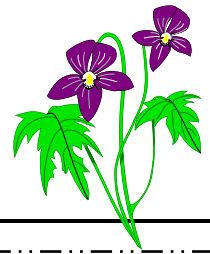


# Folsom Native Plant Society

[folsomnps.org](http://folsomnps.org)

October 2012



**Next Meeting Date: Sunday, October 21, 2012 at 1:00 p.m.**

**Place: A.J. Bailey's Home, 82517 Owen Sharp Rd, Bush, LA 70431**

From the south, you take Hwy. 190 north to Hwy. 437. Turn right onto N Lee Rd (Hwy 437) for 7.2 miles. Turn right onto LA-40 E for 5.5 miles. Turn right on Owen Sharp Rd.

Destination is first driveway on right.

## *From the President's Corner*

Greetings,

I hope everyone has recovered from Hurricane Isaac and the freak thunderstorm system that dropped over 5 inches of rain in an hour at the end of September. Lately, the old saying, "When it rains, it pours" has literally been true in St. Tammany Parish

Fall weather is here... at least for a while. It's time to collect and start native plant seeds. Some flowering natives that are easy to grow from seed include: Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis* and blue Lobelias), Beardtongue (*Penstemon tenuis* & *P. laxiflorus*), Monardas (*M. fistulosa*, *M. punctata*), Rudbeckias (*R. maxima*, *R. hirta*, *R. fulgida*), Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea* spp.), *Salvia coccinea*, Asters, and shrubs including: Red Buckeye (*Aesculus Pavia*), Coral Bean (*Erythrina herbacea*). I hope you'll start some this fall.



Earlier in the year some members expressed an interest in learning more about sustainable gardening and edible native plants. Since the two go hand in hand, we thought that Using Native Plants in Sustainable Gardening and Landscaping would be a good topic of study.

In my garden, I am working towards sustainability by choosing multi-functional native and cultivated plants. There are no more monoculture plantings on Hummingbird Hill. Fertilizer is provided by 10 hens, plus worm composting and regular composting bins. I use no synthetic pesticides and depend on natural predators and organic methods for pest control. Herbicides are used sparingly and only in extreme cases when nothing else will work.

I've been exploring the methods of companion planting to enhance vegetable plant growth and have discovered that planting members of the mint family (like *Monarda*) around the outside of the vegetable garden will attract both native pollinators and tiny parasitic wasps. Also, mixing and matching native plants and herbs with food crops can improve yields plus help with pest control. It's all about the balance of nature. *Yvonne L. Bordelon*

## PLANT IDENTIFICATION IN OUR AREA

Written by and used with the Permission of **Charles Allen**

A number of people have asked about "How to identify plants"? I attempt to do so with the first step being a definition of the various books. A flora or manual includes (or attempts to) include all species in an area. A monograph is like a flora but covers a selected family and often within a selected political or geographical area like Louisiana. A checklist is simply a list of all species in an area. An atlas is a list of all species plus a map or listing by parishes or counties of all species. Wildflower books are not inclusive and include selected, usually the showy flowered, species. Most floras, manuals, monographs, and wildflower books will have a glossary so don't get discouraged by the unknown terms.

If you have absolutely no idea what your in-hand plant is and it has distinct showy flowers, then start with a wildflower book. Some wildflower books are color coded, that is the flowers are grouped by flower color while others are organized by families. If your wildflower book is color coded, then use that to narrow down your choices but keep in mind there is a lot of variation in flower color in the same genus and even in the same species. The best thing is to start with the same wildflower book every time and turn the pages looking for a plant that looks like your in-hand plant. If you use the same wildflower book each time, you will soon start to remember what page you saw the plant on and can go directly to that page. The new book on Louisiana wildflowers has charts which will help to narrow down your choices to those with compound leaves or opposite leaves etc. If your in-hand plant does not have showy flowers, you might want to start with a flora or manual rather than a wildflower book since it is not likely to be in a wildflower book. Try to use the same flora or manual each time as you will start to recognize that you have seen a drawing of the in-hand plant. Many floras and manuals have keys but require repeated usage for a person to be able to proficiently use. Try the keys and remember that each time you key something out, it will be easier the next time since you will already know that species. But if keys are not your thing, just turn the pages looking for your plant. An on-line id source is the southeastern flora project by John Gwaltney with id help, pictures, etc. <http://www.southeasternflora.com/>.

A new approach is to Google images of plants so if you think that you know the plant then Google the name for images. Just be aware that mistakes are made in the posting of images so check out two or three images of the species to be sure.

If you recognize the genus and/or family, then go to that genus and/or family in a flora, manual, or monograph. Then, follow the steps above to identify your in-hand plant to species.

If I find a plant that I do not recognize, I first start with the family keys in the Flora of the Carolinas by Radford, Ahles, and Bell. I am on my fourth copy of that text as I have worn out the first three. I still have copy number three but is ragged and falling apart. It includes most plants in Louisiana, has illustrations for many species, and has fewer families than the Texas Flora. After getting the in-hand plant identified to family or genus, I then turn to the Texas Flora (Flora of Texas by Correll and Johnston) to key to genus or species and to double check the species identification. There are some species that are not in the Carolinas but are in Texas. If I can't find it in either of these two, I then turn to the very old Small's Flora of the Southeastern U.S. This is the only flora that includes Louisiana but is very outdated plus Small created his own nomenclature rules so the names are often difficult to trace to a modern name. A new book "Flora of North Central Texas" has illustrations of all species and can be very useful for Louisiana. And, the Flora of East Texas vol 1 has ferns, gymnosperms, and monocots. Thanks to Yvonne Bordelon for the details on these two books,

Illustrated Flora of East Texas [Hardcover]

[George M. Diggs](#) (Author), [Jr.](#) (Author), [Monique D. Reed](#) (Author), [and Robert J. O'Kennon](#) (Author), [Barney L. Lipscomb](#) (Author, Editor), [Linny Heagy](#) (Illustrator), [et al.](#) (Illustrator)

Shinners & Mahler's, Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas (Sida, botanical miscellany) [Hardcover]

[George Diggs](#) (Author), [Robert O'Kennon](#) (Author), [Barney Lipscomb](#)(Author, Editor), [Linny Heagy](#) (Illustrator)

A great on-line source is the Weakley Flora out of North Carolina. This has keys to family and to genera and to species with distribution data. Its range is to the Florida Parishes of SE Louisiana. It is large and takes a-while to download so be patient and you will find it useful.

<http://www.herbarium.unc.edu/flora.htm> Thanks to Dr. Tom Sasek for reminding me of this source.

The next step for selected families and plant groups is to consult one of the monographs. For wetland species, the Godfrey and Wooten two volumes on wetland plants of the southeastern US (one Monocots and one Dicots) are excellent works but don't forget that these do not include non-wetland species. A few monographs are completed for Louisiana including the Asteraceae by Gandhi and Thomas, the Fabaceae (Legumes) by Lasseigne, Grasses by Charles Allen, Dawn Newman, and Harry Winters, and woody plants by

the same three authors.. Many of these are not in print any more but may be available in libraries. A series of volumes on the North American Flora are being prepared with several volumes out already. These volumes will cover all species in North America with descriptions, keys, and lots of illustrations. You can use these on-line, search the family or genus and put flora of north America after it and if that family has been completed, you will be able to go to it on-line. Watch for the new volumes.

As soon as you have a name, check to see if the species is reported for Louisiana. There is a webpage [www.plants.usda.gov](http://www.plants.usda.gov) which will allow you to check for the distribution within the U.S. This will also allow you to check for scientific name synonyms; a plant's scientific name can change and thus create synonyms. Some of the reasons for name changes are (1) an older name is found, the accepted scientific name is based on priority that is the first name published is the correctly accepted one (2) moving from one genus to another, the interpretation of what genus a species belongs to is subjective and sometimes new information (chromosome number, DNA sequencing etc) causes the species to be moved and (3) lumping or splitting of species, some closely related species can be split or lumped, again based on new info (see above) or a different interpretation by a researcher. Another place to check is the Louisiana Atlas series by Thomas and Allen, a three volume work that documents the parishes within the state with known records for each species. If your plant is identified to a species that has not been reported for Louisiana or not for the parish, be sure to get it checked as you may have found a new record. Also, Charles Allen maintains an excel file with up to date parish distribution data. You can find it and download it at [http://www.nativeventures.net/plant\\_list.php](http://www.nativeventures.net/plant_list.php),

When all else fails, ask someone. After getting an answer, go and read about the plant in as many books as you can. Pay close attention to the related species as this will help you in the future. Also, go to the USDA webpage and the Louisiana Atlases and look up the distribution.

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Here is a little quiz to test your knowledge of five useful native plants. What would the following plants add to the sustainable landscape or garden?

1. Wild Plum (*Prunus mexicana* or *Prunus angustifolia*)
  - a. attracts pollinators and wildlife
  - b. edible fruit
  - c. fall color
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
2. Devil's Walking Stick (*Aralia spinosa*)
  - a. attracts pollinators, birds and wildlife
  - b. wood used for lumber
  - c. shade tree
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
3. Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea* spp.)
  - a. attracts pollinators, butterflies and songbirds
  - b. medicinal herb
  - c. hardy perennial with attractive flowers
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
4. Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma*), Wild Bergamot (*M. fistulosa*), Spotted Horsemint (*M. punctata*)
  - a. attracts insect pollinators, butterflies and hummingbirds
  - b. an herb that is used in tea
  - c. good companion for tomatoes
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above
5. Passion Flower Vine (*Passiflora incarnata*)
  - a. host plant for Gulf Fritillary and Zebra Long-wing Butterfly
  - b. perennial vine add vertical space
  - c. beautiful flowers and edible fruit
  - d. all of the above
  - e. none of the above



**Folsom Native Plant Society Facebook Page –**  
<http://www.facebook.com/FolsomNativePlantSociety>

**Statement of Purpose:** The purpose of our group is to protect, perpetuate, and propagate the abundant native plants of St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, and adjacent areas, focusing primarily on our native wildflowers, which are fast disappearing; and to discourage pollution of our water and ground so basic to their survival.

### Companion Planting Tips

Try planting Bee Balm and/or Bergamot (*Monarda* spp.) with tomatoes. This combination will boost the growth of the tomato plants, plus the flowers of the *Monarda* will attract more pollinators to the garden. *Monarda* and other mints also make great herbal tea.

### Our Board for 2012

**President:** Yvonne Bordelon  
**Vice President/Program Chairman:** Rod Downie  
**Treasurer:** David Scherer  
**Plant List Recorder:** A.J. Bailey  
**Newsletter:** Nick Blady [nblady77@gmail.com](mailto:nblady77@gmail.com)  
**Publishers:** Candyce & David Scherer  
**Hospitality Coordinator:** Candyce Scherer  
**FNPS Website:** (<http://folsomnps.org>) Yvonne Bordelon

### Dates to Remember

**October FNPS Meeting** – Sun., Oct. 21, 2012  
at 1:00 p.m. Place: AJ Bailey's home

**November FNPS Meeting** – Sun., Nov. 18,  
2012 at 1:00 p.m. Place: TBA

Check the FNPS Facebook page for other native plant dates and news.



Folsom Native Plant Society  
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