



Kinnikinnick Journal

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January-February 2024

Kinnikinnick Native Plant Society, Inc. / PO Box 1092 Sandpoint, Idaho 83864

www.nativeplantsociety.org

Upcoming Programs

Programs are available in-person at the East Bonner County Library's main branch in Sandpoint (1407 Cedar Street). The program begins at 10:00 a.m., with coffee, tea and treats available at 9:30. Programs are co-sponsored by the East Bonner County Library District and Sandpoint Parks & Recreation, and are free and open to the public. For those wishing to view the February 17 program on Zoom, please register in advance at: <https://bit.ly/WONR>

Saturday, February 17

George Gehrig, Wild Ones Northern Rockies Chapter and KNPS Board

Wild Ones Northern Rockies: Promoting Environmentally Sound Landscaping Practices. Wild Ones, founded in 1977 and with chapters across the U.S., provides educational programming and resources to promote the use of native plants in landscaping, addressing biodiversity loss and ecological degradation, as well as the growing need for climate resilience. Wild Ones aims to inspire and empower individuals and communities to adopt restorative landscaping practices. In this talk, you will learn more about Wild Ones and its new Northern Rockies Chapter. You will also learn the actions you can take in your yard and community to repair our local ecosystems and support declining bird, bee, and butterfly populations through ecological landscaping practices.

Saturday, March 16

Katie Cox, Kaniksu Land Trust, and Mark Stockwell, KNPS member

Sand Creek Connections: A Progress Report

Program Summary November

Submitted by Preston Andrews

The November 2023 program, "Down the Rabbit Hole: Native Plants are important, but what is a Native Plant?" featured KNPS members, Bob Wilson, John Hastings, Gail Bolin and Preston Andrews, as the expert panel. The panel began by defining the difference between species, variety, cultivar, and hybrid. Most of us know what a species is, but cultivar, short for "cultivated variety," is a horticulturally derived plant produced through selective breeding. What distinguishes a variety from a cultivar is that a variety is a group of individuals within a species that are distinct in form or function from other similar individuals within that species. Unlike cultivars, a variety is not produced by artificial breeding. Hybrids are plants produced from a cross between genetically dissimilar parents, which can happen artificially or naturally between plants growing in proximity to one another.

To define native plants of our region, we used the definition provided in the KNPS publication, *Landscaping with Native Plants in the Idaho Panhandle* (2012): "A plant is considered a native to a location if it occurs there naturally and is not a product of artificial breeding or selection." There are other definitions of native plants, including those by the U.S. Forest Service, National Wildlife Federation, and even in a Presidential Executive Order from 1999.

Perhaps more bewildering, some horticulturists now use

the non-scientific term "nativar" to represent a cultivar of a native plant. This terminology is used to market them to gardeners, who are now more interested in using native plants in their gardens. We showed blanket flower (*Gaillardia*) as an example of species, nativar, and hybrid to illustrate the differences in these terms and the variation that can be achieved through selective breeding (see photos).

Native plants are the foundation of our ecosystems. They support wildlife, especially insects and birds, and provide us with ecosystem services for our wellbeing. Often, they require fewer resources (water, nutrients, etc.) because of their more extensive root systems. In other words, they are better adapted than non-natives once established in the garden. Still, defining a native plant is fraught, even more so since they have become increasingly popular in the nursery/landscape trade, which is a good thing. Plus, climate change is already influencing the adaptability of native plants in their natural environments, which may require some native plants to migrate to more favorable environments in order to survive.

Our final words of wisdom for planting natives or non-natives are "right plant, right place" always!

Cont'd on Page 3

President's Message

January-February 2024

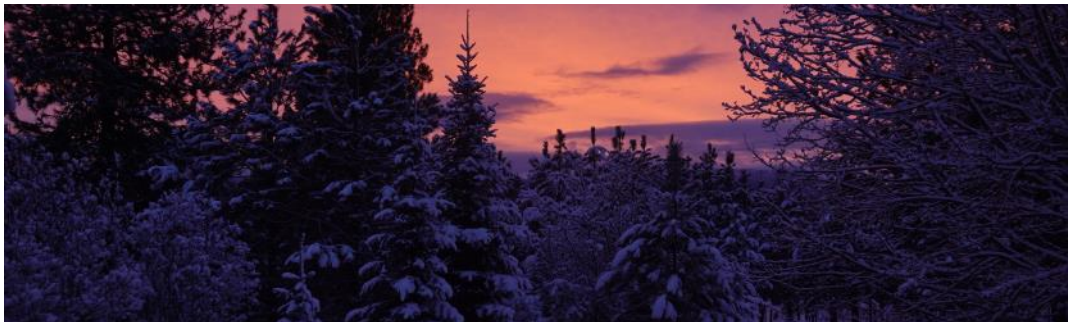
!----BRRRR----!

Submitted by Shawna Parry

Cold environments are fascinating. Laird and I enjoy traveling to places like Yellowstone, Antarctica, and Svalbard in the winter, but after the relentless sub-zero temperatures recently, I now realize that living in a permanently, extreme-cold environment is not for me. My two cats seem to agree since they have not been outside for more than 10 seconds at a time lately.

How does the extreme cold affect the native plants in the Arboretum? Eventually spring thaw will give us an answer. I doubt that what we find will change the “final” document of the Arboretum plan which is being developed now through member engagement and survey tallies. Thank you to all who enthusiastically responded to the committee (43% of us!). The “final” document will be emailed to the membership and will be named **KNPS Arboretum Master Plan 2.0**. The quotations are intentional to convey a fluid document which will depend on city plans for Lakeside Park, water treatment plant upgrades, mother nature, and our membership's population and ability to work towards goals for KNPS. Recently, a March 2002 document was discovered in the historical archives which was titled Arboretum Master Plan; thus, the new document enjoys the 2.0 designation. Not surprisingly, the contents of both are quite similar.

Thank you all for believing in KNPS as a conduit of important native plant information and for helping the community understand the necessity to retain healthy native plant environments.



Lois Wythe Grant Report

Lois Wythe Grant

Submitted by Patty Ericsson

KNPS Lois Wythe Grant Committee Chair

The Kinnikinnick Native Plant Society offers an annual grant of up to \$500 for a group, class, or individual to carry out a project in Bonner County designed to promote awareness and appreciation of native plants in our richly diverse inland temperate rainforest ecosystem. The grant was established in honor of Lois Wythe, the founder of KNPS and developer of our Native Plant Arboretum. Grant recipients must submit a follow-up report by December 31 of the year the grant was awarded. Those receiving a grant are invited to present their project at a future KNPS meeting.

The application must be received by the KNPS Grant Committee no later than the last day in February of each year. The online application form can be found at <https://www.nativeplantsociety.org/lois-wythe-grant>. Questions may be directed to Grant Committee Chair: pattyericsson@gmail.com

Recent Grant awards:

2023: Kaniksu Land Trust's "Re-wilding the Playground"

2022: Combs, Toland, and Ericssons's "Busy Buzzy Bombus Bee" coloring and activity book

2020: Faust's "Floristic Survey in the Selkirk Mountains"

2019: Washington Elementary's "Lighted Microscopes to Study Native Plants"



2023 Holiday Party

KNPS members gather to celebrate the season!



Continued from page 1

Gaillardia aristata (Blanket flower)
Perennial native to Northern Rockies



Gaillardia aristata 'Amber Wheels'
Perennial "nativar" from High Country Gardens

Gaillardia pulchella (Indian blanket flower)
Annual native to Southern Rockies



Gaillardia x grandiflora (*G. aristata* x *G. pulchella*)
Short-lived, interspecific hybrid

Education Committee Report

Submitted by Bonnie Jakubos, Education Committee Chair

About two and a half years ago, I planted a seed of an idea with the KNPS Board; if the group wanted to achieve its mission (and recruit more members), it needed to expand its education programs. Of course, as often happens, the person who proposes the idea is suddenly the committee chair. Here I am! Getting the committee rooted and growing towards common goals has taken many ideas, time, and energy from every Education Committee member. However, it was worth all the labor to see current and new education programs starting to blossom and bear fruit in the last year. You are going to see even more in 2024.

The Third Grade Tree Tours will reflect the lessons we learned last year. There will be fewer trees to discuss, more storytelling, and, hopefully, more fun for everyone, including volunteers. Tree Tour volunteers will also have more training and printed pocket guides containing everything they need to know. The Tours will probably occur during the third week in May.

Tree Cookie Tuesdays have really taken root and will continue to grow in July 2024.

A Family Evening Program (with a catchy title) on July 30 will be a brand-new education event at the Arboretum to celebrate its 25th anniversary. There will be tours of the Arb, booths with information and fun activities, pollinator programs and demonstrations, and more.

We are coordinating with LPOSD to take a different kind of outreach to elementary students. Instead of our volunteers going to classrooms, classrooms would periodically tune in to “Ask the Naturalist” via Zoom. Questions would be vetted and sent to the volunteer in advance.

A Turkey Story

By Ken Thacker

I was sharing the Arb with a flock of turkeys this fall when something (possibly me) spooked them, and they exploded into flight in an excited, squawking, wing beating roar. While most of them jumped over the fence into the water treatment plant, one decided to fly about 30 feet up into a big Douglas fir. As I found out later, adult turkeys can weigh over 20 lbs so this bird was too large to land on the tree’s limbs. As it tried to find a place to settle, it would land on a limb, snap it off and then try another limb. Branches were hitting the ground uncomfortably close, and it kept squawking and snapping limbs and trying new limbs and squawking!

So how did these non-native birds get to Idaho? Turkeys probably evolved from prehistoric birds in South America and then migrated northward, some getting as far as eastern North America. Fast forward a few million years, and both the Maya and the Aztecs domesticated wild turkeys, which were then transported to Europe by the early Spanish explorers. Since it was an exotic food and many exotic foods came from the Ottoman Empire back then, it was called the “Turkish cock” and eventually just “turkey”. Later, the birds were brought to our east coast by European settlers, who were pleasantly surprised to find very similar birds running wild.

Idaho Fish and Game transplanted turkeys to Idaho during the last half of the twentieth century. Thousands of wild turkeys were trapped in large numbers in other states. The Merriam’s wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo merriami*) has been by far the most successful, and this bird is now widely distributed and hunted in the mountains of the Panhandle, Clearwater, and lower Salmon River regions.

Turkeys are opportunistic, omnivorous ground feeders that forage on both plants and animals. Where they can get them, acorns are their preferred diet, but as we know, there aren’t many oaks around, so here they rely heavily on berries, cherries, rose hips, large seeds, insects and small reptiles. Due to their large size, turkeys compete heavily with our native wildlife, especially birds that eat the same foods. They also can become pests in yards when they invade looking for food. To minimize the damage and noise, it’s important to establish your dominance by chasing them away. Otherwise, you’ll need to enjoy days filled with turkeys and their squawking!





**Wild Ones Northern Rockies Chapter Presents:
Dr. Tallamy's Public Lecture Series
"Idea of Nature" Zoom Watch Party**



**2024 Idea of Nature Public
Lecture Series**

The speaker will be Dr. Douglas Tallamy, the Baker Professor of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at University of Delaware. He will present a lecture based on his bestselling book "Nature's Best Hope."

Join the newly formed Wild Ones Northern Rockies Chapter (WONRC) to watch the presentation via Zoom .

What: Zoom Presentation Watch Party
"Idea of Nature"

When: February 9, 2024 From 5:00-6:00 PM
(Pacific Time)

Where: East Bonner County Library, in
Community Rooms A & B.

Refreshments and free educational material
will be available beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Plant Notes from the Arboretum

Western Mountain Ash

By Robin Campbell and Cindy Hayes

The beautiful small tree or shrub called Western Mountain Ash (*Sorbus scopulina*) isn't really an Ash at all. The genus name for true Ashes is *Fraxinus*. Also called Cascade Mountain Ash and Greene's Mountain Ash in honor of the American botanist Edward Lee Greene, the *Sorbus* genus is also known as Rowans, Whitebeams and Service Trees.

Rowan trees have an honored place in Celtic and Scandinavian mythology. The Druids used the wood for staffs, dousing rods and magic wands. Crosses with even length arms were made from Rowan twigs bound together with red thread. They were hung in doorways on May Eve, sewn into clothing or carried in pockets to ward off enchantments. The color red was thought to protect against magic and is displayed spectacularly in the fall as berries on Mountain Ash trees. Resembling miniature apples, the orange-red berries fold in at the blossom end creating a five-point star or pentagram, an ancient protective symbol.



Western Mountain Ash, a member of the Rose family, is native to the Northern Hemisphere. In North America it is found primarily in the Rocky Mountains with smaller populations in the Cascades. Pockets of appropriate habitat stretch from Alaska to New Mexico and from Northern California to Wyoming. Growing as a multi-branched shrub or small tree in mid elevations, Mountain Ash can reach 25 feet. It favors rocky hillsides, stream banks and open woods with sun or partial shade. The species name *scopulina* means "of rocky places."

Deciduous leaves are a yellowish green with 9-15 leaflets arranged alternately along an arching mid-rib. They are sharply pointed and serrated along most of the outer margin. In the fall they turn various shades of orange, peach and red before falling for winter. Western Mountain Ash bark is characterized by raised slit-like pores, called lenticels, and new growth buds are white, hairy and tend to be sticky.



Not to be outdone by its colorful autumn show, Western Mountain Ash is equally beautiful in the spring to early summer when large, flat-topped clusters of up to 70 tiny, creamy white flowers burst out all over. These four to six-petaled blooms have numerous stamens giving the flower clusters a fuzzy look. Pollinated flowers mature into hanging bunches of small, shiny orange-red apple-like fruits that can persist into winter, providing food for small mammals, birds and even bears.

The fruit is edible, though it tends to be bitter. It is sweeter when fully ripe and after a frost. Early settlers used it in pies and jellies, for wine making and to flavor spirits. The wood was used for tool handles and longbows.

In the garden, Western Mountain Ash has a lot to offer. As a shrub it makes an attractive screen. If pruned to one or several trunks, it will grow to a small tree with a spring floral display and gorgeous fall color. Its flowers are polli-

ated by a variety of insects, and the fall berries attract abundant birds. Look for a spot with rich, well-drained soil in full or partial sun. It likes some moisture, but is drought tolerant when established.

Pictures and a description of Western Mountain Ash are found on page 90 in *Landscaping with Native Plants in the Idaho Panhandle*, a KNPS publication available at local bookstores and the Bonner County History Museum. Additional native plants can be viewed at the North Idaho Native Plant Arboretum, 611 S Ella St. in Sandpoint.

Photo Credit: Bob Wilson (plant with blooms), Matt Lavin, Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 2.0 (berries)

The Arboretum Rock Wall: A Labor of Love

By Phil Hough/Introduction by Patty Ericsson

A leisurely stroll along the Arboretum's paths will lead you to the low rock wall that runs the entire length of the Arboretum's south side. This dry-stack, hand-built wall is the handiwork of recently departed KNPS member, Jeff Rich. Built from local rock, the wall has become an integral, almost organic, part of the Arboretum.

The article reprinted below was originally published in the Kinnikinnick Journal in 2004. Phil Hough composed it as part of a 2003-2004 biography series initiated by Sylvia Chatburn that highlighted several people integral to the Arboretum's development.

Recent interest in the future of the Arboretum spurred me to find out more about the wall. Finding this article, I knew that I could not write an article about Jeff Rich's wall that captured the spirit and the love embodied in Phil's tribute. It is reprinted with Phil's permission.

A Tribute to Jeff Rich and the Rock Wall

By Phil Hough, originally published in the Journal, March/April 2004

The rock wall, completed by Jeff Rich in November, has already become many things: a cornerstone of the arboretum, a link between neighbors, a memorial to hard work, a monument to peace, and a place where native plants can flourish. Instead of chain link and barbed wire, we now have a more pleasing and productive boundary, a peaceful link with our neighbor the waste treatment plant. We have a bridge not a barrier. For Jeff, every hand placed stone in this wall represents a building block to enduring peace.

Using only local stones to build the wall, Jeff foraged for forgotten materials, finding most of the stones alongside county roads, farms or fields. Jeff trained as a civil engineer and apprenticed with a master rock wall builder. More importantly, Jeff learned to read the rocks. He listens to what they have to say and places each rock according to its own energy and spirit. He learned to move stones not by "dead lifting" but by rolling, utilizing the rock's natural energy flow. This, made the difficult task of moving heavy objects, as Jeff says, "child's play."

There are as many facets to the man as there are to the wall. Jeff is one of the original arboretum volunteers, a decorated Vietnam veteran, an organic gardener, a fixture at the farmers market, a community service activist who helps children and those less fortunate, a provider of food to the hungry, and an expert with many fiber arts. Jeff teaches us by example how to live simply and directly with the natural world.

After nearly five years of effort from his heart and his hands, Jeff's rock wall artistry is now complete. Jeff confesses to be both pleased with the completion of this project but a little sad that the construction is over. Certainly his idle hands will not rest long. The rest of us are very thankful for all that he has accomplished!



Curious Lifestyles of Plants

Populus tremuloides

By Jill Wilson

Every autumn we have all admired groves of aspen with their white or light green bark and contrasting bright golden leaves trembling in the wind. It is one of my favorite sights during fall in the west. I never realized until I worked in the Forest Service in the Rocky Mountain states that the groves of aspen I was observing were a single organism. Learning that made sense with my observations, though, that adjacent aspen groves would leaf out at slightly different times, and the color of their leaves in fall might vary from yellow to orange or even almost red but be consistent within each grove.

Quaking Aspen, *Populus tremuloides*, is a member of the willow family, *Salicaceae*. Aspens are small deciduous trees, ranging from 20 to 80 feet tall. Each grove is a group of stems that are clones (genetically identical) of one another, and all stems share the same root system. Each stem is relatively short lived. The oldest recorded aspen was found in the White Mountains of California and was 226 years old. One hundred fifty years is a more common life span. While individual stems are relatively short lived, the clones may live for thousands of years, resprouting following disturbance. I'm sure many have read that one clone in Utah is estimated to be 80,000 years old and is also thought to be the world's largest organism.

Aspens reproduce in two ways. First, like other flowering plants, aspens flower and set seed. Flowers are borne in catkins, which are cylindrically shaped clusters of inconspicuous flowers. These flowers are wind pollinated. Aspens are dioecious, meaning male and female flowers are borne on separate plants. The second method of reproduction is through suckering. In the western states, seed germination is rare, due to exacting conditions for successful germination and the short viability of the seeds. In the East, germination by seed is much more common.

Because aspen are dioecious and form clones, typically each clone will be male or female. Interestingly, though, a small percentage of stems may produce perfect flowers; estimates are anywhere from 5 to 20 percent! Further, some clones will switch from producing male (staminate) or female (pistillate) flowers in different years! What causes these shifts is unknown but is hypothesized to be affected by both genetic and environmental factors.

Sprouting is hormonally controlled. Auxin produced in the stem and transported to the roots maintains apical dominance. If the above ground stems are killed by fire or human action, such as harvest, auxin levels drop and cytokinins in the roots initiate sprouting. The most abundant sucker response occurs after fire or harvest removing most of the above ground stems.



Board of Directors 2024

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Vice President: Preston Andrews
Secretary: Rae Charlton
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Board Member: Sherry Ennis
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Board Member: George Gehrig
Board Member: John Hastings
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Additional Committee Chairs and Positions

Arboretum: Rae Charlton, Sue Gervais,
 Ken Thacker, Ann Torpie
Education: Bonnie Jakubos
Landscape: Gail Bolin, Jason Smith
Conservation: Preston Andrews
Membership: Rae Charlton
Lois Wythe Grant: Patty Ericsson
Historian, mailchimp: Patty Ericsson
Hospitality: Isabel Hollriegel, Vicky Johnson
Newsletter: Sherry Ennis, Jill Wilson

Upcoming Events:

- **February 9: Wild Ones Program—**
Idea of Nature (zoom)
- **February 17: KNPS Program—Wild**
Ones Northern Rockies Chapter
- **February 29: KNPS Grant proposals**
due
- **March 16: KNPS Program—Sand**
Creek Connections
- **May 11: Spokane Garden Expo—**
Inland Empire Gardeners, Spokane
Community College (there are two na-
tive plant vendors)
- **June 14-17: Idaho Native Plant Society**
Annual Meeting, Farragut State Park
- **June 17-23: Pollinator Week, Pollina-**
tor Partnership, [Pollinator Week](#) | [Pollinator.org](#)

Join or Renew KNPS

Membership Rates

July 1st through June 30th

___ Individual	\$30.00
___ Household	\$40.00
___ Student/Senior (65+)	\$25.00
___ Patron—Syringa	\$100.00
___ Patron—Lupine	\$200.00
___ Patron—Goldenrod	\$300.00

KNPS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Membership Information

(make check payable to KNPS or
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