Another year has come to an end and I think I can speak for many when I say I’m looking forward to 2022. However, in all honesty, I had a great year botanically and saw many plant species I had not seen before. We call these "lifer" species. For a recap of my year of botanizing, see the link in the videos section.

Happy Holidays! ☃️ Chris Benda, Editor
Message from the President

Dear INPS Members,

2021 was a challenging year for most of us, but it was also a good year for the Illinois Native Plant Society. This year, we held virtual and in-person events, including our hybrid Annual Gathering. Planning for next year’s Annual Gathering is underway, and we will (hopefully) be meeting in person. The 2022 Annual Gathering will be hosted by the Grand Prairie chapter in the Bloomington/Normal area during the weekend of June 25. We would love to hear if you’re planning to come, and will post an RSVP link on our website before registration opens. This will help the organizers know what to expect for food and lodging needs.

INPS awarded nine grants this year through our grant program. We are excited to make more awards in 2022 and to hear updates on what has been funded this year. The research and survey grant applications are open until January 31, 2022.

INPS is working on updating our logo. While we love the current logo, the state governing board decided that we should replace the plant species depicted as French’s shooting star, our current mascot, since it is only found in southern Illinois. After receiving submissions for new mascot plants, the board voted for shooting star (Dodecatheon meadia), which is found throughout Illinois and is easily recognizable. Look for our new logo sometime next year!

As the year wraps up, I want to remind you to renew your membership for 2022. Please keep an eye out for an email ballot to approve board members for the upcoming year. Finally, let’s continue working to save Bell Bowl Prairie, one of the last remnant prairies in Illinois. Thank you for being a member of the Illinois Native Plant Society and helping us study, appreciate, and conserve the native flora of Illinois.

Sincerely,

Emily Dangremond
President INPS

INPS Chapters

CENTRAL CHAPTER
Springfield
Trish Quintenz (President)
trishquintenz@gmail.com

FOREST GLEN CHAPTER
Champaign/Urbana, Danville
Paul Marcum (President)
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GRAND PRAIRIE CHAPTER
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Joe Armstrong (President)
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Floyd Catchpole (President)
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QUAD CITIES CHAPTER
Rock Island
Bo Dziadyk (President)
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SOUTHERN CHAPTER
Carbondale
Chris Evans (President)
southernillinoisplants@gmail.com

Check out the Illinois Native Plant Society Events Calendar for Chapter meetings and workshops.
Welcome New Members

Central Chapter
Stephanie Chabez
Chris Peters
Marilyn Robins

Northeast Chapter
Daniel & Rae Anne Alvarez
Meka Francis
Pat Johns
Pam Karlson

Tyler Lawrence
Linda Negele
Zac Olds
Fay Otto
Jessica Reynolds
Judith Rice
David Rubin
Rory Schiafo
Andy Stahr, The Prairie State Nursery

At Large
Karen Smith

INPS News

Online Ballot for Board Member Elections

Please vote in the 2022 INPS Board election by using the online ballot. You may select the candidate who is running or write in a different person. Term lengths are included in parentheses following the position name, and bios are provided for the named candidates. Expect to also receive an email reminder soon to vote in the election.

INPS 2022 Research & Survey Grants Announced

Students, citizen scientists, and conservation groups are invited to consider applying for an Illinois Native Plant Society Research Grant for up to $2,500 to fund one-year projects. The grant is for research-focused studies on Illinois native plants. Topics such as life history, reproductive biology, demography, genetics, comparative site inventories, community ecology, and research on threats to native plants and communities, such as invasive species, are acceptable. Laboratory research on native plants, as well as projects focused on research relating to education about or restoration of native plants or communities, will be considered. Projects involving student research or trained volunteers will be given special consideration. All projects must demonstrate how they support the mission of the Illinois Native Plant Society.

INPS is also pleased to continue its new second grant for 2022: the Survey Grant. This grant for up to $5,000 will fund searches for Illinois Endangered, Threatened, or several rare plant species for which current data is inadequate to assess their status and for which field surveys and recovery recommendations are needed. INPS worked with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to develop a priority list of species for the surveys. Experienced botanical field surveyors, either independent or associated with an institution, are invited to apply for this grant. Partnerships are encouraged.

Full application details and forms for the Research Grant and the Survey Grant will be posted online by late November. Check our website at https://illinoisplants.org/grants/.

Applications must be received by January 31, 2022. Awards will be announced by March 31, 2022.

INPS is grateful to be able to continue its grant program in 2022, thanks to contributions from membership fees, generous donations to the Grant Program, proceeds from the Annual Gathering, and also support from the INPS Central Chapter for one grant conducting studies within the Central Illinois counties.
**Erigenia Update**

There are now 6 articles available on our website (https://illinoisplants.org/erigenia/issues/) that will be published in the next issue of *Erigenia, the Journal of the Illinois Native Plant Society*. Submission guidelines can be found on our website and manuscripts may be submitted by email to erigenia.editor@gmail.com.

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### The Parable of Langham Island

**An Updated Vision For Illinois Nature Preserves.**

By Christos Economou, Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves Board Member.

The shocking fate of Langham Island was a major inspiration for a new force on the conservation landscape — Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves. We formed to address the urgent need for care and constituency of many of our state’s Nature Preserves. But is there really such urgent need? Consider the nightmare episode of this famed "island of rare plants," which starts back in August 2014.

That summer, the Illinois Native Plant Society sponsored a field trip to Langham Island. Some two dozen botanists eagerly paddled canoes down the Kankakee River in hopes of experiencing some of the island’s many wonders, which at one time included such class acts as buffalo clover (*Trifolium reflexum*) and leafy prairie clover (*Dalea foliosa*), and still include northern corn salad (*Valerianella umbilicata*), Pitcher's leatherflower (*Clematis pitcheri*), and the Kankakee mallow (*Iliamna remota*), a plant endemic to this specific island.

During this visit, however, they unexpectedly found: *none of the above*.

Instead, to their horror, they encountered a desolate landscape of impenetrable brush. Most of the tour participants remained on the narrow shoreline, waiting. When the few scratched and blood-splattered explorers emerged, they reported finding nothing of interest. No open areas remained — though they once were wide enough to support sun-loving rarities amidst prairie grasses — and few herbaceous plants struggled in the gloom under the honeysuckle. Perhaps most importantly, the Kankakee mallow, one of North America's rarest plants, was nowhere to be found. Everyone wondered: "How could this happen? In a dedicated Nature Preserve of all places?"

Inspired, two trip participants, Rachel Goad and Stephen Packard, got together with Illinois Nature Preserves Commission biologist Kim Roman and took responsibility. Barely a month later, they organized a huge and widely publicized inaugural day of brush cutting. Today, empowered by staff and after seven years of stewardship, the group has blossomed — and the island with it. Pursuing a strategy of "work, learn, and lead," the Friends of Langham Island study the site's ecology deeply and seek out best restoration practices from experts to inform their day-to-day stewardship priorities. Under their good care, the mallow has been resurrected, its population now several hundred strong and increasing in response to slow-but-sure recovery of its open savanna habitat.
Unfortunately, Langham Island's near “brush” with death is not an exception but practically the rule. Many, if not most, of our most important natural areas face similar threats to their long-term sustainability. Luckily, Langham Island's story of redemption need not also be an exception.

While the preserves today face serious ecological problems, the Friends see their plight in many ways as a mainly cultural and political problem. The Nature Preserves were set up in a time when the prevailing opinion was that leaving nature completely to itself was best. Gradually, painfully, we've learned that not only is this not true, but most of our state's nature genuinely needs active tending to by people. An enduring legacy of the old-school, “fortress mentality” is a decades-long backlog of stewardship, as well as a deep lack of public awareness about the Nature Preserves and the system that administers them. As a consequence, the system’s staff size and budget, inadequate to start with, have been whittled down to a ridiculous extent.

To counter this trend, we need to achieve an enduring statewide constituency for the Nature Preserves. Biodiversity conservation is most successful with a strong coalition of different sets of people. The best results will happen when serious and caring volunteer communities, government staff, landowners, conservation scientists, eco-management contractors, and other allies all prioritize working together as integrated partners for the good of the ecosystem.

To achieve this may require something of a paradigm shift in how we see and manage our natural areas. Rather than ad hoc, short-term “fixes” like sporadic brush removal, conservation in general might benefit more by focusing on the tougher and messier job of fostering a culture of long-lasting stewardship based on active engagement with the ecosystem. Such stewardship must last decades, perhaps even centuries, outliving individual stewards. The level of dedication needed for this hinges on a genuine sense of investment, an ambitious vision, and a culture of curiosity, learning, and community from all partners involved. When each partner understands and is genuinely invested in such a common vision, they can best inspire and support the other partners.

For the Friends, committed and long-lasting volunteer stewardship communities play a key role in this vision. A sufficient increase in government funding and contract management work is likely only with the major increase in constituency and visibility that comes through such communities. Furthermore, by encouraging increased and deeper community involvement in the stewardship of Nature Preserves, we begin to normalize a culture of care in conservation in the public at large. We might even, in time, hope for a new and much-needed, culture-wide shift in our relationship with the natural world.
The experience of Langham Island — and so many other natural areas across the state — shows that a new vision of stewardship and conservation is needed, possible, and effective. Inspired by its example, the Friends have begun pursuing similar initiatives at a half-dozen other sites including Fults Hill Prairie, Shaw Woods and Prairie, Kishwaukee Fen, Old Plank Road Prairies, Middlefork Savanna, and others.

We are committed to the idea that caring and creative people, when given a chance to organize, can and will perform miracles. With proper good care, all our Nature Preserves stand a good chance of maintaining and expanding the natural features that made them so important to begin with. The main problem is inspiring the hearts, minds, and bodies of the many people required to do it — something all of us as nature lovers ought to strive for.

**Monitoring Rare Plants: Become a Plants of Concern Volunteer**

* *Case Story.*

By Katherine Accettura, Southern Illinois Volunteer.

What began as a fascination with shooting photos of “pretty flowers” quickly turned into an obsession with monitoring plants that are native to Illinois, in particular those which are threatened and endangered (T&E) and rare.

I’ve been an avid hiker for years, but I would normally stick to the trails. A couple of years ago, I found myself almost consumed with the immense variety of species blooming in southern Illinois each season. Searching for these plants began to take me deeper into the woods, more and more often, with no trail in sight.

I soon realized that I needed to learn more about what makes our local forests so special. A friend and local botanist, Travis Neal was happy to help me ID photos of the plants I found. He also suggested the *Illinois Wildflowers* book by Don Kurz as an introductory guide.

I also joined the Illinois Botany group on Facebook, where I connected with Chris Benda, other botanists, and a variety of plant enthusiasts in the state. I take pride in sharing my best photographs in that group, which I shoot with a Canon DSLR.

I also became a member of Illinois Native Plant Society this year, and I absolutely love being part of a bigger movement and receiving the newsletter each month.

This past summer, I enrolled in the Flora of Southern Illinois (PLB 451) course as a community listener, offered by Chris Benda at SIU, and my eyes were finally wide open. This was one of my favorite courses I ever completed. I now know scientific names, common names, and habitats of a large number of species that are native to Illinois and beyond.

I graduated from SIU over a decade ago with an M.S. in Media and Communications, and worked as a photographer and social media influencer for years. I felt very welcomed among this incredible new community of people I hold in very high regard. I also coordinate the Makanda Mushroom Festival, and hiking for mushrooms often encourages deeper exploration of the forest too.

As soon as the opportunity arose to become a Plants of Concern (POC) Community Scientist this year, I immediately jumped at the chance. I am still in awe of the incredible opportunities that POC has offered me. Sure, some of the hikes were challenging, but the thrill of possibly finding such important plants and exploring the most unique counties the state has to offer, has far outweighed any discomfort I felt from the heat and
humidity of our southern Illinois summers. I am honored to have worked beside Chris Benda, Travis Neal, and Nicholas Seaton to track plant species and complete site files for such an incredible program like POC.

![Travis Neal, Chris Benda, and Katherine Accettura. Photo by Katherine Accenture.](image)

I am empowered beyond belief, both mentally and physically, from volunteering my time to such a fantastic program. Some of the most memorable species I have helped track as a Community Scientist for Plants of Concern include, but are not limited to, *Platanthera flava* var. *flava* (tubercled orchid), *Heteranthera reniformis* (kidneyleaf mud plantain), and *Hexalectris spicata* (crested coralroot orchid), the latter being a 47-year fail to find until this year!

I am also a volunteer with Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves, a nonprofit organized by people who love, support, and care for Illinois Nature Preserves. I want to extend my thanks and gratitude to all those who live their lives to monitor, protect and maintain the gorgeous state we call home.

**Carex Corner # 12: The Lurid Sedge**

By Lindaeus.

Lurid means unnaturally vivid, and *Carex lurida*, lurid sedge or sallow sedge, certainly is. Early morning sunlight, in particular, makes this sedge shine out. It says, “Here I am!” in marshes, like most recently at North Point Beach dunes on Lake Michigan. At this site in Winthrop Harbor, the bright yellow spikes caught my eye as soon as I saw it. Camera in hand, this shot was a bender, not a kneeler, the clumps were knee high. The east sun shining across the lake enhanced the glow to the seed heads of 4-6 finger-size spikes.

The Wisconsin portion of the beach is fenced at that Wisconsin-Illinois border at North Point, but the sedges and dunes plants grew under and outward toward the Wisconsin border of a seawall for a marina exit. This is a must-do field trip, if just for the tranquility of the rolling waves. The Lake County Health Department manages North Point and added several species of *Carex* and colorful flowering plants for restoration, including the seldom seen *C. pseudocyperus*, cyperus sedge or hop sedge.
C. pseudocyperus also gleams in the horizontal morning sun’s rays. When deep sea Lake Michigan’s waters are still, they glitter. The laughing waters were named “minihaha” recalling the Hiawatha story. If being barefooted helps with your relaxation, remember this was a major Native American summer campsite for families from Green Bay, Wisconsin who paddled down to North Point with their families in birch bark canoes with Jack pine struts. Your toes may uncover a spearhead or piece of pottery. The rhizomes of Carex would have been useful in stringing fish over the smoky campfire for preservation.

Several Carex have “bottle brush” spikes, but their sac shapes and beak teeth vary.

C. comosa or bottlebrush sedge has widely spread teeth. C. lurida has the largest perigynia, or seed sacs, 4-6mm, while C. pseudocyperus and C. hystericina, or porcupine sedge, sacs are 5mm or less in length, and their two-toothed sac beak differs in shape. These are grouped In Bog-fen Carex of the Upper Midwest, Curtis 2015. Section Two has the inflated sacs with long tapered beaks, all less than 10mm. If longer than 10mm, then those Carex species were placed in Section One. Remember, a standard pencil is 7mm wide, if you are relaxing without your centimeter ruler handy.


Other News, Web Links, & Publications

INPC Director Announced

Todd Strole has been selected to serve as the next Executive Director of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. He will move into his new position in early January. Todd has had a long history with IDNR’s Division of Natural Heritage, serving 20 years in a variety of positions, from intern to Division Chief. His most recent position as the Programs Section Manager provides oversight to the Natural Areas, Endangered Species, and Natural Heritage Database Programs. He also has experience working for The Nature Conservancy and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves are excited to work with Todd and other partners of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission to do great things! Read the complete press release.

Bell Bowl Prairie Update

Please continue to follow the effort to save Bell Bowl Prairie. The current Chicago-Rockford Airport expansion plans call for the demolition of the Bell Bowl Prairie, an 8,000-year-old natural prairie that supports rare and endangered species like the Rusty Patched Bumblebee. The airport could instead use recently awarded state funds to redesign parts of the expansion to avoid destroying Bell Bowl Prairie. A petition to ask elected officials...
to use their influence to publicly advocate for a consensus solution that protects our environment AND the construction project goals is available on the Illinois Environmental Council webpage.

SIU Press Holiday Sale

Natural Heritage of Illinois on Sale

John Schwegman's award winning book Natural Heritage of Illinois: Essays on Its Lands, Waters, Flora, and Fauna is on sale for 40% off until January 2, 2022. This book is a must have for all naturalists, biologists, and nature lovers.

- Use code HOLIDAY at siupress.com until January 2, 2022 to get the discount. Link to the book: http://siupress.com/books/978-0-8093-3484-1
- Link to the SIU Press Holiday Catalog: https://issuu.com/siupress/docs/holidaycatalog_2021

Building Back a Tiny Piece of Prairie

The University of Illinois News Bureau has published an article by Life Sciences Editor Diana Yates about a field interview with Fred Delcomyn and James Ellis, the authors of A Backyard Prairie, a book about Fred and Nancy Delcomyn’s personal project, a 3-acre swath of prairie that they began installing near their home in 2003 and have nurtured ever since. Part book review and part field report on a November walk through a tallgrass prairie in central Illinois, the article “offers insight into installing prairie on a small-but-significant scale, adding to the prospect that these distant patches of what was once a vast flowering grassland can be reconnected – if only by wandering creatures and hopeful landowners.” Read the article at https://news.illinois.edu/view/6367/1947124203.

- A Backyard Prairie: The Hidden Beauty of Tallgrass and Wildflowers by Fred Delcomyn and James L. Ellis is a 2021 publication of SIU Press and is also on sale.
- Use code HOLIDAY at siupress.com until January 2, 2022 to get the discount. Link to the book: http://www.siupress.com/books/978-0-8093-3818-4
- Also, enjoy listening to an interview of the authors on an In Defense of Plants podcast.
Study Reconstructs 232-Year History of Prairie Fire in Midwestern US

Researchers combed through thousands of historical documents for first-person accounts of fires occurring between 1673 and 1905 in the Midwestern tallgrass prairie. Their study is the first systematic analysis of the timing, causes, and consequences of prairie fires in this part of the world. Study lead author William McClain, of the Illinois State Museum, and his colleagues assembled and analyzed 795 reports of fires in present-day Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Among other findings, the study challenges a widespread assumption about the origin of the prairie fires. Of the hundreds of first-person accounts analyzed, only five prairie fires were ignited by lightning. This runs counter to a longstanding argument that the prairies were maintained by fires sparked by lightning. Read the University of Illinois News Bureau article summarizing the study’s major findings or the complete study report in Natural Areas Journal. Also, listen to a conversation with Dr. Greg Spyreas, one of the co-authors of the above study, on an In Defense of Plants podcast.

Growing Comandra with Plugs

Comandra umbelata (bastard toad flax) is notoriously difficult to grow from seed, but the Nachusa Grasslands has had success growing it from plugs. Read this article by Bernie Buchholz, Nachusa Grasslands Steward, on the Grassland Restoration Network blog for how to do it.

The Ice Age Persists in the Upper Midwest

In a northeastern Iowa unit of the Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge, a rare combination of geological quirks has preserved ancient ecosystems. Researchers and conservationists are racing to protect these unique sites from a variety of threats, including development and invasive species. But they acknowledge that their best efforts may not be enough in the face of climate change. Read the article in Atlas Obscura about these Ice Age refugia.

Profile of Ynés Mexia, the First Mexican American Female Botanist.

Ynés Enriquetta Julietta Mexia was one of the most successful botanists and female plant collectors of her time with 145,000 specimens collected in 13 years and numerous species named in her honor. She was a fierce conservationist and was an early pioneer in fighting to preserve the redwood forests of Northern California. Ynés Mexia traveled all over the Americas, and was the first botanist to collect plants in what is now Denali National Park. She was assertive, brave, and not afraid to challenge racism, sexism, ageism, and more in her impressive and amazing career. Read more in this National Park Service article. Photo from Wikipedia.

Virtual Classes in Plant Identification Available

Golden Hills Resource Conservation & Development is working with Dr. Tom Rosburg of Drake University to host online classes about identification of native plant species for winter-spring 2022. All will be on Thursday evenings from 7-8pm. Each class has a $10 registration fee and pre-registration is required. Visit this webpage for class and registration details. Recordings of 2021 presentations are also available at this site.
Twenty Years of Tallgrass Prairie Restoration in Northern Illinois

A new article on the Grassland Restoration Network blog shares the latest findings by Elizabeth Bach and Bill Kleiman from monitoring long-term ecosystem restoration on The Nature Conservancy’s Nachusa Grassland preserve, synthesizing the data collected between 1994 and 2016. Their long-term results contrast previous studies that have observed declines in plant diversity over time within tallgrass prairie restorations. Few restorations have been monitored repeatedly over time, so previous work has relied on sampling prairies of various ages to infer changes over time. In this study, long-term data from the exact same transect locations were used, exclusively focusing on plant community changes over time. Generally, these data show that long-term restoration efforts at Nachusa Grasslands have successfully reached floristic goals. Read the complete research article at Ecological Solutions and Evidence.

Spend Some Quality Couch Time Over the Holidays With These Videos

- **Butterfly Host Plants for Chicago Living Corridors** [video]. Learn to attract butterflies to your home garden by providing food sources and breeding grounds for native butterflies and other pollinators. Botanist Chris Benda will inspire you to incorporate beautiful native plant species in the home landscape and will discuss which host plants are specific to certain butterflies and other insects.

- **Illinois Botanizer's Best of Nature Photos 2021** [video]. This is the annual slideshow by Chris Benda, Illinois Botanizer, in which he displays photos and shares stories about botanizing in Illinois. This presentation was delivered in person in Giant City State Park and recorded on December 5, 2021.

- **Burning Route 66 Prairie with Henry Eilers** [video]. Controlled burn on the Route 66 Prairie. Thanks to the Great River Prescribed Burn Association, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Natural Area Guardians, and Pheasants Forever for their support. The Route 66 Prairie is a monarch habitat and native Illinois prairie site located on the east Frontage road between Litchfield, IL (Exit 52) and Carlinville, IL (Exit 60).

**Botany Humor**

A PIE CHART OF MY LIFE

I’m convinced every field botanist has at least 3 of these:
- a shelf full of outdated field guides with sentimental value
- a strong opinion about whether it’s harder to key Asteraceae or Cyperaceae
- a horror story about misidentifying something obvious
- a minimum of 3 plant-themed t-shirts
- crushing imposter syndrome
The Harbinger Winter 2021

You can renew/join by filling out the form below or online at https://illinoisplants.org/online-membership-form/.

Please become a member and support this local non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and study of the native plants and vegetation of Illinois!

Join us! □ New Member □ Renewal □ Address Change only □ Additional Donation

Name: ____________________________________________
Street: ____________________________________________
City ___________________ State _______ Zip ________
Phone Number __________ Membership Year ________
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Membership Categories
□ Student ........................................ $15.00
□ Individual ...................................... $25.00
□ Family .......................................... $35.00
□ Institutional (nonvoting) ................... $20.00
□ Supporting .................................... $50.00
□ Patron .......................................... $100.00
□ Business ........................................ $125.00
□ Life ........................................... $500.00
□ Iliamna (life) ................................. $1,000.00
□ Dedoecaen (life) ......................... $2,000.00
□ Erigenia (life) ...................... $5,000.00

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Illinois Native Plant Society
INPS, Membership, P.O. Box 60694, Chicago, IL 60660

The Harbinger Newsletter is sent electronically by email.
□ Check here to receive the newsletter BY MAIL.

Erigenia, our scientific journal, is now available digitally as well as in print.
Please indicate your preference for receiving the journal.
□ Email only □ Postal Mail only □ Both

Chapter Affiliation
□ Central (Springfield) □ Northeast (Chicago)
□ Forest Glen (Westville) □ Quad Cities (Rock Island)
□ Grand Prairie (Bloomington) □ Southern (Carbondale)
□ Kankakee Torrent □ Other/Uncertain

I would like to help with:
□ Leadership & Organization (serving on board at State or Chapter level)
□ Giving Workshops &/or Seminars
□ Leading Field Trips & Tours
□ Public Speaking
□ Website Assistance/Management
□ Organizing Workshops &/or Seminars
□ Fund Raising
□ My area of expertise
□ Writing/Submitting articles
□ Photography
□ Other: ____________________________

Pixie Cup Lichen
(*Cladonia chlorophaea*)
Photo: Suzanne Asaturian