

Kelseya

Newsletter of the Montana Native Plant Society



Kelseya uniflora
Ill. by Bonnie Heidel

Annual Meeting Sparks Passion in Greenhorns and Old-Timers Alike

By a 2025 MNPS Annual Meeting Participant



Sara Owen's field trip at the 2025 Annual Meeting, highlighting wetland mitigation on private land

If you have never attended a MNPS annual meeting and aren't sure what to expect, read on for inspiration. These words are from a member who attended her first annual meeting this summer in Ekalaka, and kindly sent the host chapter, Maka Flora, a thank you note expressing her delight:

"Thank you so much for your hard work in putting together the wonderful MNPS Prairie Solstice Sojourns! WOW! I feel like I got way more than a couple of days' experience! The weather graced us all with spectacular displays and cooling temperatures that made the field trips delightful. I've never been to a state meeting of MNPS before, and now I'm hooked, inspired to learn Latin names of plants, and hope to attend more field trips with my chapter! (I also want to help with the state meeting when our chapter hosts.)

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Chapter Events

Artemisia Chapter

Info: Jessica Callahan at 507-696-5467; artemisiamnps@gmail.com.

Calypso Chapter

Info: Catherine Cain at 406-498-6198; nativeplants@montana.com or Karen Porter at 406-498-9728; karenwporter44@gmail.com.

Sunday, October 19, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Dyeing with Native Plants – A Hands-on Educational Workshop (Divide). Co-hosted with the U.S. Forest Service, this workshop will guide participants in developing a dye notebook using various plant dye materials including lichens, bark, flowers and berries. Participants may purchase a silk scarf (a small fee paid at the workshop) to dye, or bring small samples of their own fabrics. For details and to register contact Jessie at 406-660-0011 or jessica.salix@usda.gov.

Sunday, December 7, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Calypso Chapter Annual Potluck and Planning Brunch at the Divide Grange. We will gather to celebrate the season, enjoy a meal together, and plan the trips and events we will offer in 2026. For more information contact Karen at 406-498-9728; karenwporter44@gmail.com.

Clark Fork Chapter

Info: Teagan Hayes at 920-979-9009; teagan.hayes@gmail.com or Paul Buck at 970-901-2418; paul7703@gmail.com.

Thursday, October 16, 7:30 p.m. Mason Bees are Heroic Pollinators.

John Holbrook will show a video of how to create and maintain homes for these bees so you can enjoy them. He will answer your questions or even make the nests for you.



Lupine Room, Rocky Mountain Exploration Center, 1075 South Ave. W., SE corner of the building.

Thursday, November 20, 7:30 p.m. High mountain trees across the Americas share a common feature: resilient conifer trees with surprising similarities and striking differences between species in the two hemispheres. Join Enzo Martelli Moya to visit **Conifers at the Top of the World: Linking Mountain Forests from Montana to the Andes.** Rocky Mountain Exploration Center, 1075 South Ave. W.

Thursday, December 18, 6:30 p.m. Our annual **Christmas Potluck** will be held in the Dell Brown Room in Turner Hall on the UM Campus northwest of the Oval. Bring plates, utensils and a dish to share. Don't forget to bring a few of your favorite digital wildflower photos from the summer. Call Peter at 406-728-8740 or Kelly at 406-258-5439 if you have questions.

Monday, January 12, 7:30 p.m. Long after they create foraging and nesting holes in wood for their own survival, woodpeckers support other lives in the forest, from martens and chickadees to wood ducks and flying squirrels. Join ecologist **Rob Rich** to explore **Hole Homes: How Woodpeckers Support Forest Health.** Room 110 of the Interdisciplinary Science Building at the southwest end of UM campus. Please note the different day and place!

Tuesday January 20, 7:00 p.m. Herbarium Night. *Astragalus* (locoweed, milkvetch) is the second largest genus in Montana. We will look at some photographs and herbarium collections and key out a few with Peter Lesica. Room 303, Natural Science Building, UM Campus. Limit is 10 MNPS members; email curator at Giovanna.Bishop@mso.umt.edu to reserve a place.

Eastern At-Large

Info: Kelsey Molloy at 406-654-4566; kelsey88@gmail.com.

Flathead Chapter

Info: Tara Carolin at 406-607-7670; mnps.flathead@gmail.com. Not on our email list? Contact us!

Tuesday, October 20, 5:30 p.m. Fall Pizza, Potluck and Planning. Columbia Falls Senior Center, 205 Nucleus Avenue, Columbia Falls. Let's gather to share adventures from the summer and plan events for the coming winter. More details coming by email.

Date and time to be announced: Native Plant Trivia. Make sure you are on the Flathead Chapter email list to hear about the return of our popular Native Plant Trivia event, as well as other activities.

Kelsey Chapter

Info: Elena Johnson (president) or Jane Fournier (secretary) at kelseychaptermnps@gmail.com.

Maka Flora Chapter

Info: Libby Knotts at 406-774-3778; libbyknotts@gmail.com.

Valley of Flowers Chapter

Info: Contact Gretchen Rupp for program details or to be added to the Valley of Flowers Chapter "Friends" e-mail list, at 406-586-8363; beesgrmt@gmail.com.

Tuesday, October 7, 7:00 p.m. Panel Discussion: Ascending Together – Public Action for High-Elevation Forests. We are sponsoring this event that's part of the 2025 Conference of the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation. Inspiration Hall, Norm Asbjornson Hall on the MSU campus. Free and open to the public; light snacks and a cash bar (alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages).

Monday, October 13, 3:00 p.m. Pollinator Garden Fall Cleanup. Bring work gloves, a leaf rake and hand clippers for our

annual putting-to-bed of the popular native plant garden by the Gallagator Trail north of Mason Street (Langohr Community Gardens in Bozeman). This doesn't take a long time, and it's a great opportunity to catch up with like-minded folks and pester our leader with your native plant landscaping questions! Contact Linda Iverson at 406-932-5840.

Thursday, November 13, 6:30 p.m. MNPS 2026 Annual Meeting Planning Committee. Contact Beth Madden at 406-224-1012.

Western At-Large

Info: Jon Reny at 406-334-0459; jreny@kvis.net.

MNPS Presents!

Summer Field Trip Slideshow w/Gretchen Rupp



**Tuesday Oct 21, 7pm MST
on Zoom**

Phishing Alert

MNPS has seen a slight uptick in email phishing scams. You will never be asked to provide any payment or financial information on behalf of the Society. If you receive an email requesting such information, even if it appears to come from a member, please contact that member directly, or contact Laurie Kurth, the state treasurer, at lkquilts@hotmail.com.

Corrections to Manual of Montana Vascular Plants

The Manual of Montana Vascular Plants (2nd Edition), by Peter Lesica (2022) is the definitive source for identifying Montana's native flora. As in all massive works, some errors are inevitable. Find the errata list, last updated August 2025, on our website at: <https://mtnativeplants.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/errata-for-Lesica-2022.pdf>.

(2025 Annual Meeting, continued from page 1)



So, thank you for introducing me to this delicious experience of life and nature and wonderful fellow plant, rock, and bird lovers! Well done!"

See what you have been missing? An excuse to visit a new and specific area of Montana, field trips led by the best botanists in the state, workshops focusing on plants and related interests (e.g. rare plant surveys, bumble bees, Native culture, journaling, etc.), plant identification with Wayne Phillips and friends, an engaging and educational speaker, an opportunity to hear what the MNPS does and get involved in group projects (aka committees), and, perhaps most importantly, see old friends and make new ones.

Join us next year for the annual meeting hosted by Valley of Flowers on Homestake Pass!



Save the Date: 2026 Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars! Next year's annual meeting will be hosted by the Valley of Flowers Chapter on June 26-28, 2026, at the Homestake Lodge, along the Continental Divide just east of Butte. There will be a variety of lodging options onsite, from camping to dorm beds to cabins - as well as motels in nearby Butte (15 miles). With a diversity of flora within reach from every direction, it's sure to be another unforgettable weekend. If you'd like to get involved, whether through volunteering or planning, reach out to Beth Madden at bethmadden64@gmail.com. We'd love to see both familiar and new faces.



Conservation Corner



By Andrea Pipp, Kelsey Chapter & Program Botanist, Montana Natural Heritage Program

The torch for Conservation Chair has been passed from Elizabeth Bergstrom to Lynda Saul.

As Chair, Elizabeth did a tremendous job leading the committee, and in the last three years co-chaired the position with Jennifer Lyman. Together with a committee of members, they engaged the Society in many conservation issues, including the biennial MNPS Native Plant Conservation Conference, Important Plant Area Program, Montana Native Plant Conservation Strategy, Montana Citizen Botany Program, interpretative plant signs for the Beartooth Highway, and reviews of land management actions. Although Elizabeth and Jennifer will remain involved, we take this opportunity to say, "thank you"! On behalf of the committee, we appreciate your time, accomplishments, effective participation, and dedication to plant conservation.

We welcome Lynda Saul, as Conservation Chair. Lynda's career included more than 30 years with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, where she served as the Wetland Program Coordinator. Her knowledge of native plants stems from working in wetland and aquatic systems. She brings a suite of leadership and conservation skills to this role, recognizing that "the Conservation Committee is a critical aspect of MNPS", and reminding us that "Montana's amazing native plants need your help to protect and conserve them now and into the future."

On behalf of the committee, we ask members to join, participate, and/or form/lead a subcommittee. Current issues include the 2026 Plant Conservation Conference, Important Plant Area Program, reviews on land management and other political actions, and Citizen Botany. To get involved, contact Lynda at lynda.saul@gmail.com.

Participation

- * Another 33 people, mostly MNPS members, joined the ranks of Citizen Botanists in 2025.
- * Fraser Watson and Kenda Herman led a workshop with 19 attendees at the annual meeting in Ekalaka.
- * Also at the annual meeting, Fraser hosted a successful group revisit to an occurrence of Visser's buckwheat (*Eriogonum visseri*) that had not been visited since 1997.
- * At least 31 new and veteran Citizen Botanists submitted revisit data on at least 50 rare plant occurrences!

Position Available

- * With MNPS funds, the MTNHP is hiring a Citizen Botany Coordinator through Montana AgCorps, a State AmeriCorps program. Share the news or apply!
 - Information on our website at: <https://mtnativeplants.org/conservation/citizen-botany/citizen-botany-hiring/>.
 - Position and application at: <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/A-D/AgCorps-pages/Current-Positions>.
 - Link to Citizen Botany Coordinator AmeriCorps application: <https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?fromSearch=true&id=125697>.

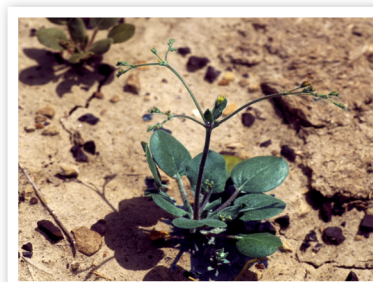
Funding & Expanding the Program

- * The US Forest Service-Region 1 continues to partially finance this program through an agreement with the Montana Natural Heritage Program.
- * The Montana/Dakotas Bureau of Land Management continues to support this program through a competitive grant opportunity. The MTNHP botanist submitted a proposal that, if funded, would help support rare plant revisits, expand the program to develop and test for components of identifying native plant material sources, seed collecting, and growing partnerships with Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Center for Plant Conservation, and others.



Kenda Herman leading Citizen Science Workshop at the 2025 Annual Meeting

As reported in the Spring 2025 *Kelsey* by MNPS Vice-President, Kenda Herman, "a permanent Citizen Botany Program is certainly sustainable in Montana", so we continue on the path of attainment. In 2025 we initiated Phase 3:



Visser's buckwheat (*Eriogonum visseri*), plant and flower, photos courtesy of Montana Natural Heritage Program, by Bonnie Heidel

September Hike on the Beartooth Plateau Leads to Ancient White Bark Pine Trees at Melting Snow Patches

By Jennifer Lyman, *Artemisia Chapter*

In September 2024 my husband and I took one of our last meandering hikes east of the Beartooth Highway toward some wetlands that are home to Alpine Knotweed (*Koenigia alpina*) and Ice Grass (*Phippsia algida*) and then hiked around to the north to explore some snow patches in the far distance. To our surprise we found a large snowpatch with a USGS instrument in the center and a jumble of logs at its base. Some tree trunks were still set in the soil while dozens of large logs lay jumbled around the melting snow patch. We noticed that some logs had been sawed through and cross-section slices removed. Some logs had metal ID tags attached to their ends. Clearly a study site.... but what it meant was unclear. Just a crazy place to find full grown dead trees emerging from the melting snow patch.



Site 1, photo taken September 7, 2024

A few months later, my botany buddy, Lisa Druckenmiller, was at our house in the winter reading our Smithsonian magazine. She found an article from January 13, 2025 entitled "Melting Ice Reveals Remains of 5,900 Year-Old Trees in Wyoming, Uncovering a Long-Lost Forest". We realized that the snow patches we had found were these. Lisa followed up with the actual science article from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) entitled "Dynamic Treeline and Cryosphere Response to Pronounced Mid-Holocene Climatic Variability in the US Rocky Mountains". Authors: Gregory Tl. Pederson, Daniel Stahle, David B. McWethy, and Cathy Whitlock, December 30, 2024. While these particular patches are in Wyoming, similar patches are likely to occur in Montana's alpine areas.

The paper mentioned that they had found two separate snow patches with trees emerging, so September 5, 2025 we visited the second site which is much smaller and with fewer trees than the first one. It occurs within a couple miles of the first patch.

The article does not say when the researchers initiated studies of

the snow patches but the authors write that the recent warming in the western United States has impacted all mountain ecosystems, particularly snow patch above treelines. They note that evidence has shown that high elevation treelines have a very narrow temperature tolerance range that has been severely affected in recent decades.

Over millennia the ice patches in the Beartooths accumulated pollen, macrofossils, and other biological materials, likely including seeds. They do not say if they found signs of human activity in the area from times long past. Radiocarbon dating and ice core information indicate that these trees thrived during the mid-Holocene warm period. The forests spanned a period from 5940 to 5520 YBP. Then a region of cooling developed over the Western US driven by increasing Arctic Sea ice cover and decreasing high latitude insolation (the amount of solar radiation reaching a given area). The lower insolation could have been exacerbated by high periods of volcanic activity in Iceland. The cooling period shifted treeline back down to near modern elevations.

What strikes me about the study from a botanical perspective are questions about what might be present in the newly exposed soil seed bank, what species of pollen might occur in the snow layers and soils beneath, and if the plants colonizing the newly exposed sites at the melting points are the same or different from those species nearby. While I observed a few young or Krumholtz conifers within a few hundred feet of the snow patches, whitebark pine was not prevalent. Will it recolonize the area over time?

The research article is fascinating and hints that somewhere there is a collection of biological materials that have been recovered from the site. The climatic variability that we experience in this century certainly has similarities to the climatic changes during the Holocene. Graduate students in botany and botany-related fields might find a trove of potential projects that would keep them busy for a long time.



Site 2, photo taken September 5, 2025



Who Would Ever Eat Moss?

By Peter Lesica, Clark Fork Chapter

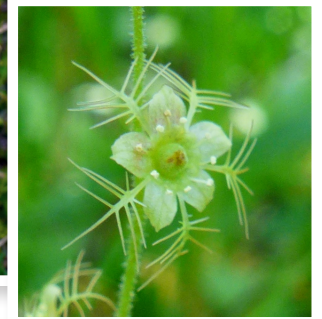
Mitreworts (*Mitella* spp.) comprise a relatively small genus of flowering plants in the saxifrage family (Saxifragaceae). They are found in western North America and Asia, with six species here in Montana. Mitreworts have small white or greenish flowers with divided petals. The lobed petals give the flowers a somewhat unusual appearance, but that is not the only odd characteristic of these plants. Many of our flowering plants are pollinated by flies - hover flies, bee flies and flower flies. Flies are indispensable as pollinators for a wide range of plant communities, especially where other pollinators are less abundant. For example, mitreworts and other genera in the Saxifragaceae are pollinated exclusively by fungus gnats, tiny flies that live in moist forests. The genus *Mitella* is a plant lineage that has coevolved with a specific group of pollinators; in this case, three closely related genera of fungus gnats. Genetic studies have revealed that this plant/pollinator relationship has evolved multiple times in Northwestern America and East Asia.

As you might imagine from the name, the larvae of most fungus gnats feed on fungi. However, there are only three genera of gnats associated with mitreworts, and their larvae feed not on fungi but on mosses. My bryologist friend tells me that nothing, except maybe bog lemmings, eats moss, so these gnats are pretty strange. These gnat larvae don't feed on just any old moss species but exclusively on three closely related genera in the Mniaceae: *Rhizomnium*, *Mnium*, and *Plagiomnium*.

So, these mosses facilitate outcrossing and seed production in mitreworts by functioning as larval food for pollinating fungus gnats. Biologists in Japan found that mitreworts always occur in forests that support at least one of these moss genera. Mitreworts, fungus gnats and mosses; now those are pretty unusual bedfellows. So next time you're out in the mesic forests of northwest Montana and you find some miterwort plants, look around. If you squint hard enough, maybe you will find some *Mnium* with fungus gnat larvae. Better not hold your breath.



Mitella breweri;
Mitella nuda flower;
photos by Peter Lesica



Further reading:

Okuyama, Y. et al. 2018. Bryophytes facilitate outcrossing of *Mitella* by functioning as larval food for pollinating fungus gnats. *Ecology*, 99: 1890–1893.

A Trip to the Bison Range

By Gunner Davies, Clark Fork Chapter & Wildlife Habitat Restoration & Management Ecologist, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes



Members waiting to start searching for young native sprouts, photo by Gunner Davies



Fungus gnat ovipositing on *Plagiomnium* from Okuyama et al.

We gathered behind the Bison Range Visitors Center in the shaded comfort of the pavilion and gathered round our trip leader, Peter Bugoni, to listen to what he had planned for us. Peter talked us through some of his plans to help restore native prairie to parts of the range that had been invaded by non-native annual grasses such as *Bromus tectorum* and a relatively new invader species, *Ventenata dubia*. A few years back, Peter chemically treated a couple of areas on the range with an herbicide

called, Rejuvra, which is designed to kill off the roots of newly establishing seedlings. He then seeded the sites with a diverse native prairie seed mix the previous fall. Peter set us out on a special task to help find these seeded species that had started to sprout up from the ground.

Flash cards and clipboards in hand we drove off to our site to find the seedlings of the year. However, we were stopped a few short minutes into the drive by a bison who was slowly making its way across the dirt road. Coming upon our site we donned our safety vests and set out in pairs of two or three and began our hunt. After some time, a few of us did manage to find some seeded species and we came across many more natives that had come back following the treatment.

It was a good day's work and our foreman, Peter, was very pleased with our work and what we managed to discover.

Field Trip Adventure to Branham Lakes

By Robyn Klein, Valley of Flowers Chapter

Seven of us had a lovely day up at Branham Lakes on July 12 viewing the subalpine flora. The rocky, challenging road ended at 9,000 feet, where glacier lily and spring beauty were still flowering. The stars of the show were *Sedum integrifolium* (kingscrown), *Kalmia polifolia* ssp. *microphylla* (alpine bog laurel), *Phyllodoce empetriformis* (pink mountain-heath), and *Veronica wormskjoldii* (alpine speedwell). At the lower elevation next to Mill Creek Campground, a few of us viewed the dainty one-flowered wintergreen (*Moneses uniflora*) and pink wintergreen (*Pyrola asarifolia*) along with a cow moose and calf.



MNPS Grants & Giving

By Leah Grunzke, MNPS Administrative Assistant

In recent years, a small group of resolute volunteers set out to clarify the policies and procedures behind the MNPS Small Grants Program, with the goal of expanding our capacity to support a wide range of projects, organizations and individuals

pursuing native plant-related opportunities. After a short hiatus during the revision process, we are thrilled to announce that we are up and running with the new and improved MNPS Grants & Giving Program! In addition to grants, we now offer academic scholarships to students and professional development scholarships to individuals seeking educational opportunities as well.

Academic Scholarships

This fall we were able to award \$4,000 in academic scholarships to Montana students, and the Clark Fork Chapter stepped in to award an additional \$4,000 to UM students. It was a highly competitive review process, and the selected applicants stood out as uniquely aligned with our mission of native plant preservation, conservation and education.

Many congratulations to our winners!

- Owen Palsic – Environmental Science & Sustainability, UM
- Johanna Ford – Wildlife Ecology, UM
- Anika Boyer – Organismal Biology, MSU
- Sarah Busmire – Restoration Ecology, MT Tech
- Hannah Hornyak - Environmental Science & Sustainability, UM
- Jaimie Costa – Ecosystem Sciences & Sustainability, UM
- Jena Hart – M.Ed. Early Childhood Education, UM
- Mollena Syndor – Environmental Science & Sustainability, UM

While Academic Scholarships are now closed for the year, we are currently accepting applications for the following:

Grants

The MNPS Grant Program provides funding to projects that stimulate research, conservation, and educational activities that help foster an appreciation for Montana's native plants and plant communities. These grants are intended to promote native plant conservation through better understanding of our native flora and the factors affecting their survival. The maximum request limit for 2025 is \$5,000. **Applications are being accepted through Oct. 31**, with awards announced Dec. 31.

Professional Development Scholarships

Professional Development Scholarships assist with educational opportunities to increase knowledge of Montana's native plants and plant communities. These could be workshops, short courses, self-study, or other opportunities. Awards of \$500 are available to help with registration fees, books, supplies, travel and lodging. **Deadline to apply is Oct. 15**, with winners announced Nov. 20.

To apply online or learn more, please visit our web page:

mtnativeplants.org/board/grants-scholarships.

The MNPS Grants & Giving program is funded entirely by donations from people like you. We are extremely grateful for the generosity of our donors, and proud to support the work of so many organizations and individuals dedicated to the study and stewardship of Montana's native plant communities. If you would like to contribute to the MNPS Grants & Giving Fund, you can make a tax-deductible donation at our website, mtnativeplants.org.



Gardener's Notebook

Using Native Plants in Backyard Landscaping

Showy Goldeneye: Asteraceae (sunflower family) *Helimeris multiflora*, (Nutt.) also, *Viguiera multiflora*, (Nutt.)

By Denise Montgomery, Valley of Flowers Chapter & Manager, Native Plants Dept., Cashman Nursery, Bozeman

This sunny-yellow composite illuminates my garden even on gloomy days. Long-blooming, from midsummer through late summer, numerous flowers provide pollen and nectar for bees and butterflies well into September. Goldfinches and chickadees are fond of the seeds.



Showy goldeneye is at home in a mosaic of native plants, in a meadow among bunch grasses, mixed with cultivated plants or in a cottage garden. In my water-wise garden, it is complemented by glowing magenta wine cups (*Callirhoe involucrata*) threading through its lower stems, dotted gayfeather (*Liatris punctata*), prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*), and pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*), thriving with moderate moisture. It is accompanied by purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*), and Munro's globemallow (*Sphaeralcea monroana*) in the drier zones of the garden.

In my mixed garden, its brilliant yellow flowers shine against the purples and whites of tall garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) and deep periwinkle-blue perennial geranium, 'Rozanne.' It would play well with silver-blue sea holly (*Eryngium*) or Russian sage (*Perovskia*).

Showy goldeneye is easily grown in well-drained soil with moderate, consistent water and a bit of extra moisture in hot, dry weather. It is robust and vigorous in mass plantings, if not overly crowded. Grow in full sun for plentiful blooms and to maintain its upright habit, 1'-4' tall. While slightly shade tolerant, plants tend to be leggier and fewer flowered in shade.

Though perennial, individual plants aren't extremely long-lived. But they readily self-sow at summer's end and generally bloom the following season, becoming showier in the next. Let them grow

where they fall, or, if they pop up where you don't want them, carefully lift and transplant young seedlings elsewhere or loosely re-group them to form a larger patch. Maintain a number of plants for the best display and most benefit to pollinators. Allowing them to self-sow has kept showy goldeneye cheerfully gracing my garden for many years.

Note: showy goldeneye is listed as a Montana Natural Heritage Program Species of Concern in the state. I purchase plants from a local, reputable native plant supplier where they are regularly available. Please do not collect *Helimeris multiflora* seeds or plants from the wild.



Showy goldeneye photos by Denise Montgomery

Tour of the Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery

By Ashley Mattson, Clark Fork Chapter

On July 10, at around 5:30 p.m., a group of approximately 30 participants gathered for a tour of the Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery. The tour highlighted the nursery's newest venture, native seed production.

Staff described collecting wild seeds in Montana, growing them into seedlings, and planting them in nurseries for large-scale harvest. Kylie Brown guided participants through the coolers and drying rooms used for seed preservation, followed by a tour of

the fields with flowering plants. The visit ended with a look at the specialized equipment that strips away plant material to produce clean, ready-to-use seeds.

As a special conclusion to the visit, attendees were able to take home leftover seedlings from the 2026 installation.



*Germination
greenhouses;
Fields
for seed
collection;
photos by
Paul Buck*



MNPS 2025 Awards

The 2025 MNPS Awards Committee:

Kelsey Malloy, Eastern At-Large Chapter
Libby Knotts, Maka Flora Chapter, & MNPS Annual Meeting Host
Karen Porter, Calypso Chapter, Awards Committee Chair

The Montana Native Plant Society has two award categories – the Outstanding Service Award, given to a Society member in recognition of his/her Service to the Society, and the Special Achievement Award, given to any person, member or not, whose work has contributed to the mission and goals of MNPS. Annual awards are not always given, but if decided upon, they are made at this annual meeting of the whole Society.

Our task turned out to be both very easy and quite hard – this great organization of ours is just full of extraordinary people, volunteers all – people who organize, people who show up, raise their hand, jump in ... on and on.

Amid this richness of opportunity, we decided to offer just one award this year – the Outstanding Service Award – and it goes to everyone's favorite "presenter" - Beth Madden.

Award (as cited at annual meeting):

Beth is known to us from many diverse avenues of both her professional and her volunteer life. We know she had a long, productive career as an ornithologist, first with the US Forest Service and then with the US Fish & Wildlife Service in both

eastern Montana and North Dakota – focusing on grassland birds and prairie grassland ecosystems. But who can love the birds and not love the plants? And that is her long-standing tie to the MNPS.

Beth's earliest MNPS days were here in eastern Montana as a Maka Flora Chapter member. And even after her move to Bozeman she coordinated the 2011 MNPS Annual Meeting right here at Camp Needmore. Welcome back, Beth!

She is a long-time active member of Valley of Flowers Chapter of MNPS – she has served as its president, has represented the chapter on the MNPS Board, led many field trips, and continues to serve on that Board. In 2020, as the global pandemic descended on us, Beth initiated two events that were to forever change MNPS's outreach and its vision of itself.

Here's what she did:

2020 was Valley of Flowers' turn to host the annual meeting that would be chaired by Beth. A lot of planning was underway in the fall of 2019 for a great site in the Centennial Valley – a meeting that never happened. But what did happen was that Beth engineered the Society's first online, all-digital raffle event with the famous cabin rental fund-raiser. She showed us what was possible for us in the online world. And then, later in that same bleak year of 2020, Beth literally invented what is now our starship Society activity – the wonderful "MNPS Presents!" - winter online lecture series that draws hundreds of viewers from across the country. Further, as part of that effort, Beth created our Society's You-Tube channel, providing a place to store and revisit the lecture series. And somewhere in all of that effort, Beth was also helping to administer our Facebook Page, which she still manages.

Outstanding Service – we would all agree.

Beth – your unfailing cheerfulness, your regularly raising your hand, and your willingness to lead have made us a better organization – your Society thanks you.



Karen Porter presenting Outstanding Service Award to Beth Madden at the 2025 MNPS Annual Meeting



Hooray for Clare!

by Judy Molland, Clark Fork Chapter

It is 8 o'clock on June 7 in Missoula, the day of the annual Native Plant Sale at the Farmers' Market, organized by the Clark Fork Chapter of the Montana Native Plant Society (MNPS). The sun beams down and already over twenty customers are lined up in anticipation of buying coveted plants.

Along with several volunteers, Clare Beelman is behind the tables laden with native plants, ready to offer advice and encouragement. This is her sale: she has been growing native plants from seeds for over ten years, as well as organizing this event.

Surprise! At ten o'clock a small group of us gather around Clare to present her with a thank you gift. We watch as she opens the package to reveal a painting of her favorite orchid that is native to Montana, *Amerorchis rotundifolia*. The image was created by Cynthia Swidler, who took watercolor classes from Clare's mother, Nancy Beelman. As Clare beams with joy, we all applaud.

"The purpose of the sale is to increase the appreciation for and knowledge of Montana native plants by providing plants and expertise to people who want to grow natives," Clare explains. She became fascinated by this idea when she volunteered at the Montana Native Botanic Garden on the University of Montana campus and talked with MNPS members who grew native plants. Her favorite part of this process is hearing how her plants make people excited to incorporate more native plants into their landscapes.

The plant sale has quite a history! Sheila Morrison started the process around 1993. "My reason for the plant sale was

entirely to introduce native plants to more people, tell them about the different plants and how they grow. Then make plants available to them to try. There was neither much in the way of information, let alone plants, out there then." She continued doing this alone until 2006, when Mike Young graciously stepped up and took over the responsibility. Sheila Morrison has also written *The Magic of Montana Native Plants: A Gardener's Guide To Growing Over 150 Species from Seed*, which is available to order at the MNPS website and is now in its third printing.

Clare took over as the coordinator and propagator ten years ago and for about six years grew all the plants herself. She continues growing numerous native plants from seed and more recently, she has recruited a few volunteers to help out. In addition, she pays tribute to Peter Lesica, who collects a great diversity of seed species across Montana, many of which are not otherwise available.

The Clark Fork Chapter's plant sale is an annual event which is eagerly awaited by numerous gardeners. It brings together folks interested in growing their own native plants, in addition to bringing in revenue for the MNPS, which helps to fund grants and scholarships and support projects, including many in the Montana Native Botanic Garden.

Thank you, Clare!



WELCOME NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS!

The Montana Native Plant Society would like to welcome and thank new and returning members from the following chapters:

☞ **Artemisia Chapter**

Andrea Berry
Carolyn Kennedy
Courtney Long

☞ **Calypso Chapter**

Carey Downey
Mary Sutherland

☞ **Clark Fork Chapter**

Jacob Baldner
Jaimie Costa
Johanna Ford

☞ **Eastern-At-Large**

Kathryn Griffing
Jena Hart
Hannah Hornyak
Ashley Mattson, DNRC
Seedling Nursery
Keala Murdock
Owen Palsic
David & Deanna Schafer
Mollena Sydnor
Alden Whitney
Elias Ravage

☞ **Flathead Chapter**

Sarah Beaudette
Trace Hobbs
Erika Rumsey
Tina Zenzola

☞ **Kelsey Chapter**

Joane Bayer
Patricia Bik
Bailey Campbell & Nancy Strain
Grace Carbeck
Ruth Swenson

☞ **Valley of Flowers Chapter**

Nancy Crawford
Sylvia Kinosian
Malia Naumchik
Noelle Orloff
Barbara Peterson
Emma Tate
Victoria Voigt & Shay Amos
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An **additional donation** to MNPS helps support conservation action, educational programs, and botanical research. Donors will receive acknowledgement of their contribution in the spring issue of *Kelseyia**. You can select from the following giving categories:

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MNPS Chapters and the Areas They Serve

Members are welcome to affiliate with any chapter. Please select your chapter affiliation.

- Artemisia** (Yellowstone, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Rosebud, Treasure, Big Horn, Carbon, & Stillwater Counties)
- Calypso** (Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow & parts of Madison Counties)
- Clark Fork** (Mineral, Missoula, Powell, Granite, Ravalli & parts of Lake Counties)
- Flathead** (Flathead & parts of Lake and Lincoln Counties)
- Kelsey** (Lewis & Clark, Cascade, Pondera, Teton, Chouteau, Judith Basin, Meagher, Broadwater & parts of Jefferson Counties)
- Maka Flora** (Richland, Roosevelt, McCone, Sheridan, Daniels, Dawson, Prairie, Wibaux, Custer, Fallon, Powder River & Carter Counties)
- Valley of Flowers** (Gallatin, Park, Sweet Grass and parts of Madison Counties)
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Welcome to the
Montana Native Plant Society!

Membership in MNPS is on an annual basis, March 1st to February 28th. Memberships processed before November 1st will expire the following February 28th. Memberships processed after October 31st will expire February 28th of the year after.



MONTANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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About Montana Native Plant Society

The Montana Native Plant Society (MNPS) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation chartered for the purpose of preserving, conserving, and studying the native plants and plant communities of Montana, and educating the public about the value of our native flora. Contributions to MNPS are tax deductible.

Your yearly membership fee includes an electronic subscription to *Kelsey*, the quarterly newsletter of MNPS. We welcome your articles, field trip reports, book reviews, or anything that relates to native plants or the Society. Please include a line or two of "bio" information with each article. All items should be emailed to scottguse@yahoo.com and jenhintzguse@gmail.com, or mailed to: Scott and Jennifer Guse, *Kelsey* Editors, 725 Twin Lakes Road, Whitefish, MT 59937.

Winter issue submission deadline is December 10

(Upcoming deadlines: March 10, June 10, September 10)

Please send web items to our webmasters:

Carol Goffe and Bob Person at mnpswebmaster@gmail.com

Advertising space is available in each issue at \$5/column inch. Ads must be camera-ready and must meet the guidelines set by the Board of Directors for suitable subject matter; that is, be related in some way to native plants or the interests of MNPS members.

If you would like extra copies of *Kelsey* for friends or family, contact the Newsletter co-editors at: scottguse@yahoo.com or jenhintzguse@gmail.com. No part of this publication may be reprinted without the consent of MNPS. Reprint requests should be directed to the newsletter co-editors.

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Please visit our website at www.mtnativeplants.org

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