



TENNESSEE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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American Columbo

By Donna Bollenbach

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American columbo, *Frasera caroliniensis*, is a monocarpic perennial herb that persists in a rosette pattern of 3-30 basal leaves for 5-15 years or more before blooming. When it does bloom, it is quite impressive. It shoots up a purple-to-green flowering stalk that reaches up to 8 feet tall with a panicle of 50 - 100 cascading flowers, making it one of the tallest wildflowers in Tennessee.



American Columbo Flower, *Frasera caroliniensis*
Photo by Mitchell Kent

While the stalk is tall, the flowers are small at only $\frac{3}{4}$ " - $1\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. They are light green to white with purple dots and green nectar pads that are swollen and fringed.



American Columbo in its habitat
Frasera caroliniensis
Photo by Mitchell Kent

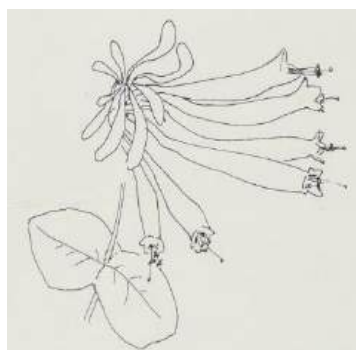
This plant is in the Gentianaceae family and is also known as green gentian. It is found in calcareous soils in upland savannas and woodlands, limestone and sandstone glades, and woodland openings throughout the eastern and southeastern United States. In Tennessee, it thrives in the East, Middle, and less often in the West. If you come across one flowering plant, look for more, as this plant

seems to flower in colonies. American

Columbo was used for a wide range of medicinal purposes by the Cherokee Nation, including as a tonic, antidiarrheal, antiemetic, and disinfectant, and it still has medicinal value today.



American Columbo
Frasera caroliniensis
Photo by Mitchell Kent



Coral honeysuckle
Lonicera sempervirens
By Mary Priestley

TNPS Newsletter

This newsletter is a publication of the Tennessee Native Plant Society and is published four times a year, generally March, June, September, and December.

The Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS) was founded in 1977. Its purposes are to assist in the exchange of information and encourage fellowship among Tennessee's botanists, both amateur and professional; to promote public education about Tennessee flora and wild plants in general; to provide, through publication of a newsletter or journal, a formal means of documenting information on Tennessee flora and of informing the public about wild plants; and to promote the protection and enhancement of Tennessee's wild plant communities.

Dues for each calendar year are:
Individual/Family: \$20
Student: Complimentary
Institution: \$50
Life: \$250

Dues may be sent to:
Tennessee Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 159274
Nashville, TN 37215

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Donna Bollenbach

President's Musings

TNPS has a good problem that we are actively working to correct. Since COVID arrived, our membership has likely doubled. I say "likely" because I don't know how many members we actually do have, but Bart Jones is working on that. Bart is our Membership Chairman; he also has a very demanding full-time job. Until now, we have maintained our membership information on lists and then Excel spreadsheets. With recent increases in membership, it has become an unwieldy task that requires more time than Bart can devote to it. Yes, help has been requested for this and other tasks, but volunteers for administrative tasks are too few.

In addition, the higher levels of membership have made sending out newsletters and seminar reminders impossible through Bart's personal email account. Some of you may not have received your May newsletter or some seminar reminders because we did not realize the extent of the problem at first. We have now switched to a free non-profit account with Vertical Response to resolve that issue. All our emails sent through Vertical Response will have our red trillium logo at the top. Please do not mark emails from TNPS as spam. If they irritate you, please simply go to the bottom and "unsubscribe."

Now for the problem of tracking membership, we have been questioning other membership-based organizations about what programs they use. The programs that other non-profits use and like have been carefully researched. A special meeting of the board has been called for discussion and a decision. So, by the time you read this, we (hopefully) will be fully involved in transferring our membership data and

setting up a new streamlined membership management system. You will likely see some changes in the data forms on our website and receive some emails concerning your membership. You may even be provided with a personal portal to manage your own membership.

The increase in membership has also put a heavier workload on our treasurer, Kim Sadler. Hopefully, we will select a program that integrates well with Quick Books to eliminate some (all?) of the data duplication that is currently necessary.

My goal is to have everything transitioned by late October, well before our membership dues need to be collected for 2024. I will try to keep everyone updated on our progress by posting on the home page of our website (TNPS.org) and by email.

These are good problems because TNPS is growing. We are connecting with more folks across the state because more and more people are interested in learning about our native plants, how to conserve them, and how to grow them. That makes my heart happy.

I hope everyone is enjoying the late summer/fall flowers. The cardinal flower, blue lobelia, and turtlehead are still showy but will soon fade. My goldenrod and ironweed are about ready to bloom. The explosion of purple and gold in the meadow always charms me. Be sure to take time to enjoy the wildflowers blooming near you.



Tennessee Conservation Summit

The first Tennessee Conservation Summit was held on Thursday, August 3rd at the Ellington Agricultural Center in south Nashville. Governor Bill Lee requested this event be held because, as he stated in his opening video, conservation is a topic near and dear to him. There were about 60 people present representing a variety of government offices and organizations. President Karen Ripple Hill represented TNPS. Upon arrival we received name badges with a table assignment. Each table held six people with our table being the exception with five people. Seated at our table were:



- Greer Tidwell, Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Conservation, TDEC
- Ray Knott, Executive Director, Southeastern Cave Conservancy
- Bill Clabough, Executive Director, Foothills Land Conservancy
- Linda Ortiz, US Department of Agriculture

Facilitators guided our small groups and then the entire group through a process of goal setting with the intention of determining what are our goals for Tennessee conservation? Why are they reasonable? How do we get started? This became a difficult process for the facilitators because each individual felt that the goal of their organization/department should be the conservation focus for Tennessee. A small group coalesced around the goal of conserving agricultural lands when retiring parents must decide what to do with their agricultural acreage i.e., keep it from falling into developers' hands.



In the end it was concluded that this gathering was valuable to the attendees and should be an annual event, albeit with a different focus.

New Membership Management System Coming

The TNPS Board of Directors has selected Neon One to manage our membership and will be working over the next few weeks to upload our current data and implement some of the many useful features that will be available for us. This will include a membership portal where you will be able to manage your own membership, such as changing your address, email address, and name, or checking when dues are due and if you paid them, and so much more. You will also receive membership renewal reminders.

Another area of change will be on the website forms for membership, donations, conference registration, and other event registrations. PayPal will be eliminated. You will only enter your information once along with your credit or debit card information. Processing will be just as secure as with PayPal, but easier and less confusing. Receipts will be sent immediately.

We hope to have many of the new features operational by mid-October, and a full rollout by December.

Ketona Glades of Bibb County, Alabama, June 3 - 4

Fieldtrip report by Bart Jones

Every so often there's a place outside of Tennessee that is just so special that we have to visit. The Ketona Glades of Bibb County, Alabama definitely fall into that category. During many of my previous field trips, this location had been bandied about and discussed, with many folks expressing an interest in visiting, so I scheduled a trip that would help several members check it off their bucket list.



Cahaba daisy fleabane
(*Erigeron dolomiticola*)
Photo by Bart Jones

The Ketona Glades were discovered in 1992 by Jim Allison as he was conducting surveys in the area for another rare plant, Nevius' Stonecrop (*Sedum neviusii*). As he canoed the Little Cahaba River, he noticed some open, glade-like areas that he was compelled to explore. Once in the glades, he noticed several plants that, while familiar-looking, exhibited some unique features. With study, he was able to identify 8 new species to science along with several other rare species, including dwarf horse-nettle (*Solanum pumilum*), a species that was thought to have been extinct for over 100 years. News of the discovery quickly spread among botanists and the sites were described as a "botanical lost world." After some communication with Jim, he agreed to help lead the trip. What a coup to have the person who discovered this "botanical lost world" show us the very plants and community he described 30 years ago!

As our group assembled at the entrance to Kathy Stiles Freeland Bibb County Glades Preserve, it became obvious that this was going to be a big group with people from Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Ohio in attendance. After a brief introduction to the geology and botanical communities within the glades from Jim, we made our way into the preserve.



Mohr's Barbara's-buttons
(*Marshallia mohrii*)
Photo by Bart Jones

Just past the parking area, we

encountered our first rare plant, Mohr's Barbara's-buttons (*Marshallia mohrii*), a plant that is listed as federally threatened. As we entered the initial glade, the first of the endemics was blooming throughout, Cahaba daisy fleabane (*Erigeron dolomiticola*). This species is very similar to the common summer-blooming species, *Erigeron strigosus*, but the flowering branches are more spreading and the leaves are very narrow and erect, especially the basal leaves.



Alabama pinkroot
(*Spigelia alabamensis*)
Photo by Bart Jones

Nearby, two more endemics made an appearance, our main target species Alabama pinkroot (*Spigelia alabamensis*) and Cahaba paintbrush (*Castilleja kraliana*). The pinkroots weren't fully open, looking more like big pink gentians. Oddly, this pinkroot was first described as a variety of *Spigelia gentianoides* which is found in Florida, a species where the flowers do not open fully, unlike Alabama pinkroot. However, Alabama pinkroot flowers only fully open when conditions, which are not fully understood, are optimum.



Cahaba prairie-clover
(*Dalea cahaba*)
Photo by Bart Jones

Further into the glade, we found a few plants of our third endemic, Cahaba prairie-clover (*Dalea cahaba*), still in flower. This species is very similar to our Gattinger's prairie-clover (*D. gattingeri*), but the flower heads of the Cahaba prairie-clover do not extend very far

vertically. As we exited this glade, it transitioned into a savanna-like habitat with scattered oak trees and a denser herbaceous understory. Here we found plants of

(Continued on page 5)

Ketona Glades of Bibb County, Alabama, June 3 - 4 continued

another endemic, sticky rosinweed (*Silphium glutinosum*), but unfortunately it was too early to see them in flower. However, we did see the rare and restricted Alabama skullcap (*Scutellaria alabamensis*) in full flowering glory. Another eyecatcher in this location was pineland nerveray (*Tetragonotheca helianthoides*). Other noteworthy species observed were showy milkwort (*Asemeia grandiflora*), maidenbush (*Phyllanthopsis phyllanthoides*), Boykin's milkwort (*Polygala boykinii*), Carolina larkspur (*Delphinium carolinianum* var. *carolinianum*), glade St. Johnswort (*Hypericum frondosum*), and twining snoutbean (*Rhynchosia tomentosa*).



Alabama skullcap
(*Scutellaria alabamensis*)
Photo by Bart Jones

Traversing a narrow band of woods brought us to another neighboring glade, where we were immediately surprised by an early-blooming Cahaba torch (*Liatis cahaba*), another endemic of these glades. Exploring this glade yielded at least four additional plants in bloom. Along the edges of the glade were patches of the rare Alabama croton (*Croton alabamensis*), an attractive evergreen shrub. As we moved about the glade, we encountered dozens of the Alabama pinkroot, but still none fully opened.



Standing Cypress
(*Ipomopsis rubra*)
Photo by Bart Jones

After lunch, we went to our final stop for the day, what was termed the "river glade." This glade held a slightly different set of plants, with many being disjunct from their main ranges to the west. Examples were pale poppy mallow (*Callirhoe alcaeoides*) and standing cypress (*Ipomopsis rubra*). But the special plant of this particular glade was the dwarf horse-nettle (*Solanum pumilum*).

Unfortunately, they had already flowered and the plants were beginning to wither, but we were

able to locate several. As we made our way back to the banks of the Little Cahaba River, we stumbled upon another uncommon plant, whiteleaf leather flower (*Clematis glaucophylla*). While some of us were busy with photographing the attractive flowers, others took the opportunity to cool off with a wade in the river.

After the majority of the group left, a few of us stayed on, determined to find a pinkroot fully opened. When we were going to the "river glade", I had noticed a small opening on the other side of the trail from the glade that I wanted to check out. This area was a little more lush, indicating a bit more moisture. As we looked around we found several more pinkroot still closed. After a few more minutes searching, we finally found one flower that was nearly completely open! Determination paid off!

Sunday, we met at a spot along the Cahaba River near the shoals where the stunning Cahaba lilies (*Hymenocallis coronaria*) grow. These amazing flowers have inspired the locals to put on a festival every year to celebrate their blooming in late May. While we were just past the peak for the blossoms, there were still an impressive number of flowers remaining. The plants grow in the shallow water in cracks in the limestone riverbed, so to view them up close requires a wade out into the river. But it is well worth the effort. The plants are much larger and the flowers almost twice the size of our common spiderlily of moist woodlands. After everyone got their fill of the lilies, we walked the road back to the cars where we had one last surprise, a few blooming swamp titi (*Cyrilla racemosa*) bushes, a new species for most of us.

This was a great trip to see some really special plants (6 of the 8 endemics), made all the better by Jim Allison and his insights and anecdotes. Thank you, Jim!



Cahaba Lily
(*Hymenocallis coronaria*)
Photo by Bart Jones

Haw Ridge Park Greenway, May 27

Our TCWP/TNPS outing was set up to be easy walking on a paved surface. We had seven participants and pleasantly cool weather. A theme for the day was compound leaves.

We saw opposite and alternate compound leaves (stem positions). We saw pinnate and palmate ones (leaflet arrangement). These leaves had a variety of number of leaflets.

Shrubs in full flower included stiff dogwood (*Cornus foemina*), and tall false indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*). Bushy St. Johnswort (*Hypericum densiflorum*) was just starting to flower and will create a major display in a few weeks. We also got a chance to observe black vultures from about ten feet away.

Fieldtrip report by Larry Pounds



Bushy St. Johnswort
(*Hypericum densiflorum*)
Photo from Wikipedia

Andrews Bald, Great Smoky Mountains NP, June 17

Fieldtrip report by Larry Pounds

This was a joint outing for TNPS and TCWP led by Larry Pounds and Allen Sweetser.

The Tuesday before this outing, Allen and I went to scout it. The area was very congested and we had to park a bit from the trailhead. Fortunately, on Saturday the parking was fine.



Catawba rhododendron
(*Rhododendron catawbiense*)
Photo by Donna Bollenbach

On the trail to the bald southern bush honeysuckle (*Diervilla sessilifolia*) was not yet in flower, but southern mountain cranberry (*Vaccinium erythrocarpum*) was in full bloom with some corolla lobes well curled. On the bald, we had a lovely display of Catawba rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*) and the start of a flame azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*) display. We also enjoyed the exuberant singing of the winter wren.



Southern mountain cranberry
(*Vaccinium erythrocarpum*)

Note: GSMNP now requires a parking pass that can be purchased for the day or for the week



Flame azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*)
Photo by Donna Bollenbach

2023 Native Plant Seminars

The Tennessee Native Plant Society hosts monthly Native Plant Seminars. These events are held via Zoom on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Central (7:30 p.m. Eastern) and last about one hour. All members, and potential members, are welcome to join the seminars at no cost. The link to join each seminar will be posted on the *Seminars* and *Calendar* pages of our website: www.tnps.org.

Most past seminars are recorded and posted on our website.

Seminar speakers are drawn from our knowledgeable membership, from professionals across the state, and from the professors and students studying our Tennessee native plants. A range of topics are covered that includes plants that are currently blooming, native plants in our yards, current research on native plants, protections for native plants, and so much more.

Join us for an hour a month to learn more about Tennessee native plants.

Upcoming TNPS Seminars

September 19 – Tony Lance (TNPS), *Certify Your Yard*

October 17 – Jaimie Matzko (Discover Life in America), *Biodiversity in your Landscape: Why it Matters* (Updated)

November 21 – Dennis Horn (TNPS), *Tennessee Orchids*

Upcoming TNPS Fieldtrips

Details of each fieldtrip are in the March 2023 Newsletter and on our website: www.tnps.org

If you RSVP it helps with planning and carpooling

September 2 (SATURDAY) Big South Fork. Leader: Larry Pounds, phone/email: 865-705-8516, PoundsL471@aol.com

September 23 (SATURDAY) Exploring the Sands of Ghost River State Natural Area. Leaders: Allan Trently, email: allan.trently@tn.gov, ph. 731-571-9729, and Caitlin Elam.

***Submit Fieldtrip Reports and Photographs to** donna.bollenbach@gmail.com

A Sampling of Fall Flowers



Giant Goldenrod
Solidago gigantea
Photo by Karen R Hill



Ironweed
Vernonia fasciculata
Photo by Karen R Hill



White Snakeroot
Ageratina altissima
Photo by Karen R Hill



Wingstem
Verbesina alternifolia
Photo by Karen R Hill

When Are Dues Due?

All membership dues are due on January 1, including those who joined during the year up to and including June 30. If you joined on or after July 1, you receive the partial year free, then need to renew annually by the following January 1st.

To make payment go to www.TNPS.org. Click on “Membership” on the bottom left side of any page and follow the directions for either printing a form and mailing it with a check OR using the online form. Once the online form is complete, you will be sent to the PayPal page for payment with either a credit card or through your PayPal account. You have the option of making a one-time payment or making recurring annual payments.

Either way, UNTIL PAYMENT IS MADE VIA CHECK OR PAYPAL YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER AND WILL NOT RECEIVE NEWSLETTERS. If your address has changed, please email your new address to info@TNPS.org.

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