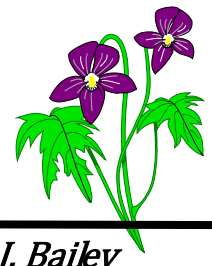


Folsom Native Plant Society

folsomnps.org

February 2010



From the President's Corner

A. J. Bailey

What grows in the cold wet saturated clay of Northern St Tammany Parish? I am not sure and I don't think I want to go out and search! This unusual cold, wet, and grey winter will probably affect the native plants in our areas. It will be interesting to note any differences occurring in plant growth this spring and summer. The weather has affected the birds in my area. Goldfinches were late in arriving. Robins were in by the hundreds. Cedar waxwings have eaten any berries they could find.

The giveaway trees are all planted thanks to Dave and Candy Scherer. Al is on the mend. We are also sorry to inform everyone that our Mentor of many years and one of the founding members, John Larkin, has passed away. We will discuss a tribute to John at the February Meeting. We will also finalize plans for the booth at the plant show. Please attend if you can. Bring your weeds and plants for identifying and bring a snack to share with the group. Last but not least someone please bring the sun and some warmth to share with the group. Keep smiling and plant a water garden in one of your puddles. AJ

Remembering John Larkin, Folsom Native Plant Society's First President

As head librarian in Folsom, I probably knew John Larkin the longest. I found out from his wife, Muriel, that John did wild flowers all the time. That was the beginning of a friendship that lasted over twenty years. He could always answer all my questions. He was a person who affected my life. His interests in wild flowers gave me an interest that still continues.

John was very dedicated to FNPS, the first president and editor of the newsletter. He wrote it, typed it, had it printed then handed it out at the meeting, all by himself for five years. Those newsletters were our teaching tools, how we all learned.

John had a shy, subtle humor. He was quiet person, never raising his voice. He had courage through many health problems. I consider it a privilege to have known John Larkin.

- Edmey S. "Tema" Theriot
One of FNPS Co-Founders

I wanted to say how John meant so much to me personally. We wouldn't be a club without him & his passion.

Mary Ann McClellan
Second Secretary, FNPS

The Folsom Native Plant Society began at the Folsom Library with the intention of getting the Village of Folsom cleaned up and beautified so we could enter it into a statewide contest for the "Cleanest City", (according to population, ours being about 325 at that time, 1988.)

That brought us together electing John Larkin, President, because he had already been president of the "Fern Society" in New Orleans. LA.

John was a friendly, smiling and knowledgeable person, who took to wild flowers so fast, getting the books for us to reference. He got us going on a special book with our own photographs and complete information on the specific wild flowers native to the Folsom area.

He tried to grow all these plants at his home, mainly around his pool, where we ended up having our monthly meetings.

John was a great President for so many years plus, with his wife, Muriel, a great host. He lived a good, long life until he was 90. We are glad to have known him and will miss him.

Naomi S. O. LaBrousse
First Secretary & Photographer, FNPS

Come to the February Meeting and express what John meant to you and to the FNPS.

IN MEMORIAM: John Larkin, the first President of Folsom Native Plant Society, died. He was our guiding light for many years. Our deepest sympathies go out to Muriel and his whole family.

Cogongrass *Imperata cylindrica*

A perennial grass that grows in loose or compact tufts from that creeps using its long, pointed rhizomes (stem-like roots) crowding out native plants. The invasive weed will be easiest to spot through mid-June, when it is in bloom. The most identifiable characteristics are fluffy white seeds that resemble dandelions, one-inch-wide leaves that have serrated edges and whitish, off-center midribs. Cogongrass reproduces both by rhizomes and wind-dispersed seeds; a single plant can make thousands of seeds that are carried by the wind. Vegetative reproduction occurs through tough, massive rhizomes that may lay dormant for long periods. Rhizomes may be moved in soil or on equipment to other uninfected areas. They may also survive in the feces of pigs.

This plant is a reproducing machine. Cogongrass is an aggressive invader capable of displacing native vegetation, desirable pasture grasses, and tree seedlings in a wide range of soil types and conditions. This is dangerous especially if native species depend on native plants for food. Cogongrass is unsuitable as a livestock forage because of poor nutritional value and low palatability. Cogongrass has no known pests or diseases to control its spread in the Southeast.

It is one of the top 10 worst weeds in the world and interferes with 35 different crops in 73 countries. Native to Southeast Asia and it is commonly found in humid tropics, but has spread to warm temperate zones. It was introduced in 1911 near Mobile, AL as packing material in a shipment of plants from Japan and into MS as a forage crop from the Philippines before 1920. It was replanted to FL from MS as forage and soil stabilizer in Gainesville, Brooksville, and Withlacoochee, where they now have high population densities. Later, it was planted to control erosion and feed cattle. Unfortunately, animals will not eat it.

Cogongrass is extremely flammable, capable of altering natural fire regimes; dense stands create a serious fire hazard. "Cogongrass does not provide food, shelter or benefits of any kind to wildlife," said the NWTFF Director of Land Management Programs Bryan Burhans. "It is a dangerous fuel source for wildfires, it multiplies at an alarming rate and it chokes-out native vegetation. Even kudzu looks like a bunch of wildflowers compared to cogongrass." Cogongrass can burn at any time, making it a year-round wildfire source and cause of constant concern. Its leaves are spaced far apart, which allows for tremendous air flow between the leaves and plants. "Because fields of cogongrass are highly oxygenated, a wildfire would burn very quickly," Burhans said. "Also, cogongrass flames burn so hot and climb so high that trees such as pines, which provide food and shelter for wildlife, would be killed if they are growing in a stand of cogongrass."

By 1949 there were more than 405 ha in central and NW FL. It is frequent along utility and transport corridors, and is spreading to Louisiana along Interstate 10 and Highway 90 from Mississippi.

Much research is being done to find out how to handle this aggressive intruder. So far, it has been found that a combination of plowing and herbicides is the most effective, and burning can also be substituted for plowing. It is important that these be staggered at certain points in the growing season. To combat cogongrass, which appears on the US Department of Agriculture's Federal Noxious Weeds list, the National Wild Turkey Federation and 22 partners (including LA:ed.) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding that formed the Georgia Cogongrass Task Force. The task force will complete projects to clear cogongrass from areas in Georgia that already have been overtaken, and will educate landowners about the importance of learning to identify and control Cogongrass.

The above article is a generous compilation of the information at the links to the right.
J. Bailey, FNPS President will do a presentation on Cogongrass at the February Meeting. This is additional background information.

[National Wild Turkey Federation](#)

[Tulane University](#)

[National Wetlands Research Center, USGS](#)

[USDA](#)

Links to this and other Louisiana invasive species can also be found below:

[Cogongrass](#): USDA

[Chinese Tallow](#): USDA

[Kudzu](#): Tulane University

[Invasive Species in Louisiana Forests](#) from *Louisiana Agriculture Magazine*

[Cogongrass Pictures](#): Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health, University of Georgia

[Chinese privet](#): USDA

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, February 21, 2010 at 1:00 p.m.

The [Lee Road Branch Public Library](#) 79213 Hwy 40, Covington, LA 70435 (985) 893-6284 From the south, you take Hwy. 190 north into Covington. At second red light past overpass turn right on Hwy 437 (Lee Road). Go 8 miles to an all-way stop at Hwy 40 and Lee Road. Proceed through stop. Lee Road Branch Library is the first building on the left after passing Lee Road Junior High School.

Smithsonian Magazine: Feb 2010

Observed *Name: Impatiens pallida*, a forest plant found in eastern North America.

In The Dark: Like some other plants, *I. pallida* can tell with its roots whether a neighboring plant is its sibling.

In The Light: With unrelated neighbors, *I. pallida* grows short, leafy stalks. With sibling neighbors, it grows taller stalks with fewer leaves, thus sharing the sunlight, says a study from McMaster University in Ontario.

Under Scrutiny: Other plant species have been shown to take up fewer nutrients through their roots when siblings are growing nearby, but this is the first time a plant has been shown to conspire with kin above ground.

Sent in by Edmey S. "Temae" Theriot

Our Board for 2010

President Emeritus: John Larkin

President: A.J. Bailey

Vice President/Program Chairman: Rod Downie

Treasurer: David Scherer

Plant List Recorder: A.J. Bailey

Business Recorder: NEEDED

Newsletter: Nick Blady nblady77@gmail.com

Publishers: Candyce & David Scherer

Hospitality Coordinator: Candyce Scherer

New Member Mentor: Temae Theriot

FNSP Website: (<http://folsomnps.org>) Emily Canter & Yvonne Bordelon

Seed Snatchin': The Art and Sport of Collecting Seeds

By Jill M. Nicolaus (critterologist)

October 29, 2009

We all know gardeners who pounce on every faded flower, deadheading to keep their garden looking as fresh and colorful as possible. Other gardeners, less dedicated or more distracted, claim the spent flowers add "texture" to their gardens. And some gardeners know the value of allowing seeds to ripen for later collection. To them, those dried stems have a special beauty and excitement after the flowers fade. Seed collecting can be an obsessive hobby, and one that's not necessarily limited to your own garden...

Dave's Garden

November 29, 2007

It starts with the realization that if you pick a few of those "dead" marigold blooms by the mailbox and stick them in a drawer, you won't have to buy a new packet of seeds next spring. Soon, you learn to recognize the fluffy seeds of asters and clematis in your garden. Then you discover where the tiny dark seeds of salvia and rose campion hide on the dried flower stalks in your neighbor's yard. The next thing you know, you're eyeing the unusual lantana in front of the local McDonalds, planning to casually snatch a

Congratulations! You have joined the proud tradition of seed snatchin'.
Soon after joining DG, I came across the series of Seed Snatchin' threads on the Saving Seeds discussion forum (subscribers only). I soon realized that my occasional raids on my neighbor's zinnias or my best friend's columbine patch were nothing compared to others' bold efforts. Imagine snatchin' seeds from in front of the police station in a deserted lot to snag some morning glory pods. Their tales inspired me! Soon, my husband was pretending not to know me as I nonchalantly helped myself to a restaurant window box. I'd pull petunia seeds in the shoulder and search out chicory or the car onto the oxeeye daisy seeds. I'd briskly strip a handful of dried coneflower seeds. I'd pluck a few dried heads on my way into an office building. Now my pockets never stay empty long.

For those concerned about the ethics of snatchin', nothing says snatched seeds have to be harvested without permission. You might get some odd looks, but you'll find few people who would object to your picking for plants, after all! Taking their dead flowers. Deadheading is good doesn't seem right to me, but seeds instead of buying a plant at a local nursery. Beds and planters in many nursery owners will happily share a few extras if common sense will keep you on the side of what's legal and considerate. If you collect wildflower seeds, please check to be sure you're not on protected land or collecting endangered species. Leave plenty of seeds for reseeding.



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There are several approaches to seed snatchin'. The Bold Front: Clad in coveralls and armed with pruners, go about the business of collecting the seeds. If you act as though pruning and tidying these plants is your job, nobody will think twice about what you're doing. The Sneaky Sleight of Hand: Pretend to be sniffing a bloom or looking for the pen you dropped, then slip your hand into the plant and come away with a few seeds to stuff into your pocket as you turn away. The Ninja Raid: Under cover of darkness, using only a small keychain light, gather seeds quickly and quietly, and then make your escape without waking your neighbor's tiny terror of a terrier. Try out a few of these methods, and you'll soon develop your own signature style.

Collecting seeds wherever you find them requires improvisation. I've folded seeds into napkins and gum wrappers. I've dropped seeds into empty cola cans and brought them home rattling in my car's cup holder. I've ended up with different seeds in each pocket of my five pocket jeans, foolishly thinking I'll remember which seed was stashed where when I come in from the garden. (Hah! I do well to remember to empty the pockets before washing the jeans.)

Sometimes, I'm better prepared, with little sandwich baggies, labels, and a Sharpie marker to keep track of my treasures. Freshly snatched seeds aren't usually quite dry, so I put mine out on plates to dry for a few weeks before removing the chaff and storing them in plastic bags. Some champion seed snatchers develop their own snatchin' kits for purse or car

Not all seeds are as easy to find and identify as those of marigolds or peppers. In addition to the Seed Saving forum, you'll find seed photos and seed collecting tips in a growing number of PlantFiles entries. Some websites such as The Seed Site and the Seed Saving FAQs at wintersown.org also have great information on recognizing and collecting seeds.

Depending on where you live, it might be a little late for seed snatchin' this year. But keep it in mind, and soon you'll be taking notes on all the locations with great potential for snatchin' next summer!

Once you get started, you may find that you've collected more seeds than you and your friends and relations can use. That's a perfect time to increase the variety of your stash by heading over to the Seed Trading discussion forum (subscribers only). Sharing and swapping your seeds opens entire new worlds of gardening opportunities... but that's another article.

*The above is taken from that most wonderful of gardening sites, Dave's Garden, a collective treasure trove of just about anything possibly to do with gardening. It is user friendly, and thousands have contributed to its always informative and entertaining hours of information.

Folsom Native Plant Society
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Cogongrass, *Imperata cylindrical*.

Cogongrass came from Southeast Asia.

This perennial is rhizomatous and grows from 2-4' in height. Cogongrass can invade and overtake disturbed ecosystems. The grass is a threat to habitat and endangered species. It is considered one of the world's worst weeds and is on the [Federal Noxious Weed List](#).

