

# Illinois Native Plant Society Northeast Chapter

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JUNE 2016

## A few words from the president

Field season's greetings, Northeast Chapter!

I hope you're enjoying the transition from spring to summer and the changes in our plants that come along with it. This time of year always feels like a whirlwind when it comes to different plants blooming, setting seed, or just putting on a lot of growth. I just learned a couple cool species at those different life stages while I was on a project in Kane County and I wanted to share them with you.

I was generating a site species list for a sedge meadow just north of Sugar Grove and noticed among the humps of tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*) a couple unfamiliar plants. The first one I saw looked a little like the invasive, crown vetch (*Coronilla varia*) that we see all over our roadsides, but with fewer, more elongated leaflets. There weren't any flowers to go off of but I eventually figured out that it was marsh vetchling (*Lathyrus palustris*; photo below from wikimedia), which is also a legume and a beautiful one at that. It is a vining herb with tendrils that wrap around nearby plants and it has pretty pinkish to purple flowers. I'm passing through the area in a couple weeks and though we may still be toward the early end of its bloom window, I'll be hiking out there, hoping to catch a glimpse of it in flower.



Among the tussock sedge and marsh vetchling, there were these occasional grasses about a foot and a half tall that were in flower. I had no idea what they were but my co-worker recognized them, smelled one and identified it as sweet grass (*Hierochloe odorata*). I took a whiff and it did smell pretty sweet, somewhat like a sweet baked good. In addition to being a beautiful,

fragrant wetland grass, it is used by Native Americans in medicinal and spiritual applications as well as basket-weaving. Had it not been in flower I may not have even noticed it, so the timing of our visit was pretty fortuitous in that respect. Next time you're near a sedge meadow keep your eyes peeled for these beauties.

We're planning to get a field trip or two on the calendar this month to capitalize on this nice point in the growing season but we haven't finalized details yet. We'll send notification out by email and Facebook when we get them figured out. I hope you have a nice June!

- Andy



*Hierochloe odorata* (sweet grass)  
photo from [www.naturalmedicinefacts](http://www.naturalmedicinefacts)

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Editor's note: another busy month for me, and a late newsletter for you. My apologies. As compensation, I offer up a few photos from a recent trip to Vermont,

where spring arrives approximately 2 weeks later than in the Chicago region.

- Linda



*Onoclea sensibilis* (Sensitive Fern)



*Arisaema triphyllum* (Jack-in-the-pulpit)

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*Clintonia borealis* (Bluebead Lily)

## Native Plant Excursions

Visit our FaceBook page for more info!

### RECENT

#### NE-INPS Lake in the Hills Fen

A small but dedicated group of us met on Saturday, May 14 (a chilly and drizzly day) to visit the fen and associated uplands under the guidance of Barbara Wilson. Thanks to Daniel Lopez, our social media man for organizing the trip.

As stated in the trip announcement, the area includes a diversity of habitats including the calcareous fen, dry

gravelly (limestone) hilltop prairie communities and a sedge meadow (complete with quicksand!).



Don't let this spot fool you. One step in the wrong spot and you are stuck!

We began our visit on one of the dry prairies. Here native grasses were beginning to flower as well as Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*), Bird's Foot Violet (*Viola pedata*), Fringed Puccoon (*Lithospermum incisum*) and Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon meadia*). Flowers were less obvious due to the weather, but still put on a show for us.



Fringed Puccoon  
(*Lithospermum incisum*)

Bird's Foot Violet  
(*Viola pedata*)

The White Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium albidum*) and Spring Cress (*Cardamine bulbosa*) refused to cooperate. Had there been sun, we would have seen a sea of white blossoms in both the wetlands and uplands.

Many unusual plants are also found in the fen including the False Asphodel (*Tofieldia glutinosa*) and the Bog Violet (*Viola nephrophylla*). We were fortunate enough to see (we think!) the violet.

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Prairie Smoke  
(*Geum triflorum*)



White Blue-eyed Grass  
(*Sisyrinchium albidum*)



Yellow Stargrass  
(*Hypoxis hirsuta*)



False Toad Flax  
(*Comandra umbellata*)



Bog Violet  
(*Viola nephrophylla*)



Cotton Sedge  
(*Eriophorum angustifolium*)



Marl soil of the fen.

see (*Hypoxis hirsuta*) and (*Comandra umbellata*). Marl, the pebbly soil texture, is typical for a calcareous fen. It develops via precipitation of calcium carbonate.

Other great sights included a large number of sedges, grasses, and rushes in addition to more typical wetland species such as Common Valerian (*Valeriana edulis ciliata*), Solomon's Seal (*Smilacina racemosa*) and Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*) in bud. In the fen proper we were lucky enough to avoid the quicksand and

Thanks to our guide Barbara, and all who came out despite the inhospitable weather!

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Daniel documenting the *Hypoxis* and *Comandra*!

## UPCOMING

**NE-INPS Chapter June Field Trips are in the works! Watch your email or our Facebook pages for more information.**

### Cook County

As always, you can join Canyon Tours at Sagawau every Saturday. The annual [Beaubien Woods Celebration](#) is on Saturday 6/11. River Trail Nature Center is hosting a Summer in the Woods walk (with a naturalist) on Sunday, 6/26, and there is a special Father's Day walk at the Trailside Museum.

Check out the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's [web page](#) for complete FP listings.

### DuPage County

Participate in one of the many [Forest Fitness Walks](#) taking place (a 10 mile hike at Springbrook Prairie on 6/13), the Pioneer Park History Hike (6/16), a St. James Farm History Walk (6/18), a Prairie Hike at the West Chicago Prairie (6/25), or a Nature Walk at St. James Farm (7/2). Visit the [DuPage County Forest Preserve](#) web site for locations and schedule details.

### Kane County

Join the Trek with a Naturalist program this month to visit Big Rock Forest Preserve (Thursday 6/16).

Download the latest [Tree Line Newsletter](#) for more information.

### Lake County

Walk on the Wildflower Side (Rollins Savanna, 6/25; \$5-7 fee) and Forest Fitness (various locations, Saturdays).

You can also get out in the evening for a Sunset Stroll (6/23) or join a Bilingual (English/Spanish) Nature Hike on 6/25). Walk with a Naturalist continues with the next outing at Ray Lake (7/2). Visit the [Lake County Forest Preserve](#) web site for locations and schedule details.

## Other Regional Plant Events

### UPCOMING

### Cook County

You can learn about [Gardening with Natives](#) at the next Master Gardener Drop in at River Trail Nature Center on Saturday 6/11 then head back on Sunday 6/12 to get the [Buzz on Bees](#) (and visit the pollinator garden!). The annual [Juneteenth Celebration](#) will include a display on wild edibles (Sand Ridge Nature Center, Saturday, 6/18). Visit Sagawau Sunday, 6/19 to catch the second chapter of their [Tallgrass Prairie series](#) (Early Summer Prairie). You can learn about [Pollinator Friendly Gardening](#) at the Crabtree Nature Center on Saturday, 6/25, or [Gardening for Birds](#) at Sagawau on Sunday, 6/26.

Western Cook County Wild Ones chapter is hosting Chris Benda for a presentation on [Rare Plants and Unique Natural Areas of Illinois](#) on 6/12 at the

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Dominican Priory Campus. This talk is open to the public. This new chapter will meet at the [Oak Park Conservatory](#) on 7/7 to tour the new native gardens, but you need to be a Wild Ones member to participate.

The grand opening of the [Community Roots Demonstration & Community Garden](#) at Skinner Park takes place 6/11. Gardening, pollination, and native species will be highlighted.

Free Admission days at [The Field Museum](#): 6/21, 22, and 24 for Illinois residents!

## DuPage County

Volo Bog Guided walk and book signing on 6/18! Linda Curtis will be giving a presentation and signing her newest book! Greater DuPage Wild Ones is hosting this event. Space is limited. Please reserve space via this [webpage link](#).

## Kane County

Late notice: there is a Summer Tree Identification workshop at Bliss Woods Forest Preserve Sunday (6/5). Preregistration is required (630-444-3190). You can learn about the importance of pollinators to our crops and natural areas during the **Pollination Celebration** at Brunner Family Forest Preserve (6/19). Register early to attend a presentation on **Fire: A Prescription for Ecosystem Health** at Peck Farm Park (Orientation Barn, 8/14). Download the latest issue of [Treeline](#) for more information on Kane County Forest Preserve activities.

Join Barb Wilson at Barbara Key Park for her **Identifying Sedges** workshop on 6/19., or her **Botany for Beginners** on 6/25. Visit [www.LITHFen.org](http://www.LITHFen.org) for more information.

Northern Kane County Wild Ones is hosting a [tour of the plant nursery](#) at Citizens for Conservation Barn in Barrington on 6/25.

## Webinar or Online

US Fish & Wildlife Service:

[Evaluating Urban Forest and Marsh Condition in New York City](#) (6/9)

## Further Afield

**Sedges: Identification and Ecology**

Jun 10–11, 2016.

University of Wisconsin, Saukville, Wisconsin.

Dr. Anton Reznicek will lead this workshop on sedge biology. \$115 Fee. For more information on this, and the other UWM Field Station workshops and courses, follow this [link](#).

## **Vegetation of Wisconsin**

Jun 13–18, 2016.

University of Wisconsin, Saukville, Wisconsin.

Dr. James Reinartz leads this week-long field trip to major plant communities in the state. \$420 fee.

## **24<sup>th</sup> North American Prairie Conference**

From Cemetery Prairies to National Tallgrass Prairies. July 17–20, 2016.

Illinois State University, Normal, IL

Four days and over 70 presentations covering many aspects of prairie ecology, restoration, management, and more. Registration required. Early registration deadline is 7/1/2016.

For more information, follow this [link](#).

## **Forest Communities of Southeastern Wisconsin**

July 29–30, 2016.

University of Wisconsin, Saukville, Wisconsin.

Dr. Gretchen Meyer, Senior Scientist and manager of the Field Station, leads this workshop to regional forest communities of SE Wisconsin. \$105 fee.

There are tons of interesting events listed in [The Outside Calendar](#) every month, but June is especially jam-packed.

## *Volunteer Opportunities*

Check out the various Forest Preserve web pages for listings in each county.

## Cook County

Forest Preserve District of Cook County [web page](#).

**Restoration Workdays** at the Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center (no registration required) or River Trail Nature Center (call 847-824-8360 to register). There are

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a couple of workdays through The Field Museum at Beaubien Woods and Eggers Grove (calendar [here](#)).

## DuPage County

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County [web page](#) has lots of listings including **Restoration Workdays** at various Prairies and Woods, and at the Native Plant Nursery. Register at 630-933-7681 at least five business days prior.

## Lake County

There are numerous opportunities to assist in **Restoration Workdays** at the Native Seed Nursery or in a variety of communities. Contact the Restoration workday coordinator [Tom Smith](#) to participate. Desk: 847-968-3329, Cell: 847-276-5379. Visit the Lake County Forest Preserve [web page](#) for more information.

[The Habitat Project](#) and [Habitat 2030](#) [ongoing]

## Events At A Glance:

TBD	NE-INPS field trip
June 10-11	Sedge Biology (UWM)
June 11	Beaubien Woods Celebration
June 13-18	Veg of Wisconsin (UWM)
June 19	Pollination Celebration
June 19	Identifying Sedges
June 21, 22, 24	Field Museum for FREE!
June 25	Botany for Beginners
July 17-20	24 <sup>th</sup> NA Prairie Conference
July 29-30	Communities of SE Wisc (UWM)

Please check on our NE-INPS or Facebook pages for late additions to the calendar of events.

Got some great ideas for places to go or plants to see?  
Want to hear talks on specific topics?

Send us an email message: [northeast-inps@gmail.com](mailto:northeast-inps@gmail.com) or write me directly at [lindamprince@gmail.com](mailto:lindamprince@gmail.com)

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*\*Additional Life membership categories provide even greater support for our organization.*

*To join, visit [www.ill-inps.org](http://www.ill-inps.org). Please indicate that your chapter is Northeast  
OR*

*Mail to: Illinois Native Plant Society,  
Membership, P.O. ox 271, Carbondale, IL  
62903-0271*

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### *INPS NE Chapter 2016 Officers:*

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*Newsletter Editor: Linda MacKechnie*