrush (<i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i>)	Snowberry (<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>).
Shrub	More robust shrub, up to 1m tall	Slender shrub up to 1m tall
Leaf shape	Rounded, 3 to 5 cm long	Rounded, 2 to 4 cm long
Leaf texture	Thick, leathery	Thinner, more delicate
Leaf colour	Blue green	Fresh green to greenish yellow
Flower	Narrow bell (funnelform) with exerted stamens and a (usually) hairy exerted style (i.e. sticking out from the flower)	Wider bell with stamens and style included (i.e. not sticking out from the flower)
Fruit	Dense cluster of greenish, oblong berries, drying purplish	Single or small clusters of rounded, white berries

The Prairie Crocus

by Marsha Hayward

The prairie crocus, *Anemone patens*, has traditionally been the first harbinger of spring. These delicate looking pale mauve flowers are to me a welcome symbol of new life after months of frozen stillness.

In fact, immediately following the vernal or spring equinox, one can go outdoors in search of the flowers blooming in small groupings across prairie meadows, woodland glades and open exposed slopes. The best time to look is just after the snow has gone, when the sun has begun to warm the top of the soil (this will vary by several



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If you have an announcement, article or other item, you are invited to submit it to the editor for publication. Items concerning native plants will be given highest priority.

The editors reserve the right to edit submissions, but will review changes with the authors whenever possible. Disputes will be resolved in favour of the Audience.

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Winter	January 15, 2006
Spring	May 15, 2006

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weeks according to your latitude and the weather).

The soft violet flowers are easy to spot against the dull matte of grasses and ground cover, newly exposed by the melting snow. It is not uncommon in sheltered areas to find prairie crocuses blooming in the middle of a snow bank.

There are ten recognized wild species of *Anemone* in Alberta and more than 30 are available as domesticated garden varieties. They are actually members of the large buttercup or crowfoot family called Ranunculaceae. *Anemone* translates directly from the Greek *anemos*, meaning "wind" or "windflower". It means simply that the seeds of the anemone are scattered by the wind.

The prairie crocus, however, is a bit of a trickster. Despite its very regular appearance, with a centered cluster of stigma surrounded by numerous yellow stamens, the outside daisy-like violet petals are actually sepals. There may be anywhere from five to nine petaloid sepals rising from a single solitary stem. The Latin species name, *patens*, alludes to the spreading fashion of the plant's petal-like sepals, forming flowers which are generally 7 cm across. The leaves of the prairie crocus do not open until after the plant has begun, or even nearly finished, blooming. These are silky-haired basal leaves, palmately divided into lobes, each of which is divided into long segments and is a soft green in colour.

Upon completion of the blooming cycle, the sepals wither away and fluffy seed heads begin to make their appearance. The seed heads themselves have inspired descriptive names for several of the anemone species. The western anemone is sometimes called "old man of the mountains". The longer white sepals dry up and wither over the stalk to create a rather hairy, human-like appearance.

When the prairie winds begin to blow the fluffy seed heads, they are carried high and far in the wind across the prairie. On the southern plains of the U.S., this inspired the name "prairie smoke" because the feathered tails of the seed heads gave the illusion of smoke on the prairie. Because the prairie crocus can produce two flower stems, the Dakota Sioux Indians gave it a name, which when translated means "twinflower". Some native tribes used the sepals of the flower and stuffed them up their nose to help stop bleeding and also applied them externally



Prairie Crocus M. Hayward

to aid with rheumatism.

Prairie crocuses grow from 7 to 28 cm tall. They bloom anywhere from late March until the end of May. They are known to have both tuberous and crown roots. All are considered to be perennial.

Interestingly enough, a less commonly used name, pasqueflower, seems to have been derived originally from the Pesach supper, which occurred at the time of the Jewish Passover. This was traditionally around Easter time, and during the period of the spring equinox. The early Celts had a tradition of dunking eggs into a boiled solution of pulsatilla flowers (a species similar to the anemone). The dye turned the eggs green and children hid them outdoors and hunted for them. So, this may have been the beginning of the tradition of the coloured Easter egg. So, it seems that the humble prairie crocus has been connected with Jewish, Christian and Pagan traditions. ❁

Note: Many classification systems consider this species as *Pulsitilla patens*.

New Life from Cold Ground

by Marsha Hayward

As the last months of winter passed by, I developed a strange need to see green—anything green. I found myself inhabiting floral shops, spending more money than usual on overpriced bouquets. I picked up and buried my nose in the fresh happy little bouquets of hothouse flowers at the end of the till in the grocery store, ignoring the odd glances from other customers. I spent more time than usual in the fresh produce section of the grocery store. I called the local garden centre and nursery to see if they'd planted yet. I browsed through all my seed catalogues at least three times and bought all the old over-priced bulbs from the local hardware store to force into bloom on my dining room table. If these are familiar symptoms to you, then relax, as it is not abnormal behaviour for plant lovers.

My advice for fellow plant lovers as spring approaches, is to remember to take a stroll out into your local woods and have a good look around when all the snow is just newly melted. Bend down and carefully remove the top layer of drab brown cover of last year's leaves. If you don't find anything at first, just keep looking. The subject you are searching for shows itself as several small oval to kidney-shaped green leaves. These little bunches of leaves will often be accompanied by the evergreen leaves of several other plants, including bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*), wintergreens (*Pyrola* spp.), and twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*), found in the same local area.

Usually the best place to look is in a clearing of a mixedwood forest. The plants will be down low to the ground, perhaps below the telltale red stems of a red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) or the vine of a twining honeysuckle (*Lonicera dioica*). They are also to be found along the margins of local sloughs or small fens in or near a jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) forest. If you haven't guessed it yet, the plant you are searching for is a delightful little violet. They are very common in western Canada.

Early blue violets (*Viola adunca*), are one of our first showy flowers to appear in the spring. They will reach nearly full development, tucked just under that protective cover of last year's leaves. Then when we get the first warm days, they will suddenly burst forth. Their deep blue to blue-violet flowers come directly out of the axil of the



Violet M. Hayward

oval-shaped leaves. The lowest and largest petal continues backward into a conspicuous hooked spur. I have gently cleared around the small plant to give it more freedom from the protective cover of brown leaves or moss and have been surprised to find frozen ground beneath.

A closely related species is the bog violet (*Viola nephrophylla*). Also very common, they are distinguished from the early blue violet by their kidney-shaped leaves. All the leaves are basal, arising from the same base. Generally bog violets have a larger flower than early blue violets, and they grow in wetter, boggy areas. The colour seems to be a more intense blue, although I have seen many variations. Our native violets do have some scent.

Another member of the Violaceae family is the western Canada violet (*Viola canadensis*). It flowers from a much taller stalk, with blooms which are pale pink to white in color. There is a conspicuous yellow centre and tiny netted purple veins on the petals. Look for leaves that are oval or kidney-shaped and are sharply pointed. It grows to about 30 cm in height and can be found in soil in shaded woodlands. When searching, look again for the red osier dog

wood and wild vetch (*Vicia americana*), with twining honeysuckle wrapping around the trunks of young aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) or white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) trees. When the red osier dogwood blooms, so does the western Canada violet. ❀

Adopt-a-Plant Alberta Logo Contest

Adopt-a-Plant Alberta is an exciting new program that will allow interested amateur and professional botanists to become directly involved in the conservation of rare plants in Alberta. This initiative has been generating a great deal of interest among plant enthusiasts throughout the province. More details are provided in this issue of *IRIS*.

The Adopt-a-Plant Alberta organizing committee has decided that this new program needs an eye-catching logo. Here is your opportunity to apply your creative talents and help the committee come up with a pleasing design! The committee recommends that the logo include the name "Adopt-a-Plant Alberta" and a unique symbol or relatively simple image based on the theme of rare plants. Beyond this, let your imagination and creativity run free! Entries may be submitted as paper documents or as digital images in JPEG or TIF format. Please remember to include your name, address, phone number and if you have one, an e-mail address. All entries must be delivered by November 1, 2005 to:

Lisa Matthias
Alberta Sustainable Resource
Development
Fish and Wildlife Division
Resource Data & Species at Risk
2nd Floor, Great West Life Building
9920 108 St., Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2M4

e-mail: Lisa.Matthias@gov.ab.ca
phone: (780) 422-8411
fax: (780) 422-9557

The contestant who submits the winning logo will receive an autographed copy of the award-winning book *Rare Plants of Alberta*.

Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC) Winter 2005 Update

by C. Dana Bush

Alberta Species Listed under Canada's Species At Risk Act (SARA)

Schedule 1—Endangered

Tiny cryptanthe—*Cryptantha minima*

Schedule 1—Threatened

Western blue-flag—*Iris missouriensis*

Soapweed—*Yucca glauca*

Haller's apple moss—*Bartramia halleriana*

Slender mouse-ear cress—*Arabidopsis salsuginea*

Schedule 1—Special Concern

Tall woolly-heads (Prairie population)—*Psilocarphus elatior*

Schedule 2—Endangered

Sand-verbena*—*Tripterocalyx micranthus*

Schedule 2—Threatened

Western spiderwort*—*Tradescantia occidentalis*

Schedule 3—Special Concern

Smooth goosefoot—*Chenopodium subglabrum*

Hare-footed locoweed—*Oxytropis lagopus* var. *conjugens*

Bolander's quillwort—*Isoetes bolanderi*

Not yet on a Schedule—Threatened

Porsild's bryum**—*Braya humilis* var. *porsildii*

* Status has been reassessed by COSEWIC based on the most recent status report. The status of these species may change (i.e.,

added to Schedule 1), pending the results of public consultation and federal decisions.

** Status has been reassessed by COSEWIC, however, as of August 2004, the species is not scheduled to undergo public consultation or addition to Schedule 1. These public consultations (and potential subsequent addition to Schedule 1) must, however occur within approximately 1 year of status reassessment.

Species Approved by ESCC for Listing under Alberta's Wildlife Act

Endangered

Soapweed—*Yucca glauca*

Western spiderwort—*Tradescantia occidentalis*

Tiny cryptanthe—*Cryptantha minima*

Threatened

Western blue-flag—*Iris missouriensis*

Sand verbena—*Tripterocalyx micranthus*

Ministerial Acceptance

Tiny cryptanthe (*Cryptantha minima*) has been accepted by the minister as endangered, and ASRD is working with the City of Medicine Hat to encourage appropriate management for the species within the city's Ranchlands Development Area (the subdivision is planned on the site of the largest tiny cryptanthe population in Canada). ❀

Share the Beauty!

by Linda Kershaw

Spring has sprung, and plant lovers across Alberta are dusting off their back packs, field guides and hand lenses in preparation for another field season. Mustn't forget to pack our sunscreen and water bottles, and of course, our cameras! Some of Alberta's most enthusiastic photographers are gardeners and botanists. After all, what could be more photogenic than the first prairie crocus or a spray of fresh green leaves emerging from winter buds? If you have a camera and enjoy taking pictures of plants, the ANPC has a project for you!

We are asking members (and anyone else who's interested) to submit their best photos to our webmaster, Ken, so that he can post them on the ANPC website. This way, everyone can share the wealth of beautiful images that might otherwise be filed away in hard drives or lost in boxes of prints. People can check the site to see what's in bloom and where different plants have been

found in the province. Perhaps a visit to the site will reveal the identity of that beautiful wildflower you've been seeing everywhere.

If you have a digital camera, it's easy to send photos electronically. If you use film, you can have your prints or slides scanned in a couple of hours at photo finishing shops (e.g. London Drugs, McBain Camera) for \$1–\$3 per image. Once you have your digital image in hand, simply send a medium-sized JPEG (100–400 kB) to Ken at info@anpc.ab.ca and he will post it on the website.

When you submit a photo, please be sure to include the following:

Permission for the ANPC to post your photo on the website. If you're also willing to give us permission to use your images in *IRIS*, this too would be appreciated. All other types of use will require explicit permission of the photographer.

Where and When the plant was photographed

The **Name** of the plant(s) in the photo - both common and scientific names would be appreciated. If you have a beautiful shot, but don't know the name of the plant, perhaps someone who visits the site will be able to help you identify it.

You also might like to include points of interest about the plant, such as how or why it was photographed, but this isn't essential. If you have software for editing digital images, it would be great if you could include your name and the name of the plant on the photo.

This is a new project for the ANPC, so we'll see how it evolves. If we receive lots of beautiful photos by the end of the summer, we'd like to use the best ones to produce an ANPC plant calendar in the fall. So, spread the word! Tell all of your photographer friends about the site, and let's get those shutters clicking. If you're a photographer, why not mark a day on your calendar each month to check back through your recent photos and send the best one or two to Ken? This could be fun! ❀

Thanks to...

Ed Karpuk, who joined the board in 1998, served first as the Central Director. In 2001, he bravely took on a two year term as Vice President, with the plan of moving into a further two year term as President.

During his tenure, Ed worked with the board on many projects, and got enthusiastically involved with the Dandelion Festival, the issue with wildflower seed packages, Adopt-a-plant program, and many others. Taking seriously the mission of the ANPC to, among other things, get your hands dirty, Ed did a thorough soil survey of Nisku Prairie, to assist with the development of a management plan for the site. But as he has generously agreed to continue to serve as Past President, ANPC can continue to rely on his solid support into the future.

Elaine Gordon, who joined the board in 1998 and served as our membership secretary. For the last seven years, since 1999, she has ably represented ANPC as our representative on the board of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists (FAN).

During that time, ANPC has benefitted from her summaries of the activities of FAN. But she has also actively lobbied for plants and plant projects. She co-ordinates reports on the plant May Species Count and coordinated a pilot plant atlas project. She worked with the Provincial Museum of Alberta as the Wild Alberta display was being developed, and provided many ideas to them of ways that the importance of plants could be incorporated into the exhibit. It's no surprise that FAN would want her to get further involved, and so she moves from ANPC representative to FAN Secretary. But really, this means that plants will now have at least two strong representatives at the FAN table. Elaine will be there, and we can supply a new representative (and Nic DeGama-Blanchet has stepped forward to fill this role - thank you Nic).

Thanks to Elaine for all she has done over the years, and we know she will continue to be involved in ANPC. In fact, despite having organized this year's (and last year's) excellent workshops, she is now working on organizing Botany Alberta 2005, to be held on the Blood Reserve in southern Alberta.

Adopt-a-Plant Alberta

A new conservation initiative for rare plants and lichens

Would you like to get involved in the conservation of rare plants in Alberta?

Consider volunteering with the Adopt-a-Plant Alberta program! This exciting new initiative offers an exceptional opportunity to learn about rare plants in Alberta and at the same time contribute to the understanding of their ecology and distribution in the province. Adopt-a-Plant Alberta participants will adopt a provincially rare plant of their choice. Experts will train them how to identify it, how to find it and, once found, how to gather data about its location and environment that will be useful in its conservation. All the data submitted will be housed in the conservation database of the Alberta Natural Heritage Information Centre, and be used to help understand where the species lives, and aid in efforts to protect the plant in the province.

Adopt-a-Plant Alberta will be developed if there is a sufficient interest amongst botanists, both amateur and professional, in the province. We are currently looking for volunteers to help generate that interest and help build the program. For more information on assisting with building the program, or to become a field participant, contact:

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Become an active member of a botanical community devoted to conserving the native plants of Alberta! Your involvement can make a difference. If you don't do it today, it could be gone tomorrow!

Volunteers are required for:

- giving slide shows,
- becoming a regional contact,
- organizing the 2006 workshop,
- organizing field trips,
- fund raising, and
- finding rare plants.

Adopt-a-Plant Alberta is a co-operative program including the Alberta Natural Heritage Information Centre, Devonian Botanic Garden (University of Alberta), Alberta Native Plant Council, and Alberta Fish and Wildlife Species at Risk Program. ❁

Nisku Native Prairie Reserve

Are you ready to get your hands dirty?

Here's an opportunity to "get your hands dirty"!

Please mark your calendars and plan to put the Alberta Native Plant Council's management plans into action. Following are the planned work days for Nisku Native Prairie Reserve for the 2005 season:

Saturday, July 16: Control smooth brome (an invasive exotic grass) by herbicide and by removing seed. Also, we will be harvesting native prairie plant seeds.

Saturday, August 13: More variety, a job for everyone! Pull weeds, mow, collect seeds.

Saturday, September 17: Restore areas back to native grassland by planting seeds that we collected all year.

For more details or to help out by being a volunteer, contact Birgit Friedenstab at (780) 440-0971 or birgitf@telus.net. ❁