Iris

No. 51 • Winter 2006 The Alberta Native Plant Council Newsletter

Mountain-ash – An Established Member of the Edmonton Flora

By Linda Kershaw and Elisabeth Beaubien

Around Edmonton, 2005 was a great year for fruit. Although total rainfall was near or below average, frequent showers in July and August kept things green and moist enough to support abundant fruit production. Some of the most prolific fruit producers in the city were mountain-ash trees. By autumn, their branches were bowed under the weight of a heavy crop. When the annual wave of robins swept through in September, large flocks did their best to lighten the load, but most trees were still red with fruit as the birds continued south. By the end of October, when trees had shed their leaves and bare branches stood exposed, the wash of red along streets and through the river valley was even more apparent. Large flocks of Bohemian Waxwings arrived in January, stripping some trees in just a couple of days, but there are still lots of berries left. Waxwings and robins aren't the only ones with a taste for mountain-ash fruit. Grouse, grosbeaks, mice, squirrels, bears, and of course, humans also enjoy the fruit.

The bright red fruits are usually called berries, but they are, in fact, miniature apples called pomes. Although mountain-ash fruit is rather bitter and acidic, it is nutritious (containing iron and vitamin C), and has provided people with food and medicine for many years. However, the berries should be eaten only when they are fully ripe. Like many other fruits in the Rose Family, mountain-ash pomes contain toxic tannins and amygdalin when they are green. Bittersweet fruits, gathered after the first frost, can be used to make jams, jellies, juice, cider, wine and liqueurs. Some people report that raw fruits mixed with sugar are commonly eaten, but this is not recommended. Uncooked mountain-ash fruit contains poisonous parascorbic acid. This toxin is neutralized by heat, so it is

Abundant fruit on European mountain-ash attracted 1000s of birds in late summer
Photo: L. Kershaw

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probably best to stick to cooked dishes. Dried fruits can be added to stews or ground into meal or flour for use in a variety of foods. Medicinally, mountain-ash fruit is considered a mild laxative with diuretic effects. It also aids digestion, and was recommended as a condiment to accompany difficult-to-digest foods such as fish or meat. Mountain-ash fruit is quite astringent, so it has also been used to make gargles for sore throats and inflamed tonsils, as well as infusions for treating hemorrhoids. Because of its high vitamin C content, the fruit was also eaten to prevent scurvy. The protective powers of these trees went beyond the mere physical. In Europe, mountain-ashes were believed to give protection from witchcraft and evil spirits, so the trees were often planted by homes and near barns.

Mountain-ashes are hardy, attractive trees, with showy flower clusters *Photo: L. Kershaw*

Mountain-ashes are hardy, attractive trees, with showy flower clusters in spring, shady canopies in summer, salmon-coloured leaves in autumn and beautiful red fruits in fall and winter - ideal landscaping trees. Frothy clusters of white flowers appear in early June. The flowers attract numerous nectar-seeking insects; including bees, flies and butterflies and these, in turn, attract insect-eating birds. Mountain-ash leaves emerge with the flowers in late spring. Each leaf is composed of several pairs of toothed leaflets. The number and shape of the leaflets varies somewhat with the species, but most trees are very similar. The canopy remains a rich, deep green throughout the summer, but in late September the leaves gradually turn red, salmon or yellow. Like other introduced species in our city forests, mountain-ashes often hold their leaves longer than native trees in the fall, so they frequently add splashes of colour to an otherwise grey/brown landscape. Even in winter, mountain-ash trees add interest and colour. Many hold large clusters of bright red fruit throughout the winter. These are especially attractive covered in frost or silhouetted against a snowy white background.

All of the mountain-ash trees that you see in the city have been introduced from elsewhere. Several species are grown here, but the European mountain-ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*), also called the rowan tree, is by far the most common. Species from eastern

Most Common Species in Alberta

1a Buds dull, not sticky, covered with silky white hairs; leaves hairy, stalks of young leaves white-woolly, underside of leaflets always somewhat hairy;leaflets 11–17 – **European mountain-ash (*S. aucuparia*)** (native to Europe)

1b Buds hairless or reddish-hairy, usually sticky; leaves essentially hairless – Canadian species – **go to 2**

2a Buds dull, not sticky, reddish hairy; leaflets mostly 9–11 – **Sitka mountain-ash (*S. sitchensis*)** (native to foothills and mountains)

2b Buds glossy and sticky, with or without hairs; leaflets mostly 13–15 – go to 3

3a Leaflets 2–3 times as long as wide, broadest near the middle, abruptly pointed at the tip and with few teeth towards the base – **Showy mountain-ash (*S. decora*)** (native to eastern N. Am.)

3b Leaflets mostly 3–5 times as long as wide, broadest near the base, tapered to a slender pointed tip and toothed nearly to the base – go to 4

4a Flowers and fruits up to 6 mm across; buds completely hairless – **American mountain-ash (*S. americana*)** (native to eastern N. Am.)

4b Flowers and fruit up to 10 mm wide; buds somewhat hairy – **Western mountain-ash (*S. scopulina*)** (native to western half Alberta)

Canada are also popular. The most common of these are American mountain-ash (*S. americana*) and showy mountain-ash (*S. decora*). Western mountain-ash (*S. scopulina*), a native species with a range extending from Waterton north to Lesser Slave Lake and the Clear Hills, is also available from some garden centres. All of these species are popular for landscaping in Edmonton.

The periodicity of flowering, fruiting and leaf growth can also vary from one species to the next. In Edmonton, Showy mountain-ash appears to flower about 10 days earlier than European mountain-ash. Start-of-bloom dates for American mountain-ash have ranged from May 23 in the early spring of a warm El Nino year (1998) to June 13 in a cool spring (2002). In the fall, Showy mountain-ash leaves turn a beautiful orange colour in early to mid-October, typically about 2 weeks earlier than the leaves of European mountain-ash.

Mountain-ashes are now among the most common trees in Edmonton, but this wasn't always the case. Mountain-ashes were widely planted in Edmonton neighbourhoods in the 1950s, and since then thousands of songbirds have carried hundreds of thousands of seeds throughout the woodlands and ravines in and around the city. Seedlings grow readily from bird droppings, and are hardy enough to survive even the coldest prairie winter. Today, almost every woodland in the Edmonton area has mountain-ash trees or seedlings growing in it. Most ravines and river-valley slopes support healthy populations with mature trees. These are especially apparent in the winter, when a haze of red fruit marks their number and location in the understorey. In one vegetation study just downhill from the northeast corner of the University, in an area where thousands of waxwings are known to roost on winter nights, 600 seedlings of European mountain-ash (*S. aucuparia*) were counted in a single 2 x 5 metre quadrat. Unfortunately, many of the native shrubs that once flourished in these habitats, are now being replaced by European mountain-ash. At some point, local conservationists may want to address the problem of removing non-native and invasive woody species from the river valley, but with so many aggressive invaders already established here (e.g., mountain-ash, caragana, honeysuckle, cotoneaster, common buckthorn, etc.), this is a daunting, if not impossible undertaking. It seems likely that, for better or worse, mountain-ashes are now part of the Edmonton flora.

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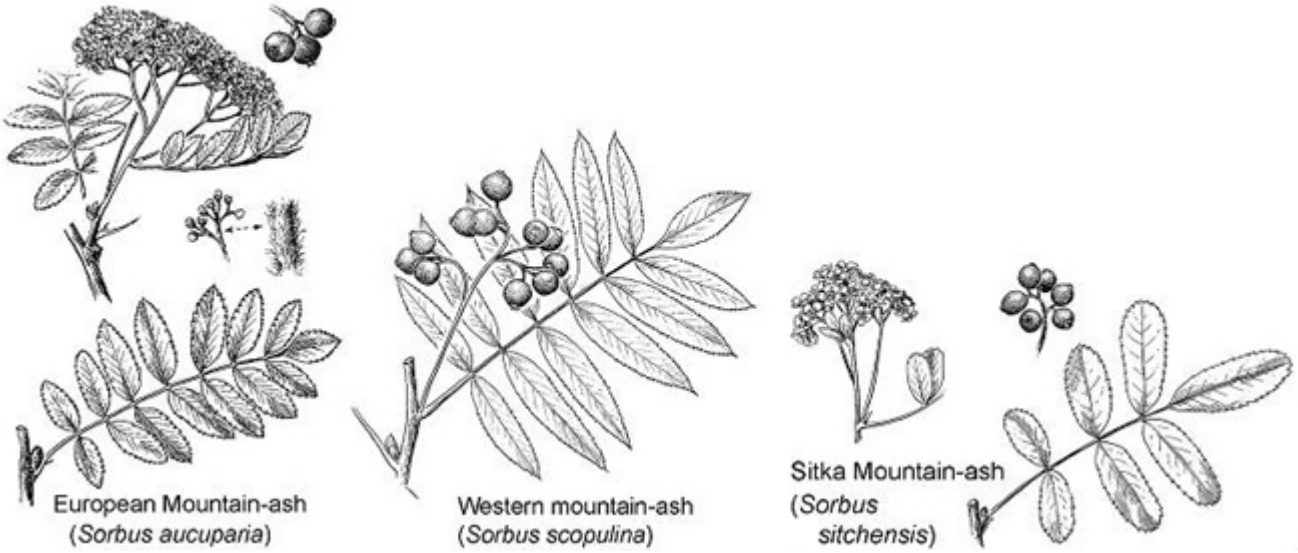

Line Drawings of Sorbus species
Illustrations from Hitchcock et. al., 1955–69, with permission from University of Washington Press

Special Resolution – Update to Section 5 of ANPC Bylaws

Introduction

The ANPC bylaws were adopted in 1988, and there have been very few changes made to them since that time, although Section 17 as copied below outlines how such changes might be made.

Section 17

The bylaws may be rescinded, altered or added to by a Special Resolution.

Meetings continue to be held every second month, but in the last few years, the Board has increasingly relied on email as an effective means of communication and as a way of accomplishing tasks between meetings. In addition, from time to time the Board has found itself without a President, but continue to function in the absence of a person to fill that position.

For these reasons, the Board is recommending by Special Resolution, a change to Section 5 of the bylaws, which is the section that discusses the functioning of the Board. Section 5, as it appears in the bylaw, is copied below, and then is followed by the proposed changes to the section.

Section 5

Current bylaw regarding functioning of the Board

The board shall, subject to the bylaws or directions given it by majority vote at any meeting properly called and constituted, have full control and management of the affairs of the society, and meetings of the Board shall be held as often as may be required, but at least once every three months, and shall be called by the President. A special meeting may be called on the instructions of any two members thereof provided they request the President in writing to call such a meeting and state the business to be brought before the meeting. Meetings of the Board shall be called by ten days' notice in writing mailed to each member or by three days' notice by telegram or telephone. Any four members shall constitute a quorum, and meetings shall be held without notice if a quorum of the Board is present, provided, however, that any business transactions at such meeting shall be ratified at the next regularly called meeting of the Board; otherwise they shall be null and void.

Special Resolution

The 2005–2006 Board suggests that the following amendments to Section 5 of the ANPC Bylaws be considered for adoption at the 2006 Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Native Plant Council, to be held Saturday, April 8 2006 at 4 pm at Red Deer College in Red Deer, Alberta. Numerous additions but no deletions are proposed to Section 5 of the current Bylaw..

Proposed Revisions to Section 5

All proposed revisions are bolded.

In the following, Section 5 has been broken down into subsections to facilitate discussion and review of proposed changes.

5.1 The Board shall, subject to the bylaws or directions given it by majority vote at any meeting properly called and constituted,

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is published three times a year by the Alberta Native Plant Council (ANPC). The Council aims to increase knowledge of Alberta's wild flora and to preserve this diverse resource for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

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 the 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.

Submission deadlines for upcoming issues:

Spring	**April 15, 2006**
Fall	September 15, 2006
Winter	January 30, 2007

A subscription to Iris is included with membership in the ANPC. To join, contact the Secretary, or check our web page at www.anpc.ab.ca.

have full control and management of the affairs of the society, and

5.2 meetings of the Board shall be held as often as may be required, but at least once every three months, and shall be called by the President **or by an individual appointed by the Board, in the absence of a President**.

5.3 A special meeting may be called on the instructions of any two members thereof provided they request the President **or Board-appointed designate** in writing to call such a meeting and state the business to be brought before the meeting.

5.4 Meetings of the Board shall be called by ten days' notice in writing mailed to each member or by three days' notice by telegram or telephone **or by email or other electronic means such as fax**.

5.5 Any four members shall constitute a quorum, and meetings shall be held without notice if a quorum of the Board is present, provided, however, that any business transactions at such meeting shall be ratified **either** at the next regularly called meeting of the Board; **or as discussed below, through email or other electronic means**, otherwise they shall be null and void.

5.6 Some business may be carried out by the Board through email, to supplement the usual business carried out at Board meetings.

5.7 This may include voting on issues, subject to the following stipulations:

- **an email vote can only be held if all members of the Board have regular access to email or if those without email receive all correspondence in a timely fashion and can participate in the voting through some other means such as fax.**
- **a proposed email vote must be clearly marked as such and sent to all members of the Board.**
- **there will be a minimum of five working days for review before the vote is closed.**
- **any discussion and results of the vote will be reported back to the Board by email and presented at the next regularly called meeting of the Board.**

5.8 The Board may develop policies to allow use of new technologies, as they may be developed, in the running of the Society, as long as all members of the Board have ready, easy and timely access to those technologies.

Botany Alberta 2006: Pekisko Rangelands– Preliminary Notice

Three nights at Chain Lakes Provincial Park: June 8, 9, and 10, 2006 (arriving on Thursday, leaving on Sunday).

Includes field trips in the area and evening presentations by the Pekisko Group and the Southern Alberta Land Trust

Stay tuned for more information in the Spring 2006 IRIS!

The Dangers of Transplantation as a Conservation Technique

By: Dianne Fahselt

Original excerpts are from the article originally published in the *Natural Areas Journal* 8(4): 238-243 and reprinted in Botanical Electronic Newsletter No. 331 June 16, 2004 with the author's permission.

Danger to Intact Natural Areas

Transplantation of threatened or rare plants into suitable protected sites has been proposed as an acceptable conservation strategy (e.g., IUCN 1986, Falk 1987). The most straightforward approach introduces rare plants into a location similar to the one at risk. A restoration site would be the wisest choice, but regardless of where the transplants are placed, a natural area must not be manipulated to accommodate them. Why disturb one assemblage of plants in an attempt to relocate others? The large number of rare and endangered species is a result of society's cavalier approach to natural areas in the past. Continued insult to ecosystems will only aggravate the situation and create even more rare entities.

Conservationists are very concerned about rare species, but the inherent values of habitat and communities, while given lip-service, are not equally appreciated. In addition to their role as a haven for particular species, ecosystems themselves are of value and must be perpetuated. As discussed by Whitney (1987) and others, they serve as reference points or benchmarks, outdoor research laboratories, sources of germplasm, and element of natural and cultural heritage. Because of the necessary functions that ecosystems perform, it is senseless to interfere with them for any reason. This is particularly true since there is no guarantee that rare species will be actually saved as a result of the disturbance.

Some types of research depend on undisturbed conditions. Insidious changes in ecosystems due to transplantation or other manipulations can confound an unsuspecting investigator attempting to understand basic biological phenomena. Chater (1987) learned accidentally that what he had regarded as a range extension of the uncommon *Polystichum aculeatum* was actually a transplant of unknown origin made by a botanist some years previously. Such unsuspected introductions could give spurious results in studies of nutritional and moisture requirements, allelopathic interactions, or factors controlling distribution.

Another consideration is that in the course of inserting new individuals or floristic elements into a natural area, something previously established often is displaced. Any interference is bound to impinge on the complex interrelationships within an ecosystem. Also we could be wrong about what constitutes an appropriate introduction.

Even when it is believed that transplantations are being made into an area where a species once grew naturally, mistakes can be made not only about the proper provenance but [also] about a satisfactory microhabitat or even the suitability of the area itself. An introduction can be slowly eliminated if it is ill-equipped for a site; it can disadvantage other elements in the community if it becomes aggressive in the new setting.

An example of error in judgment can be seen in two parks in southern Ontario where oak savannas were deliberately planted with pine (mainly *Pinus strobus*). The savanna origins of the stands were not understood, and it was believed that pines previously occurred there. After all, one area had long been known as the Pinery. As a result of an extensive planting operation that took place in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, sites now have degenerated to dense, near monocultures of pine with only a few of the original species surviving. In one park a locally rare herb, *Lupinus perennis* has been essentially eliminated along with the rare Karner blue butterfly that feeds upon it (Crabe et al. 1988). To prevent the loss of more savanna species and the destruction of one of the rarest ecosystems in Ontario, expensive and labour-intensive pine removal has become necessary to restore the community.

Introduction of pine into parks in southern Ontario was a major effort extending over a period of many years, but lesser introductions also can have an effect. Introductions of even a single fertile individual could ultimately generate a burgeoning population and the full impact of an apparently minor introduction might not be felt until decades or even centuries later (Egler 1983).

High Costs

Limited availability of funds is often given as a reason for resorting to alternative conservation methods rather than simply setting aside nature reserves. However, alternative approaches can be very expensive when they are properly executed. An example is the substantial cost of creating artificial vernal pools in California to mitigate the effects of urbanization on natural pools; Zedler and Black (1988) concluded that it is not necessarily cheaper to create artificial communities than to preserve the natural ones that are to be destroyed.

Unreliability

Since funds are usually limited they should be spent where prospects of success are greatest. Private yards and gardens are ephemeral and not recommended by the World Wildlife Fund Plant Conservation Roundtable (1986). Even constitutional gardens are unreliable as a permanent repository of rare plant due to policy changes over time. As directors come and go, commitments change and old collections disappear to make room for new.

There are also many biological reasons why transplantation could fail and many indications that it does, though much of this evidence is unpublished. For example, in a local provincial park several interesting plants were moved so that the public could see them more easily. The park naturalist noted that while transplants persisted at first, they usually did not increase in number. Gradually most species declined and twenty years later were gone (T. Crabe pers. comm.). All attempts to transplant a threatened Canadian population of *Buchnera americana* totally failed (A.H. Rider pers. comm.); transplanting a distance of [only] 100 metres [away] did not work. Most transplants fare poorly when placed in previously established communities (Lape 1985) and according to Egler (1983) "do best in good Bare Soil."

Better known transplant examples include the rare sedge, *Schoenus ferrugineus*, in Scotland, where individuals from the last remaining population were moved to avoid inundation of the original habitat (Morton 1982). Though they were moved only a few meters up a lakeshore the transplants persisted for just a short time before they died out. The species is now thought to be extinct in Britain.

[Several more examples of mostly unsuccessful transplants (Cranston & Valentine 1983, Hall 1987, Holland 1980, Hope Simpson 1987, Lape 1985, and May et al. 1982) follow in the original paper.]

Obviously many wild plants flourish in gardens and may persist there for many years; however, success with any given species is not predictable (Keddy 1983). Detailed environmental requirements are not usually known, and even if every aspect of the physical support system could be suitably reproduced, it would be almost impossible to assemble the appropriate genotypes of microbes, insects, plants, and other biological associates in the natural community. Rare plants often have an extremely narrow ecological amplitude, and this may well be the reason why they are rare. What appear to be negligible differences between growing conditions at the original location and some chosen transplant site may be critical ones that preclude establishment.

[In the next sections of the article Dianne Fahselt discussed "False Sense of Security," and "Undermining of Preservation Efforts."]

Value of Transplantation

Transplantation is not, of course, universally inadvisable. Clearly it can be a valuable tool for the stabilization of disturbed areas (e.g., Diamond 1985, Falk 1987) such as dune systems, eroding roadsides, mine tailings, and old fields, and some of the more successful revegetation projects do involve the use of native species (Miyawaki et al. 1988). Such applications are commendable, as long as valuable natural areas are not depleted in the course of supplying stock for reestablishment and as long as the finished product is not regarded as a satisfactory replacement for a long-established and finely tuned natural ecosystem. As pointed out by Zedler & Black (1988) artificial habitat cannot replace natural habitat.

In spite of the problems associated with it, transplantation is used along with seeding to culture rare species, as recommended by the Canadian Plant Conservation Program, the Center for Plant Conservation in the United States, and similar organizations in other countries. However, this should be done only if it is impossible to prevent

relevant habitats from being destroyed and only if plants are transferred to locations other than natural areas.

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See also the Canadian Botanical Association Conservation Policy Statement (1987) *Transplantation as a Means of Preservation* at http://www.sru.edu/depts/artsci/bio/jgc/positio1.pdf (published version in: *Natural Areas Journal* 8(4): 243–244. 1988.)

Editor's Note

If you have had a plant transplant experience, we would enjoy hearing about it, regardless of its success. Please send information on the type of species transplanted, transplant methods, characteristics of donor and recipient habitat, follow-up and results to lor_hamilton@hotmail.com. NOTE: Any submission is considered permission to be published in IRIS.

Correction

An article in the last issue of IRIS (No. 50), entitled, *Cuttings from the ANPC's 2005 Workshop: "Grow Naturell"* has the following correction:

The section entitled "Native Plants for Prairie Gardens," incorrectly identified the presentation title. The title of this presentation should have read "Every Drop Counts: Water-wise Gardening in Alberta."

The presenter, June Flanagan, would like to clarify that the intent of this presentation was to focus on water-wise gardening practices and indicate that, where the article indicated irrigation recommendations of deep watering, it should only apply to the highest, water-demanding plants in the garden (i.e., lawn, vegetables, and annual bedding plants), not to native plants.

Alberta Weed Species:
Butter-and-Eggs, Toadflax

By: Mari Decker

This pretty little thing, which looks like a snapdragon, and can show up in wildflower seed mixes, is not a native flower in Alberta, and can cause havoc in places where it's introduced. You don't want it in your garden! Butter-and-eggs (a.k.a. Toadflax) (*Linaria vulgaris*) is native to Europe and was brought here in the mid-1800s for use in gardens, but is now classified as a noxious weed in Alberta. It can spread prolifically by seeds and rhizomes in gardens, roadsides, meadows, cropland and rangeland (where cattle generally won't eat it due to its toxic compounds). In early English, Toad meant useless, hence useless flax.

The plants are top-branching perennials, 20–80 cm tall, with numerous narrow, alternate leaves, often with a bluish cast, and clusters of yellow snapdragon flowers with spurs and orange throats. Before flowering, these plants could be confused with leafy spurge, but leafy spurge is also a noxious weed, so either way, get rid of them! (To distinguish them before flowering, leafy spurge has milky juice in the stem, toadflax does not). Toadflax seeds can be viable for up to eight years, and root fragments as short as one centimetre in length can grow a plant.

To control established stands, mow to prevent further seed set. In croplands, intensive tillage, high seeding rate and high fertilizer rate may be useful. In other areas, two insects (a beetle and a weevil) have been shown to prevent spread of the weed; however, for eradication, chemical control is likely necessary.

See the Alberta Agriculture toadflax information sheet at: http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex3488?opendocument.

For more information, contact the Agriculture Fieldman for your area at: http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/rsv5531.

Butter-and-eggs (*Linaria vulgaris*) *Photo: Anne Elliot*

Vacant ANPC Board Positions

ANPC has elected and volunteer (non-elected) positions on the board.

Vacant Positions for Nomination

Elected positions are for a two-year term. Nominations are now being requested for the following positions, which are up for election this year:

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Northern Director
- Central Director
- Southern Director
- Federation of Alberta Naturalists (FAN) Director
- FAN Director (alternate)

ANPC members may offer to stand for election for a selected position, or nominate others (with agreement from the nominee)

Nominations may be mailed to:

Alberta Native Plant Council
Box 52099
Garneau PO
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2T5

Or emailed to info@anpc.ab.ca.

Elections will be held at the Annual General Meeting, to be held in conjunction with the Saturday, April 8, 2006 Workshop in Red Deer, Alberta.

Vacant Non-Elected Positions

In addition, ANPC is looking for volunteers for the following non-elected positions:

- Volunteer Coordinator
- Conservation Action

ANPC Objectives

ANPC strives to:

- promote knowledge of Alberta's native plants
- conserve Alberta's native plant species and their habitats
- preserve plant species and habitat for the enjoyment of present and future generations

Specific Objectives

The Council's specific objectives are:

- to educate individuals, industry,and government about native plants
- to promote awareness of native plant issues through a newsletter, an annual workshop, and in the media
- to coordinate information and activities concerning Alberta's native plants, including:
  - developing briefs or position papers for special projects, e.g., biodiversity, forest vegetation management, wetlands, rare species or phenology
  - organizing field trips, plant studies and May Species Counts
  - updating lists of current research and conservation projects
- to preserve natural habitats and plant communities, including:
  - supporting legislation that protects native plants
  - taking action to establish, preserve and manage protected areas
  - undertaking Alberta projects jointly with like-minded groups
- to encourage appropriate use of Alberta's native plants by:
  - producing information on using native plants in land reclamation
  - developing and distributing collection, salvage and management guidelines
  - updating a list of native seed sources and suppliers for horticulture and reclamation

Thanks to . . .

Jane Lancaster, Who Steps Down from the Rare Plant Committee

Jane Lancaster has been an ANPC member for many years. She's served on the executive board as a member of the Rare Plants Committee for the past 11 years (1995–2005). During this time, she has made many important contributions to conservation and the study of plants in Alberta.

Jane works as an environmental consultant, where she has identified several information and protocol gaps in Alberta.

Rather than sit back and hope that things would fix themselves, Jane spent many hours working with other ANPC members to address problems and find solutions.

When field biologists identified a need for a standard approach to rare plant surveys, Jane worked with a variety of participants to compile a series of guidelines. She edited the information to produce the ANPC's *Guidelines for Rare Plant Surveys in Alberta*. These guidelines have been adopted by many organizations and are now widely used as the standard for surveys in Alberta and other parts of North America.

Jane also contributed to the ANPC's first *Guidelines for the Collection and Use of Native Plants*.

When the rare plant book project got underway, the committee knew that illustrations would be one of the most important components. To illustrate all of Alberta's rare plants, hundreds of photos and line drawings had to be gathered, assessed and catalogued. Jane took on this daunting project and worked with other volunteers to gather slides and prints from dozens of photographers, plus line drawings from dozens of publishers and government agencies. Through it all, she kept track of the ownership and permission status of each illustration. Now that's organization!

Over the years, Jane has spoken at ANPC workshops on a variety of subjects that reflect her broad knowledge and wide range of interests. Some of her topics have included rare plants, rough-fescue prairie and gardening with native species. Jane is a dedicated and energetic botanist, and we will miss her on the ANPC executive.

Adopt-a-Plant Alberta Workshops

Spring 2006

In 2006, Adopt-a-Plant Alberta (APA) is launching its first year of operation with the presentation of three rare plant workshops. The first one will be a joint APA/ANPC Workshop and ANPC Annual General Meeting (see Page 13).

The remaining two workshops are identical hands-on, technical sessions devoted to training registered APA volunteers and are scheduled for May 13th and 14th, 2006 at the University of Calgary and May 27the and 28th, 2006 at the Devonian Botanic Garden (located a short distance west of Edmonton). At both technical sessions, participants will choose a vascular plant, bryophyte or lichen to adopt, and learn how collect valuable rare plant data by developing key skills such as:

- accurately reading maps and air photos
- using a GPS to record plant locations
- applying sound rare plant survey techniques
- filling in ANHIC (Alberta Natural Heritage Information Centre) data forms

Since the training will be the same in both sessions, volunteers may select the location and date that is most convenient. These workshops will be free of charge.

Stay tuned for further details on these events in the next issue of IRIS coming out shortly. To become an APA volunteer, contact:

- René Belland (Devonian Botanic Garden). e-mail: rene.belland@ualberta.ca or phone, (780) 987-3054 (Edmonton)
- Dana Bush (Alberta Native Plant Council). e-mail: cdbush@telusplanet.net or phone (403) 282-3975 (Calgary)
- Ed Karpuk (Alberta Native Plant Council). e-mail: ed.karpuk@gov.ab.ca or phone (403) 340-7114 (work) and (403) 347-5723 (home) (Red Deer)
- Margot Hervieux (Alberta Community Development). e-mail: margot.hervieux@gov.ab.ca or phone (780) 538-5603 (Grande Prairie)

Alberta Native Species: Scarlet Mallow

By Maric Decker

Have you felt the joy at seeing bright peach-pink buttons jump out at you from the greening prairie in June? Perhaps this is why this plant has been called Cowboy's delight though it's more commonly known as scarlet mallow or scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*). If you haven't seen it, head to any of our prairie parks this summer (Dry Island Buffalo Jump, Wyndham-Carseland, Dinosaur Provincial Park, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, Writing-on-Stone, etc.) and have a look for it. Though it is a forb, look closely… scarlet mallow is a perennial with a woody base. Also, use a hand lens to see that it is covered with star-shaped hairs that make it look like a cactus under magnification. Look for it after it has finished flowering and you will see that the seeds look like neat wedges on a wheel of cheese.

The species was first described in the early 1800s by the eminent German botanist Frederick Pursh. As the common name tells us, this plant is of the Mallow family. The word mallow comes from the Greek word meaning soft and refers to the soft leaves. Sphaera of *Sphaeralcea* is Greek for sphere and refers to the round fruits. *Coccinea* is Latin for scarlet. Medicinally, the leaves can be chewed to relieve a sore throat or upset stomach, or crushed leaves can be used as a plaster on inflamed skin. You won't have to fight cattle off for it as they don't like it, however it is eaten by deer, antelope and small mammals, so don't take too much!

If you live in the prairie region and would like to add scarlet mallow to your native garden, you can purchase seed from Coyote Coulee Seeds in Cessford, Alberta, however, choose your site carefully, as scarlet mallow has underground rootstocks, and it can spread aggressively in gardens. For this or other native plant sources, check the ANPC's Seed Source List found at: *http://www.anpc.ab.ca/source.pdf*. If you are thinking of collecting native seed, please consult ANPC's Collection Guidelines found at: *http://www.anpc.ab.ca/guidelines.pdf*.

Happy native plant watching!

Scarlet mallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*) *Photo: M. Decker*

ANPC 19th Workshop and Annual General Meeting

Adopt-a-Plant Alberta

An Exciting Grassroots Rare Plant Conservation Program

April 8, 2006
Margaret Parson's Theatre
Red Deer College
56 Avenue and 32 Street
Red Deer, Alberta

Would you like to help conserve rare Alberta plants? Please join us on April 8, 2006 in Red Deer to learn about how you can make a difference through an exciting new program called Adopt-a-Plant Alberta. This workshop will inform and inspire ANPC members and others interested in rare plants. This event is considered the first training session for Adopt-a-Plant volunteers. Topics include:

- Alberta's natural regions and subregions
- understanding wetlands
- clues for botanical detectives—sources of information helpful in locating and assessing rare plant populations
- how rare plants are evaluated in Canada
- rare vascular plants
- rare lichens
- rare mosses and liverworts
- rare plant survey techniques

After the workshop, the ANPC will hold its Annual General Meeting. Everyone is invited. Learn about ANPC activities, consider a position on the Executive and/or volunteer for committee work.

The day will conclude with an evening banquet and a presentation by Dr. Peter Kershaw on the value of volunteers in environmental projects.

Registration for the April 8 conference includes a buffet lunch and coffee breaks. The banquet is an optional extra.

All events on Saturday will take place at the Red Deer College in Red Deer. Check-in time and last minute registration starts at 7:30 a.m. and workshop presentations begin at 8:00 a.m. Free outdoor parking will be available for all registrants and participants at the College.

Free space for display tables is available on a first-come, first-served basis. For information on display tables and registration, please contact:

- Ed Karpuk at 403-340-7114 (business) or 403-347-5723 (home), or by email at ed.karpuk@gov.ab.ca
- Eileen Ford at 403-886-4905 or by email at hh3@telusplanet.net.

Registration

Fill out the registration form (see Page 16) and mail it to:

2006 ANPC Conference
c/o Ed Karpuk
140 Dowler Street
Red Deer, AB, T4R 2J4

Include a cheque or money order payable to Alberta Native Plant Council. We can't accept other forms of payment. We will confirm your registration only by e-mail; no other confirmation will be provided.

Deadline

Early registration is up to and including March 15, 2006. After that, a late registration fee will be charged. Deadline for banquet tickets is March 31, 2006. Cancellations will be refunded in full, if notification is sent to one of the contacts (Ed or Eileen) by March 31, 2006.

Rhododendron lapponicum *Photo: Joyce Gould*

Accommodation

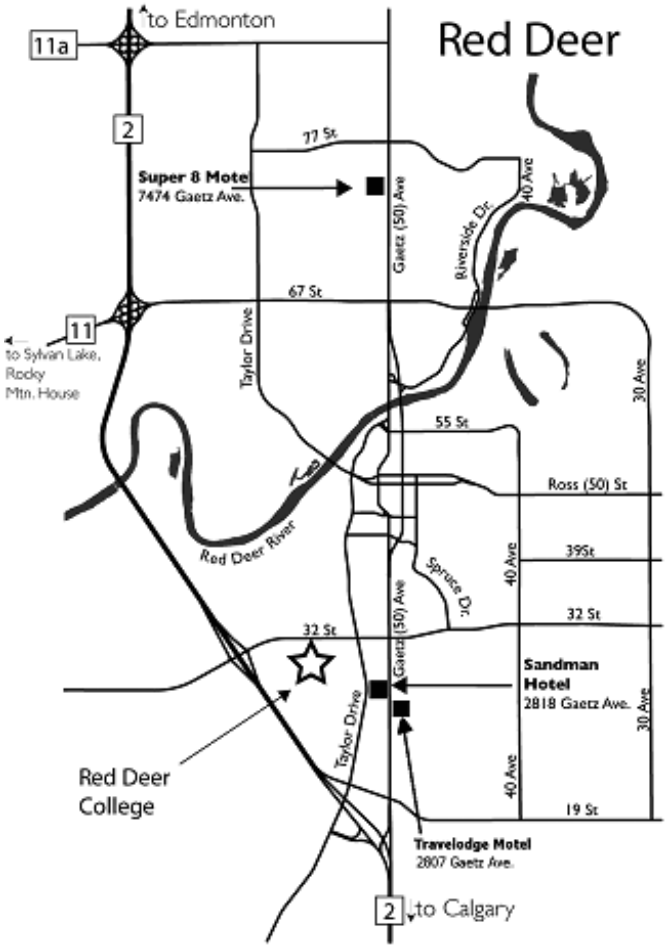
A variety of non-smoking rooms (singles, doubles and suites) have been booked the evenings of April 7 and 8 in Red Deer for participants at the following establishments (please book by March 24 to take advantage of the special rates and mention ANPC):

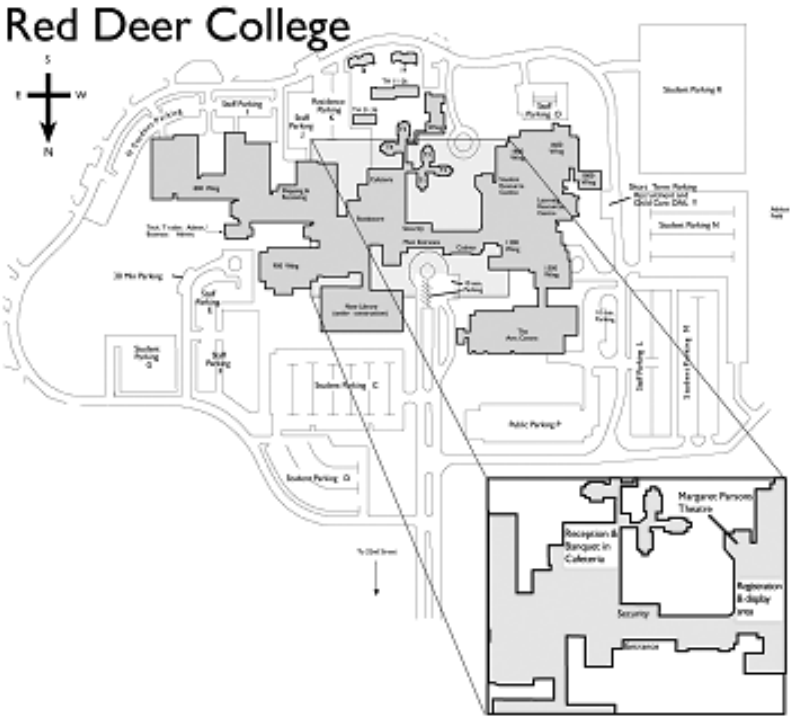
- Sandman Hotel Red Deer
  (25 rooms from $90 to $105)
  2818 Gaetz Ave, Red Deer
  Toll Free: 1-800-SANDMAN
- Super 8 Motel Red Deer
  (17 rooms from $79 to $110)
  7474 Gaetz Ave, Red Deer
  Toll Free: 1-877-488-2288
- Travelodge Red Deer
  (17 rooms from $75 to $85)
  2807 Gaetz Ave, Red Deer
  Toll Free: 1-888-383-2344

Getting There

Red Deer College is located in southwest Red Deer, east of the 32 Street exit off of the Queen Elizabeth 2 Highway (former Highway 2).

On Saturdays all outdoor parking is free, so park anywhere. Closest parking is Lot C, north of the Library.





Plant Happenings

By Lorna Allen

Courses, Workshops and Events

The Devonian Botanic Gardens
(near Edmonton)
http://www.devonian.ualberta.ca/
Phone: (780) 987-3062
2006 course calendar is now out. Some of the native plant related events:

- Naturescapes for Schools
  Saturday, March 25, 2006.
  10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
  Cost: $50.00
- Sunday Nature Walk – Focus on Spring
  Sunday, May 28, 2006
  1:30 p.m.(duration: about 1.5 hours)
  Cost: Free with garden admission, but must preregister
  (780) 987-3062
- Edible Wild
  Sunday, June 11, 2006
  10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
  Cost: $42.00

Botany BC 2006 – Preliminary Announcement
http://members.shaw.ca/dmeidinger/botanybc/
Date: Thursday, May 18, 2006 through Sunday, May 21, 2006.
Venue: Quaaout Resort and Conference Centre, Chase, British Columbia (Shuswap Area).

Jasper Institute
http://www.friendsofjasper.com/institute.htm
This year there are three wildflower courses to choose from (plus many others):

- Spring Wildflowers, June 10–11, 2006
- Introduction to Wildflowers, July 13, 2006
- Alpine Wildflowers, July 21-23, 2006

Athabasca University
Biology 321: Wildflowers (Plant Taxonomy)

This is a three month, field-oriented independent study course, with a nine-day taxonomy workshop held at the Kananaskis Field Station (KFS) at Barrier Lake.
Dates: June 1–August 31, 2006 (home study) or June 23–July 2 (at KFS).
Instructor(s): Mr. Richard Dickinson
Contact: Dr. Robert Holmberg
Email: robert@athabascau.ca

Canadian Land Reclamation Association (CLRA)/ International Affiliation of Land Reclamationists (IALR)
http://www.clra.ca
First Announcement and Call for Papers

Annual Meeting and Conference:
Date: August 20–23, 2006
Venue: Crowne Plaza Hotel Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
Conference Activities: technical sessions (three days), short courses, field trips, trade-show and banquet.

Websites

Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance Map Server (submitted by J. Rintoul):
http://www.restoretherockies.org/arc_ims.cfm.

This ArcIMS conservation mapping tool provides critical and timely data to local groups working to preserve wildlands in the southern Rocky Mountains. The site gives these groups access to data on threatened and endangered species, roadless area delineations, and current and consistent U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management boundaries. Users can integrate local data with online data for display, query, and analysis in the Web browser.

Invasive species (submitted by Elisabeth Beaubien):
http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/rsac/invasivespecies/planning_main.htm.

Contains information on invasive species as well as planning and management tools.

EMAN Website – Identifying West Coast Forest Lichens, A Reference Notebook:
http://www.eman-rese.ca/eman/ecotools/protocols/terrestrial/lichens/westcoast/intro.html.

Irwin Brodo, Brian Craig and Fred Rhoades have pulled this together and it's now posted on the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network (EMAN) website.

Registration Form

Name: Affiliation:

Address:

City: Province: Postal Code:

Phone: E-mail:

Banquet Guest(s) (list all for name tags):

Early Registration (tick one as applicable, enter amount on line below)

☐ Member (new or current) $40.00

If membership payment is enclosed, you may register at the member's workshop rate above.

☐ Student $15.00 ☐ Non-Member $50.00

Workshop Registration $_____

Banquet ($25.00 each) $_____

Late Registration **after March 15th** ($60.00 each) $_____

Total Enclosed $_____

☐ My diet is restricted (please describe, so we may meet your needs):

New membership enclosed (by separate payment)

☐ Individual ($15.00) ☐ Family ($25.00) ☐ Senior ($10.00)
☐ Student ($10.00) ☐ Corporate ($50.00) ☐ Life ($500.00)

Iris