



TENNESSEE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Nature Journaling Workshop at the Elsie Quarterman Festival, May 2, 2025

by Mary Priestley and Kim Sadler

Cedars of Lebanon State Park, the Center for Cedar Glade Studies, and the TN Native Plant Society partnered to

host a Nature Journaling workshop at the Elsie Quarterman Wildflower Festival last spring. Workshop facilitators included TNPS members Joanna Brichetto, Kim Sadler, Mary Priestley, and four members from her 'nature journaler' group from Sewanee: Corinne Arnold, Margie Galligher, Marianne Sobey, and Deb Tucker.

As nature journaling "guru" John Muir Laws explains, nature journaling is basically the process of taking your experiences in a natural environment out of your head and onto paper. A journal entry consists of a combination of images, text, and numbers, and there are as many ways to do that as there are nature journalers. We wanted everyone to leave the workshop with a

journaling technique they could call their own.

One of the techniques is using

narrative and storytelling. This was demonstrated by Joanna Brichetto (author, *This is How a Robin Drinks: Essays on Urban Nature*) as she shared excerpts from her book, which were borne from her nature journal. We ventured to the butterfly garden at the Nature Center, where the variety of plants provided plenty of inspiration for journaling. To encourage everyone to think about narrative and delve beyond photographs and sketches, Joanna intrigued us all about the sex life of a paw paw flower (look it up and be amazed).

Mary Priestley explained how one might set up a journal, and suggested ideas for what a journal entry might look like. Then her fellow



Mary Priestley explained how one might set up a nature journal.



Joanna Brichetto shared excerpts from her book in talking about using narrative and storytelling in nature journaling.

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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 1978. 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.

Membership Dues:

Individual/Family: \$20

Student: Complimentary

Institution: \$50

Life: \$250

Join online or renew via the member portal, or mail a check to:

Tennessee Native Plant Society

PO Box 159274

Nashville, TN 37215

Officers

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President's Perspective

As the 2025 summer season winds down, it's the perfect time to reflect on what has so far been an incredible year for TNPS! We have organized field trips to sixteen sites across Tennessee, plus one in Missouri, bringing native plant enthusiasts together across the region. Several more field trips are scheduled before the year's end.

TNPS membership continues to grow, now exceeding 750 individuals, according to the latest Neon CRM data. Our "Grants for Native Plants" program has also grown, with grants recently awarded to ten schools for the 2025–2026 academic year—up from six last year.

We have hosted eight TNPS Online Seminars with three more scheduled this year. Additionally, we have conducted twelve TNPS education outreach events across the state, from Knoxville to Memphis. Other highlights include sponsoring participant Matthew Chrnalogar to attend the renowned Cullowhee Native Plant Conference in July at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC. See Matt's report on pages 6 and 7 of this newsletter.

The TNPS Board of Directors and I want to thank all of you who have contributed to making this year such a success! We are actively planning new strategies for fundraising and expanding our engagement with the education community. We want to continue our high-level offerings in the coming years. To do this, and to cover rising expenses of the organization, we are considering a modest increase in membership dues beginning January 1, 2026. (See page 14) A vote on the proposed increase in membership dues will take place at the 2025 TNPS Annual Conference and

Membership Meeting to be held in late September.

We encourage all members to stay engaged and offer their continued support as we strive to enhance the programs and opportunities available through TNPS. Your involvement is vital in ensuring our mission and initiatives continue to flourish for the benefit of native plant environments and enthusiasts across our region.

With gratitude, Mitchell

President, TNPS



Meet Us at Pickwick Landing!

The schedule has been finalized for the TNPS annual membership meeting at [Pickwick Landing State Park](#) the weekend of September 26-28 with a great line-up of speakers and field trips! See you there!

TNPS 2025 Annual Conference Schedule

Note: All times shown are Central Daylight Time.



The Pickwick Landing Hotel

Day 1: Friday, September 26, 2025

3:00 pm – Arrive and check-in for those staying at Pickwick Landing State Park

3:00 - 6:00 pm - Pick up your TNPS conference badge and attend a pre-conference social at the Conference Center.

6:00 to 7:00 pm – Friday night dinner at the Lodge for conference attendees

7:00 – 8:30 pm – Welcome and announcements, followed by the presentation by Tennessee state botanist, Todd Crabtree titled: “40th Anniversary of Tennessee’s Rare Plant Act”

Day 2: Saturday, September 27, 2025

8:30 am – Meetup at park (location TBD) for travel to field trip location for hike at John Ross’ Farm in the AM followed by Hike at Walker Branch State Natural Area in the afternoon. Trip leaders are Bart Jones and Allan Trently. Another trip reversing the two site locations may be scheduled depending on number of participants. Note: Box lunches will be available for participants prior to leaving the park.

9:00 am – Attendees arriving on Saturday should pick up their conference badges at the TNPS information table in the Conference Center.

10:00 to 11:30 am - Presentation “Understanding Botanical Names” by John Manion, Coordinator of Education and Outreach, Overhill Gardens in Vonore, TN.

11:30 to 1:00 pm – Remaining box lunches will be available for pickup at the Conference Center for conference attendees.

1:00 pm - Meetup at Walker Branch State Natural Area for afternoon field trip led by Allan Trently. (Directions to site TBD.)

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm – Self-directed activities in the park for those people not attending the field trips.

6:00 to 7:00 pm – Saturday Night Dinner at the Lodge for conference attendees



The Pickwick Landing Marina

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7:00 to 8:00 pm - Presentation by Dr. John Evans, biology professor at the University of the South titled "Discovery of a New *Phacelia* Species"

8:00 – 9:00 pm - Annual TNPS Membership Meeting

Day 3: Sunday, 9/28/2025

7:00 – Breakfast on your own followed by check-out

8:30 am - Meetup at Lodge for Hike on the Island Loop Trail inside the park.

10:00 am – Conference concludes



View from the hotel of the Pickwick Lake and Dam

About the Park (from the Pickwick Landing Park Website):

Pickwick Landing State Park is located just south of Pickwick Dam, 14 miles south of Savannah, in Hardin County. Noted for its excellent water recreation the lake and river offer fishing, boating, swimming, and a marina. Accommodations in the park include a lodge and restaurant, cabins, and camping. In addition to water sports, guests enjoy golfing, birding, picnicking, disc golf, nature walks, and tennis. The park contains 1,416 acres of forested hills and hollows.

Grants 4 Native Plants - 2025 Winners

submitted by Karen Hill

In this second year of Grants 4 Native Plants, TNPS has seen a major increase in applicants, jumping from eight last year to twenty this year. Schools receiving the \$500 grant for native plants and supplies also receive two reference books and an on-site mentor to assist and guide both teachers and students with plant selection, location, and maintenance. The hoped-for end product is a created or enhanced natural area for hands-on student environmental education, replete with native plants that provide both habitat and sustenance for pollinators and other wildlife.

We are excited to announce that our ten grant winners from across the entire state of Tennessee are: Bethel Springs Elementary (Lauren Sprayberry), Christiana Middle (Clara Kaplan), Clarksville Christian (Brandon Sheffield), Hickerson Elementary (Michelle Mullican), Hunters Lane High (Madline Licocci), Jackson Christian (Amy Groves), Mt Juliet Montessori Academy (Debi Miller), Rockwood High (Darcy Soard), Seedkeepers Forest School (Micky Morton), and White Stone Academy (Kim Young).

Mentors are drawn mainly from our TNPS membership living near the school. Most are native plant gardeners who willingly share their love of native plants and their experiences in dealing with them. If you're willing to serve as a mentor for a school near you in the future, please let us know at grants@tnps.org.

Some schools will plant in the fall, some in the spring, and some will do both. Hopefully, everyone will learn something in the process. Results will be shared in the June 2026 issue of our newsletter.



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Deb Tucker talks about constructing phenology wheels.

Sewanee nature journalers each spent a few minutes at each table, describing some aspect of the practice that she particularly enjoys. Participants rotated in table teams for personal conversation with the Sewanee facilitator and to examine journal techniques more closely. Topics included drawing birds, making dyes from flower pigments,

constructing phenology wheels, creating three-dimensional images, and actually constructing different kinds of journals from a variety of materials.



Margie Galligher demonstrates adding 3D images to nature journals.

Kim Sadler shared resources that can assist the nature journaling process, such as field guides, like the *Wildflowers of Tennessee, the Ohio Valley, and the Southern Appalachians: the Official Guide of the Native Plant Society*, and *Limestone Cedar Glades:*

An Introduction to Some Common and Rare Species. She also discussed appropriate materials that withstand the elements, like mechanical pencils, waterproof pens, good-



Marianne Sobey displays a palette of pigments made from flowers.

quality journal paper, plus other tools like a small watercolor paint set and colored pencils.

We deemed the workshop a success — the participants seemed to have as much fun as we did. We hope some of them will be inspired to make nature journaling a regular part of how they interact with the natural world.

Tentative plans are in place to offer the workshop again next year at the Elsie

Quarterman Wildflower Festival May 1, 2026 at Cedars of Lebanon State Park. Many thanks to TNPS for helping sponsor this event!



We ventured to the butterfly garden at the Nature Center, where the variety of plants provided plenty of inspiration for journaling.

Transitions, and a Thank you...

We would like to recognize and sincerely thank our Newsletter Editor, Donna Bollenbach, for her outstanding dedication and hard work over the past three years. Donna has recently decided to step down from her role to care for her disabled son in Houston, and her departure leaves very big shoes to fill.

Throughout her time as editor, Donna has consistently gone above and beyond by crafting engaging newsletters, curating compelling content and visuals, coordinating with Field Trip leaders, managing timelines, and handling newsletter distributions with care and precision.

Thank you, Donna, for your incredible service and commitment to our organization. Your presence will be deeply missed. Best regards from your TNPS team.

As Donna transitions out of her role, we are looking for someone to step forward as our next Newsletter Editor. If you enjoy writing, organizing content, and helping to keep our community connected, this could be a wonderful opportunity to get more involved. Please reach out if you are interested or would like to learn more.

Donna's note: It has been a great pleasure to serve as your newsletter editor. I will miss the role and the people. To those considering taking on this task: Every 3 months, you have the opportunity to get creative. It is so much fun. I will gladly help you transition into the role.

The Cullowhee Native Plant Conference, an Educational and Impactful Experience by *Matthew Chrnalogar, recipient of the TNPS conference scholarship for 2025*

Taking place in the mountains of western North Carolina, the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference delivered a joyful, impactful, and educational experience I am eager to return to. Over the course of five days, my colleagues and I attended various field trips and many presentations on a variety of topics. In the heart of the conference was a market of vendors selling native plants, art, left-handed tools, tinctures, clothing, and other unique items, many of which were hand-crafted.

The conference begins with various field trips, which attendees rush to register for before they fill up. Some of these trips include kayaking the Little Tennessee River, taking an Ethnobotanical tour in Panthertown, visiting the North Carolina Arboretum, learning how to landscape with moss, and visiting the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness, a remnant of old-growth forest with centuries-old Tulip Poplars. I am grateful I was able to attend a field trip diving into Graminoids: grasses and grass-like plants such as sedges and rushes. A truly fascinating family of plants with exceptional winter interest! The teacher of this class, Scott Ward, led a lab examining the morphology of various species and gave us a crash course on their biology with a focus on differentiating between three types of graminoids: rushes, sedges, and grasses. After lunch, we went on a short hike to apply our newly gleaned knowledge. Despite the short distance hiked, we found many examples of graminoids thanks to Scott's sharp eye.

There was a diversity of talks to choose from during the conference, some of which occurred simultaneously. My colleagues and I divided and conquered, each attending different sessions and returning to compare notes. Some themes we walked away with were the importance of gardening for moths, the importance of using non-violent language when discussing native ecology and restoration, and developing an understanding and respect for indigenous knowledge in our endeavors to restore functional ecology in the southeast and elsewhere.

Attendees were lucky to hear not one, but two talks by Doug Tallamy, an entomologist who is passionate about teaching us all about native plants and the insects that rely on them, especially moths. Doug first introduced us to Homegrown National Park, an organization that raises awareness of the importance of

incorporating native plants in our landscapes at home, work, and school. By beginning to replace lawns with native plants, habitat for wildlife can expand in urban environments. His advice: "If you don't have access to native plants or seeds, simply remove an invasive plant and observe what grows." Many soils still contain native seed banks that are waiting for the right conditions to germinate. Among these plants are numerous hosts for moth caterpillars. Moth species far outnumber butterfly species and are critical for feeding wildlife that depend on them to raise their young, like birds and bats. Moths are so varied, and many are strikingly beautiful, including their wild caterpillar forms.

Birder and conservationist J. Drew Lanham asked the conference a thought-provoking question: "What is native enough?" This is a question that needs great consideration within the native plant community. Is something bad because it does not have a deep history in a place? Do transplants deserve to be eliminated just because they are not "native" to a region or are not useful in our eyes? Or is it possible that we can coexist with some of these plant and insect relatives that serve to promote functional ecology in our communities? For example, Japanese beetles may provide a source of food for birds. Borage, native to Europe and Africa, is a powerhouse flower and nectar producer, replenishing nectar in flowers within 2-5 minutes and able to produce nearly 1000 flowers per plant. They may not host specialist pollinator larvae, but they can certainly contribute benefits to the ecosystem.



Matthew (left) with colleagues at the Cullowhee Native Plant

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The final presentation that I would like to highlight was by Corlee Thomas-Hill, a tribal liaison for the Southeastern Grassland Institute. This organization is dedicated to restoring the lost grasslands of the southeast through collective action and education, and works to connect existing Native American tribes to the historical ranges of their ancestors.

Southern grasslands are among the most diverse in the whole of the U.S. and the most imperiled, with only a fraction remaining of what once existed. Corlee asserted that “no grassland is too small” and that many of these imperiled species are vitally important for preserving indigenous knowledge and ways of life. Many of these plants were honored and named by tribes, associating them with meaning or uses. This naming connects people to ancestral land stewards who nurtured countless ecological communities for generations before colonization. The knowledge of these connections is priceless, as it is the story of humankind.



The grand finale of the conference was the infamous talent show featuring acts by the attendees and hosts in which Matthew (right) was an enthusiastic participant.

The grand finale of the conference was the infamous talent show, featuring acts by the attendees and hosts. The acts included bird mimicry, poetry, music, and other incredible performances that were genuine and, at times, tear-jerking. I left the conference with a deeper sense of place in the southeast and a greater desire to do my part in conserving and restoring the vital, functional ecosystems that all life depends on. As Dr. Seuss said, “Unless someone

like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Tennessee Native Plant Society for sponsoring my attendance at the conference this year. Without the aid of organizations like TNPS, many passionate individuals would not have the opportunity to attend these inspirational educational experiences that fuel their drive to continue working toward societal and ecological change.

TECH TIPS: Navigating NEON

Your guide to making the most of the TNPS website and Neon Portal

We have received questions from TNPS members regarding the use of the Neon CRM Member Portal. The portal serves several purposes, including:

1. Creating a new membership account or renewing an existing one.
2. Modifying your account profile, such as updating your mailing address or changing communication preferences.
3. Changing your member account password.
4. Reviewing events with online registration or submitting your registration for those events.
5. Making a donation.

To access your membership account in Neon CRM, visit the TNPS website by entering "tnps.org" in your browser. Click the "Login" button located at the top right corner of the TNPS webpage. You will be taken to a login tab labeled "Log in to your account." Enter your username and password to access the Member Login Portal. If you don't have an account, you can click "Create an Account" at the bottom.

If you have any questions about the TNPS Member Login Portal, please email your inquiries and contact information to support@tnps.org, and a TNPS support representative will reach out to you.

2025 TNPS Fieldtrip Reports

JUNE 21, RITA VENABLE'S POLLINATOR GARDEN: LANDSCAPING WITH NATIVE PLANTS IN AN HOA

Fieldtrip report by Kim Sadler

Rita Venable (author, *Butterflies of Tennessee*, and PBS *Volunteer Garden Host*) and her husband Phil shared their morning with us at their residence in Franklin, TN. It is impressive how they have incorporated their philosophy about gardening with native plants and nectar/habitat species for native pollinators within an HOA's (Home Owners Association) regulations. In keeping with HOA guidelines, there is a section of fescue grass in the front yard, but unlike any other homes in the neighborhood, there are two larger mulched landscaped beds on both sides of the grassy area in the front and a veritable wildlife habitat in the backyard.



Rita Venable's front yard. A haven for wildlife.

Rita explained she likes her plants to be situated like children at their desks in a school, where each has their own place. If a plant doesn't thrive where it is planted, it will be moved. Many of her plants are labeled, making the visit a lesson in plant identification for us, plus educating the curious passersby in the neighborhood.

Out of view from HOA police scrutiny, the Venable's have more liberty in how plants are situated in their backyard. The gardens have walking paths through sections and plants are more densely clustered together. Rita noted how dynamic gardening can be, as the recent loss of two hardwood trees in the back has her thinking about plants more suitably adapted for the new sunnier conditions. President Mitchell Kent and I thought it would be wonderful if other TNPS members with native plant gardens would volunteer to host this type of field trip. Thank you to Rita and Phil!

(Please note: This field trip filled up quickly, with all 30 slots taken within days of being posted, but only half of those who registered attended. If you can't attend a fieldtrip you registered for, please cancel at least 24 hours in advance to allow others to participate.)



Rita greeting field trip attendees in her front yard.

Rita shared this list of some of the plants we enjoyed viewing in her yard. Perhaps you will be inspired to plant some of these species in your yard, too.



Common blue violet,
Viola sororia

Ground covers:

Cherokee sedge (*Carex cherokeensis*)

Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*)

rosette grass (*Dicanthelium* sp.)

palm sedge (*Carex muskingumensis*)

common blue violet (*Viola sororia*)

wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)

Edging:

blue-eyed grass, stout (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*) 'Lucerne'

nodding wild onion (*Allium cernuum*)

loosestrife, lanceleaf (*Lysimachia lanceolata* var. *purpurea*)

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Grasses:



Muhley grass, *Muhlenbergia capillaris*

little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)
 'Cheyenne Sky', 'Shenandoah',
 'North Wind'
muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)

Forbs:



Wild bergamot, *Monarda fistulosa*

blue sage (*Salvia azurea*)
wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
orange milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
smooth aster (*Symphyotrichum laeve*)

pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)
purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*)
 'Glitters Like Gold' and 'Goldstrum'
rose verbena (*Verbena canadensis*) 'Homestead Purple'
downy skullcap (*Scutellaria incana*)
greater tickseed (*Coreopsis major*)
hoary vervain (*Verbena stricta*)

Shrubs:



Oakleaf Hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia*

sweet shrub (*Calycanthus floridus* var. *floridus*)
 'Athens'
shrubby St. Johnswort (*Hypericum prolificum*)
golden St. Johnswort (*Hypericum frondosum*)
 'Sunburst'
autumn sage (*Salvia greggi*)
buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) 'Sugar Shack'

'Purple Dome' New York (*Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*) and
 New England (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*) asters
Walter's viburnum (*Viburnum obovatum*) 'Best Densa' and
 'Reiffler's Dwarf'

oakleaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea quercifolia*): 'Sike's Dwarf',
 'Munchkin', 'Ruby Slippers', 'Snow Queen'

Trees:

red maple (*Acer rubrum*) 'October Glory' and 'Red Pointe'
common hoptree (*Ptelea trifoliata*)



Flowering Dogwood, *Cornus florida*

spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)
sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) 'Moon Glow'
Carolina laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*)
eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) 'Taylor'

southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) 'Little Gem'

pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)

smoke tree (*Cotinus coggygria*) 'Royal Purple'

American holly (*Ilex opaca*)

blackhaw viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*)

flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*) 'Sentry' (male and female)

Vines:



Passionvine, *Passiflora incarnata*

clematis (*Clematis virginiana*)
 (in a pot on back porch)
trumpet honeysuckle
 (*Lonicera sempervirens*) 'Major Wheeler'
Virginia creeper
 (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)
passionvine (*Passiflora incarnata*)
woolly Dutchman's pipe
 (*Aristolochia tomentosa*)

*Fieldtrip photos courtesy of Kim Sadler and
 plant images courtesy of Donna Bollenbach*

JULY 19, SAND PRAIRIE CONSERVATION AREA, SCOTT CO, MISSOURI

Fieldtrip report by Bart Jones



The Sand Prairie Adventure Group

A really great group of eight adventurers gathered at the Sand Prairie Conservation Area near Benton, Missouri, on a hot, sunny day to experience this unique habitat. Only 2,000 acres of sand prairie remain in southeast Missouri, providing the last refuge for several state rare species.

The flora of the sand prairies is an eclectic mix of midwestern tallgrass prairie and southeastern coastal plain prairies, with a few barrens species thrown in for good measure.



Jointweed, *Polygonella americana*

As we left the parking lot, we immediately encountered the two characteristic plants of these prairies: Jointweed (*Polygonella americana*) and plains golden-aster (*Heterotheca camporum*). Jointweed has a fairly large, scattered range, including Tennessee, where it is never considered very common. These plants have the unique feature of the seed pods being as showy as the flowers, so they have a prolonged “bloom” period.



Plains golden aster, *Heterotheca camporum*

As we moved toward areas of open sand, we came upon another of our target species, slender rushfoil (*Croton michauxii*). These plants are very wiry with narrow leaves and tiny flowers, so much so that they almost disappear among the other plants. Also here in the more open, sandy areas were numerous flatsedges, including the rare sand prairie

flatsedge (*Cyperus grayoides*).

Moving down just a few feet in elevation from the open sandy areas revealed a damper, more densely vegetated area that harbored more of our target species. One aspect of the plants in this harsh environment is the narrow, hairy leaves that many of them possess. Two species of tick-trefoil definitely fell into this category: Sessile-leaved tick-trefoil (*Desmodium sessilifolium*) and the rare disjunct pineland tick-trefoil (*Desmodium strictum*), which is over 300 miles north of the nearest populations in Louisiana and Mississippi.



Pineland tick-trefoil, *Desmodium strictum*



Patterson's stylisma, *Stylisma pickeringii* var. *pattersonii*

Other noteworthy species seen were dotted beebalm (*Monarda punctata*), pigeonwings

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From left to right: Dotted beebalm, *Monarda punctata*; Prairie blazingstar, *Liatris pycnostachya*; Creeping St. Johnswort, *Hypericum adpressum*

(*Clitoria mariana*), Patterson's stylisma (*Stylisma pickeringii* ssp. *pattersonii*), broad-leaf snoutbean (*Rhynchosia latifolia*), and one gorgeous plant of prairie blazingstar (*Liatris pycnostachya*).

We made one last stop at another prairie which contained a small pond and wet draw below it to look for two more rare plants. At the pond edges were several plants of the dwarf burhead (*Helanthium tenellum*), then in the wooded section of the draw were a few plants of the globally rare creeping St. Johnswort (*Hypericum adpressum*).

At this point the heat had pretty well done us in, so we quickly said our goodbyes and enjoyed an air-conditioned ride home.



Above: Pigeonwings, *Clitoria mariana*

Left: A Sand Prairie Scrub

Photos courtesy of Bart Jones

AUGUST 2, SUMMER ORCHIDS OF THE CUMBERLAND PLATEAU

Fieldtrip report by Chuck Wilson



Yellow fringed
Orchid, *Platanthera*
ciliaris

A small band (actually about 40) of TNPS individuals braved the extreme summer heat (in reality, heavily overcast and cool) to view and photograph several summer orchid species.

We met at the Fall Creek Falls volunteer firehouse to find abundant and spectacular yellow fringed orchids (*Platanthera ciliaris*) widely scattered under overhead power lines in mostly thick grassy vegetation. Along one edge of the corridor were a number of crested fringed orchids (*Platanthera cristata*) with small, tightly packed, and very cute flower racemes. In addition, just inside the bordering tree canopy, we saw one small woodland or club spur orchid (*Platanthera clavellata*) and one rattlesnake plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*). As we were leaving, some members also found a few green-lipped ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes lacera* variety *gracilis*).

Next, we carpoled to the Big Bottom unit of the Bridgestone/Firestone Wildlife Management Area north of Mooneyham. We entered on a rough gravel road, and after about two miles we stopped to explore another transmission line corridor. Although herbicide usage on woody plants had disfigured the appearance of the site, we immediately spotted

"spring" ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes vernalis*) and more green-lipped ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes lacera* variety *gracilis*) on our way to a quaking fen. We skirted the periphery of this unusual habitat to avoid sinking, and we saw prime examples of the same *Platanthera* species we saw earlier (*ciliaris*, *cristata*, and *clavellata*) but with the very notable addition of magnificent and lightly fragrant monkey-faced orchids (*Platanthera integrilabia*).



Small woodland green orchid,
also known as club spur orchid,
Platanthera clavellata



Monkey-faced orchids,
Platanthera integrilabia



"Spring" ladies' tresses,
Spiranthes vernalis

Seven blooming orchid species on one day in pleasant weather with amiable company counts as a memorable experience. Thanks to Allen Sweetser, Ruth Ann Henry, and John White for helping to scout out the trip, and to Mitchell Kent for organizing and registration.



A group of the nearly 40 people who attended the fieldtrip.

Photos courtesy of Chuck Wilson

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Passionflower

(Inspired by Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird by Wallace Stevens)

By Donna Bollenbach

I

Among a thousand bees,
the only fragrance they desire
is the passionflower's.



II

I was of three hearts,
like a vine in which
there are three passion flowers.

III

The scent of the passion flower fills the meadow,
the bees and butterflies dance together.

IV

A bee and a butterfly
are one.

A bee and a butterfly, and a passionflower
are one.

V

O ladies of means,
why do you imagine roses?

Do you not see how the passionflower
grows wild in your yard and holds the key to your desire?



VI

The butterfly lays its eggs
in the shadow of the passionflower.

The caterpillar cuts swaths
through the leaves.

It is sacrificial love.

VII

I do not know which I prefer,
the complexity of the flower
or the intricacy of the vine.
The passion flower in bloom,
or the fruit left behind.



VIII

At the sight of a thousand passionflowers
growing in the meadow,
the pauper and the king
are equal.

IX

The worker bees lie drunk
in the purple fringes of the
passionflower,
while the queen paces the hive.



X

The passionflower spreads its vines,
tracing many paths through the meadow.

XI

The bees are buzzing,
the passionflower must be blooming.

XII

The hawk screeched,
fear cut through the field.
The sparrow found refuge
in the shadow of the passionflower.



XIII

It was cold all night.
There was frost in the morning.
The butterfly sat motionless
On the passionflower.



Proposed TNPS Membership Dues Increase

We conducted a study of membership dues of several other native plant organizations in the southeastern U.S. The chart below shows the results of our study. As you will see, TNPS has one of the lowest rates among all the organizations.

Comparison of Membership Rates							
	Individual	Family / Household / Multi-member	Student, Full-time	Senior (55+)	Sustaining	Business / Corporate / Institutional	Lifetime - Family
Florida Native Plant Society	\$35	\$50	\$15			\$150	\$1,000
Georgia Native Plant Society	\$30	\$50	\$25	\$25		\$250	\$1,000
Kentucky Native Plant Society	\$15	\$25	\$10		\$50	\$100	\$200
North Carolina Native Plant Society	\$25	\$35	\$15			\$50	\$700
South Carolina Native Plant Society	\$35	\$40	\$15			\$75	\$600
Tennessee Native Plant Society	\$20	\$20	\$0			\$50	\$250
Virginia Native Plant Society	\$30	\$40	\$15		\$100		\$500

In previous articles in the newsletter, the excellent growth in membership and the many activities that TNPS has sponsored this year were shared. The Neon One membership system serves several important functions, such as maintaining online membership data, implementing online registration for many of our field trips, providing a payment portal for books and conference registration, and others. Our Zoom capabilities have been expanded to handle larger numbers of participants for TNPS Online Seminars. For the first time, liability insurance has been obtained for TNPS as an organization. There has not been a membership fee increase in many years. It is time to consider a modest increase in the dues to cover the increasing costs.

The TNPS Board of Directors has agreed on the following new rates for membership dues, subject to approval by the TNPS membership.

Proposed TNPS Membership Dues for 2026							
	Individual	Family / Household / Multi-member	Student, Full-time	Senior (55+)	Sustaining	Business / Corporate / Institutional	Lifetime - Family
Tennessee Native Plant Society*	\$20	\$20	\$0			\$50	\$250
Proposed Dues for 2026	\$25	\$35	\$10			\$100	\$350
* Reduced price memberships to be offered at education outreach events at <u>\$15</u> .							

A comparison of the proposed dues with other native plant organizations shows that TNPS dues will remain lower than most, even with the proposed new rates.

Per the TNPS By-Laws, this matter will be open for discussion during the Annual Conference Business Meeting, at which point a vote will be called. If approved, the new rates will take effect for all new memberships and renewals beginning January 1, 2026.

Fall Fieldtrip & Conference Dates

- 9/6 [Van Buren County Powerline](#)
(Register Online)
- 9/13 [The Point Trail at Obed Wild and Scenic River, Morgan Co.](#)
(Reserve by email)
- 9/26-28 [TNPS Annual Meeting & Conference at Pickwick Landing SP, Hardin Co.](#)

The Autumn Quilt

by Donna Bollenbach

*The sun squints on the horizon
as she spreads her autumn quilt
over the table earth.*

*She weaves threads of golden grasses
with yellow sunflowers and goldenrods,
and plaits blue blazing stars
into the living fabric.*

*Her smile brightens as her handiwork
comes to life. Her autumn quilt
warms the earth and the hearts
of those who bear witness.*



The Tennessee Native Plant Society Presents 2025 Native Plant Seminars

Each year the Tennessee Native Plant Society hosts monthly Native Plant Seminars from January through November. 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. 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 will be covered that may include 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.

2025 TNPS Native Plant Seminar Upcoming Seminars & Video links

Videos of past Seminars are available our website: www.tnps.org

9/16 Kris Light, *The Birds and Bees of Wildflowers*

10/21 Eli Harris, *Floristic Diversity of Window Cliffs State Natural Area*

11/18 Steve Slack, *Growing Native Plants by Sees Sourced Locally*

When Are Dues Due?

Membership dues are due one year from the date of last payment. You will receive a reminder email 5 days before expiration asking you to renew. There is currently a grace period of 65 days in which you retain your membership status.

If you go into your membership portal (www.TNPS.org, and click the LOGIN button or <https://tnps.app.neoncrm.com/login>) you will see when your membership is due to expire. You may also renew your membership, if it is near expiration, and sign up for auto renewal if you wish. Payment is either by credit card or delayed payment if you mail a check. If there have been changes to your email or physical address, please update your membership.

If you have any questions or problems, contact support@tnps.org.

TNPS Newsletter
P.O. Box 159274
Nashville, TN 37215