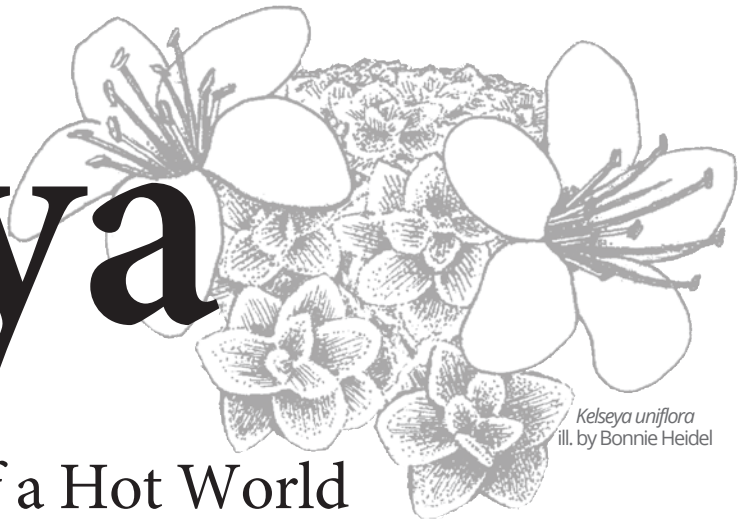


Kelseya

Newsletter of the Montana Native Plant Society



Kelseya uniflora
ill. by Bonnie Heidel

Inhabitants of a Hot World

By Robert Pal, MNPS President, Calypso Chapter



A diverse array of geothermal features in Norris Geyser Basin; article and photos by Robert Pal

Montana holds only a small sliver of Yellowstone National Park, yet our state enjoys perhaps the best access to this extraordinary landscape, one that draws millions of visitors each year. When most of us visit Yellowstone, our attention is captured by the steaming geysers, bubbling mud pots, and vividly colored hot springs that make the park famous. Far fewer people, however, pause to notice the living organisms quietly persisting in and around these geothermal features.

Most research in Yellowstone's geothermal areas has focused on microbial life, and for good reasons; these systems host some of the most remarkable extremophiles on Earth. Surprisingly, little attention has been given to the vascular plants that grow at the margins of this hot world, where boiling water, acidic soils, and unstable ground create some of the harshest growing conditions on Earth.

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Chapter Events

Artemisia Chapter

Info: Andrea Berry at 406-665-9774; andrea.berry2@montana.edu

Calypso Chapter

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

Clark Fork Chapter

Info: Gunner Davies at 253-988-4702; gunnerdavies@live.com or Teagan Hayes at 920-979-9009; teagan.mtnativeplants@gmail.com.

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 Giovanna.Bishop@mso.umt.edu to reserve a place.

Thursday, February 19, 7:00 p.m. Lichens and Bryophytes are often the most diverse yet understudied members of cliff ecosystems. Come and hear **Giovanna Bishop**, curator of the UM Herbarium, speak on **Lichen and Bryophyte Cliff Floras: Diversity, Ecology, and Human Impacts**. Rocky Mtn. Exploration Center, 1075 South Ave W.

Thursday, March 26, 7:00 p.m. Montana Natural History Center Trivia Night. Come and showcase your native plant knowledge or learn something new, meet some fellow plant folks, and win prizes! Registration required at montananaturalist.org. This event is capped at 30 participants. Located at 120 Hickory St., Suite A. For questions, email kylie.mtnativeplants@gmail.com.

Thursday, April 16, 7:00 p.m. Join **Kathy Settevendemie** to explore **The Vegetation and Flora of the Caribbean**. Experience the colorful, fascinating flora of the countries that circumscribe the Caribbean Sea. Rocky Mtn. Exploration Center, 1075 South Ave W.

Thursday May 14, 6:30 p.m. Our **Spring Potluck** will be held at the Pineview Park Pavilion in the Upper Rattlesnake off of Rattlesnake Drive, just west of Rattlesnake School. Bring your own plate, utensils and a dish to share. No alcohol please. Call Peter at 406-728-8740 for directions.

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!

Please put our Chapter email, mnps.flathead@gmail.com in your contact and safe sender lists. We have increasing problems getting dumped into SPAM folders.



Cypripedium parviflorum, photo by Maria Mantas

Wednesday, March 4th, 7:00 p.m. Peatlands of the Flathead Region. Plant Ecologist **Maria Mantas** will discuss peatland ecology and showcase the rare flora and fauna of this unique vegetation type. Program at 7:00, but please join other Chapter members at 5:30 to help make plans for future activities. Have ideas but can't make the meeting? Please contact organizers at the Chapter email. Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Meeting Room, 490 N. Meridian Rd., Kalispell.

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.

Tuesday, January 13, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Seed Starting Workshop (Carroll College, Room TBD). Ready to start thinking about adding some native wildflowers to your garden this summer? Please join **Carson Thomas** (Montana Department of Agriculture, Nursery Specialist), **Kenda Herman** (Montana Natural Heritage Program, Botany Data Assistant), **Travis Almquist** (Associate Professor, Biology, Carroll College), and **Karen Nelson** (retired USFWS toxicologist) for a hands-on workshop about starting native seed. Event space is limited to 20 participants. Registration to be announced.

Friday, February 6, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Kelsey Chapter Annual Winter Potluck (Lewis and Clark Brewery - Power Room). Please bring a dish to share (no outside drinks allowed). We will gather to enjoy a meal together and discuss trips and events that will be held in 2026! If you would like to share photos for display during the potluck, please send submissions to kelseychaptermnps@gmail.com. Please RSVP here: <https://forms.gle/NCBnFz6A1iThzJpz8>.

Tuesday, March 24th, 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Willow ID Workshop. (Helena Food Share Community Room). Please join us for a herbarium night led by **Scott Mincemoyer** (former MTNHP botanist) focusing on the *Salix* genus. The workshop will include a brief overview of willow identification/ecology before keying several species of willow. This workshop is intended for participants with previous experience using dichotomous keys. Space is limited to 20 participants. Registration to be announced.



Salix bebbiana, photo by Matt Lavin

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, January 13, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Plant Trivia Night.

This will be a fun-filled evening with trivia questions ranging from highly-technical to pop-cultural. Friendly to all levels! The game will take place at MAP Brewing. Folks can order drinks and appetizers downstairs before heading upstairs to match wits with question-masters/Valley of Flowers members Bryce Pease (peasebryce@gmail.com) and Jared Trilling. Naturally, prizes will be awarded.

Tuesday, February 10, 7:00 p.m. How Do Those Quillworts Get Around?

Come and meet new MSU plant scientist (and Herbarium Curator, and Valley of Flowers Chapter member) **Sylvia Kinosian** and hear about her work puzzling out the relationships and ecology of the ancient aquatic plants known as quillworts (*Isoetes* sp.), as they occur on the granite outcrops of the Texas Llano Uplift. Her unexpected findings yield insights into possible conservation methods for small plants growing in isolated habitats. Room 108 of the Plant Bioscience Building, west side of 11th Avenue on the MSU campus. Parking could not be more convenient.

Western At-Large

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

It's MNPS Membership Renewal Season

It's January, and that means it's time to renew your annual membership to MNPS. If your membership is due, you will receive a reminder via email and/or postcard. If you don't receive a reminder, it means you are either a lifetime member or you are already paid up for the next year. Please note, we are no longer accepting multiple year membership payments, so any payment above dues will be considered a donation. To avoid paying annually, you may wish to consider a lifetime membership. If you have any questions, please contact us at mtnativeplantmembership@gmail.com and we can let you know your membership status. Please also let us know if there have been any changes in your contact information.

Support MNPS

As lovers of Montana's native plants, we feel connected to the awe-inspiring displays of spring wildflowers on the prairies, old growth forests of our western valleys, and alpine plants on the mountain peaks and alpine tundra. Your support ensures that these native landscapes continue to thrive.

Your generous donations have allowed MNPS to have greater impacts on our mission every year. Thank you!

Native Plant Conservation Conference Tues. - Wed., April 14-15, 2026 University of Montana, Missoula

Please join us for the 2026 Native Plant Conservation Conference at the University of Montana in Missoula. This year's program brings together leading voices in botany, ecology, and land stewardship for two days of learning and collaboration. The event is open to the public and is especially relevant for practitioners across federal, state, Tribal, and local governments as well as nonprofits, academia, private industry, and members of MNPS. You may attend one or both days in person at UM's University Center or online via Zoom.

Day 1: "Plants, Fire and Conservation" Seminar spotlights the intersection of native plant conservation and fire. Featuring ten western Montana experts who will share insights on fire behavior, post-fire recovery, and using fire as a tool to support native plant and wildlife diversity.

Day 2: Montana's Potential/Species of Concern (P/SOC) vascular plants - revising state ranks, designating species of concern, and digital data collection across platforms. Participants will walk through the state ranking process, using real examples from the ongoing P/SOC rank revision effort. Facilitated discussions will invite attendees to share feedback, re-evaluate what it means for a plant to be considered a Species of Concern, and explore how tools like iNaturalist, Citizen Botany, Survey123, and regional herbaria portals are improving observation reporting for both rare and exotic plants. Day 2 is particularly pertinent to land management practitioners.

Attendance will be in-person or virtual. This event is open to the public. More details, such as registration fees, full agenda, speaker list, and virtual access instructions, will be available soon on the MNPS website: mtnativeplants.org.

☞ **Registration:** Available online soon or at the door on the day of the event.

☞ **Transportation:** Out-of-town attendees staying near campus are encouraged to walk to UM. Optional permits to park on campus will be available for purchase with registration.

Watch your email for upcoming details on registration.

MNPS Presents!

- **JAN 20** Old-Growth Forest Communities of Montana
 - **ASHLEY MARTENS** Old-Growth Forest Network's Intermountain West Regional Manager
- **FEB 17** Whitebark Pine Ecology, Conservation & Restoration
 - **DR. ENZO MARTELLI MOYA** University of Montana Office of Undergraduate Research Director

Programs occur on the
third Tuesday of each month
from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. via Zoom

MONTANA NATIVE
PLANT SOCIETY



Conservation Corner



By Peter Lesica, Elizabeth Bergstrom and Andrea Pipp, Conservation Committee Members

Protecting Montana's rare plants is one of the Montana Native Plant Society's important goals. One way we help do this is with our Important Plant Areas (IPA) program which uses consistent criteria to identify the most important sites for plant conservation across Montana. The unique signature of rare plants has been the basis for the IPA program in Montana. An IPA supports a population of one or more globally rare plants, or an exceptional group of plants that are rare or threatened in Montana. The IPA committee has approved ten IPA nominations so far; the most recent was Lost Trail in 2022. Past history indicates that IPA status is taken into consideration by state and federal agencies when making land management decisions.

Recently there have been three potential nominations that need to be discussed by the committee. Ambrose Fen in Flathead County is on private land and has at least three state rare vascular plants and one moss. The Bailey Lake/Twin Lakes area in the Bitterroot Range has several state rare mosses. The third area is in the Beartooth Mountains, one of the most significant alpine areas of North America. Many disjunct occurrences of arctic plants are

found only within the alpine flora of the Beartooth. The Line Creek Plateau is one of five large alpine plateaus within the range and supports seven vascular plant species of rare status in Montana.

We hope to obtain official nominations for these potential IPAs and then assemble a committee to evaluate the nominations.



The Line Creek Plateau of the Beartooth Mountains.

Montana Citizen Botany Program

Making a Difference in Rare Plant Conservation

By Kenda Herman and Andrea Pipp, MTNHP botanists, Kelsey Chapter

Following a successful pilot study, Citizen Botany graduated to the next phase in developing a sustainable, statewide Montana Citizen Botany Program. Jointly managed by the Montana Native Plant Society (MNPS) and the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP), Phase 3 began in 2025, and over the next four years aims to refine leadership, grow partnerships, implement plant conservation tasks, and address financial planning. We are excited to share this year's accomplishments, highlights, and what's in store for 2026.

2025 Accomplishments by Citizen Botanists

From Libby to Ekalaka, Citizen Botanists revisited rare plant occurrences and returned a wealth of information about their populations and habitats. In January, the natural heritage botanists collaborated with public land managers to publish a list of 300 rare plant sites in need of current survey data. We trained 23 new Citizen Botanists in February and March. By late April, our growing community of qualified Citizen Botanists selected 78 sites to revisit by the end of 2026. As of 2025, surveys of more than

half of these sites have been completed, reviewed, and are in the MTNHP botany database.

At our annual meeting in Ekalaka, Citizen Botanists and interested recruits joined veteran Citizen Botanist Fraser Watson to learn plant surveying skills. At the mapping workshop, participants revisited a population of *Viola pedatifida*, a Montana Species of Concern (SOC) plant. They honed their skills in estimating its population size and mapping its distribution before narrowly dodging an electrifying thunderstorm. On the field trip to the stark badlands, participants conducted a full survey of *Eriogonum visherii*, also a state SOC, distributed along toe slopes of the Hell Creek layer.

Citizen Botanists Make a Positive Impact with Rare Plant Management

Since the start of the pilot study in 2022, at least 170 rare plant occurrences have been revisited, bringing forth current data on presence/absence, plant counts, habitat condition, and threats, along with enhanced mapping and photographs. We receive perennial thanks from public land managers for the revisit data. More than one public land manager has expressed that this program is the most timely and impactful work that a non-governmental organization can do on behalf of native plants and their habitats. In recent years, rarity alone, without population trend data or threat information, is generally not enough to retain federal designations, such as Sensitive or Species of Conservation Concern. Thus, revisits are the first step in acquiring necessary data on trends and threats.

Building the Program in 2026

Through Montana AgCorps, an AmeriCorps member has been selected to serve as the Citizen Botany Coordinator. This position is jointly supported by our Society and the Montana Department of Agriculture and will be supervised by the MTNHP Program Botanist. Starting in January, Grace will serve an 11-month term to coordinate volunteers and assist MTNHP botanists in building the program.



Viola pedatifida

We are exploring ways that Citizen Botanists can engage in activities to identify good seed populations and participate in seed collecting. We are ready to host field-based group activities, and together build skills in plant identification, surveying, mapping, and seed collecting.

Join the Team of Citizen Botanists in 2026

If you like hiking in the woods and identifying plants, then consider becoming a Citizen Botany volunteer. Training begins in February. Learn more about Citizen Botany, and how to apply at the MNPS website <https://mtnativeplants.org/conservation/citizen-botany/>, or scan the QR code:



Planting at the CSKT Bison Range; see story on page 9

2025 Activities of the Montana Native Plant Society

The Montana Native Plant Society remained dedicated to our mission of conservation and education throughout 2025. We are proud to highlight these key achievements from a very productive year:

Education, Communication & Community

- ☞ Conducted more than 70 field trips throughout the state
- ☞ Sponsored in-person workshops and presentations concerning native plants in multiple communities
- ☞ Provided Montana undergraduate and graduate students with academic scholarships studying topics related to native plants
- ☞ Distributed educational materials at public events
- ☞ Hosted six “MNPS Presents!” online presentations and maintained a YouTube channel on Montana native plants
- ☞ Provided small grants, of up to \$5000 each, for research, conservation and education projects
- ☞ Provided financial support to Montana academic herbaria
- ☞ Updated and distributed the Guide to Sources of Montana Native Plant Material
- ☞ Convened for our annual gathering featuring presentations, field trips and fellowship among more than 130 participants
- ☞ Helped fund our three state herbaria
- ☞ Published *Kelseya*, a quarterly compendium of articles and news on plant conservation, biology and education

Conservation

- ☞ Mobilized Citizen Botanists to re-visit sites where rare plant occurrences had been recorded
- ☞ Helped pay salary for the first-ever coordinator for the new Montana Citizen Botany program
- ☞ Commented on plans and projects of public land management agencies
- ☞ Worked with partners to implement the Montana Native Plant Conservation Strategy, that will shape the actions of land-management agencies for decades to come, and are printing enough copies to put one in every library in the state
- ☞ Funded educational signs to be erected on the Beartooth Highway to help protect delicate resources

Gardening & Landscaping

- ☞ Grew native plants from seed and conducted a plant sale
- ☞ Maintained several native plant demonstration gardens



A New Record of Bracken Fern for Gallatin County

By Sylvia Kinoshian, Assistant Professor and Montana State University Herbarium Curator, Valley of Flowers Chapter

Bracken (*Pteridium*) is a fern common across the West, often in dry, open spaces. It is known for forming large clones that can be nearly 400 meters wide. This August, I found several large bracken fern (*P. aquilinum* var. *pubescens*) clones at Crosscut Mountain Sports Center. This was the first record of bracken in Gallatin County since 1900, when it was collected on the western side of the Bridgers by Peter Koch. The only locality description for Koch's specimen is "Spring Hill Canyon," and there is a note with the specimen that this may refer to Sypes Canyon. Koch's collection labels are often quite sparse, but he was known to collect throughout Gallatin County.

According to iNaturalist and the Consortium of Pacific Northwest Herbaria online portal, the closest known bracken populations to

Gallatin County are in Yellowstone National Park. Bracken is also common in Glacier National Park and in the mountains of western Montana.

Throughout the fall, Matt Lavin and I were on the lookout for more bracken populations in the Bridgers. Between the two of us, we explored most of the western drainages, including Sypes Canyon, with no sign of these ferns. We visited the Gallatin History Museum, and with the help of research director Rachel Phillips, we learned about the history of the Springhill Community and explored maps of the area from when Koch was collecting plants. However, we couldn't find any information on where Spring Hill Canyon might be. I also spoke to longtime Bozeman resident, my uncle, Bill Gum, who recalled that the area around Springhill Community was sometimes referred to as Spring Hill Canyon, at least in the 1950s and 60s. By the time I visited the Springhill area this fall with my aunt, Jane Gum, most herbaceous plants had died back for the season, so we had to settle for a beautiful fall drive without ferns.

Matt and I will be on the lookout for bracken again next summer, so please reach out if you know of any other bracken populations in Gallatin County or have any information on the historical name of Spring Hill Canyon.



The collection of *Pteridium aquilinum* from Spring Hill Canyon by Koch in 1900. This specimen image was retrieved from the Consortium of Pacific Northwest Herbaria online portal (pnwherbaria.org).



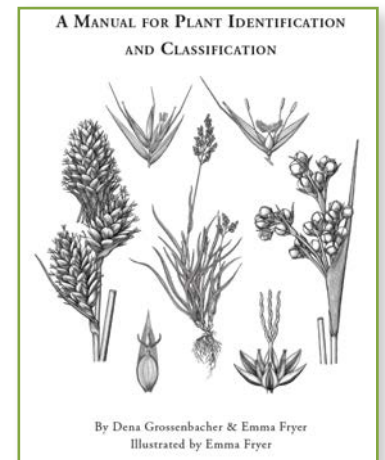
One of the large clones of *Pteridium aquilinum* at Crosscut Mountain Sports Center. Photo by Sylvia Kinoshian.

Review: A Manual for Plant Identification and Classification. Dena Grossenbacher and Emma Fryer. 2025.

By Robyn Klein, Valley of Flowers Chapter

This spiral-bound manual was written for a university course in California. Wonderful line drawings help to visualize plant terms, and suggestions to observe a living plant and draw its vegetative features help one to recall terms. Two pages are devoted to how to illustrate plants. Thus, this manual is instructive for plant artists as well. There's no index for finding terms, however. It's meant to be explored and filled out as a workbook. Softcover, spiral-bound, 172 pages.

See page examples and order from the authors: www.emmarosefryer.com/labmanual/



To better understand what shapes these plant communities, we conducted botanical surveys within a 3.2-meter (10.5-foot) radius of 101 hot springs across 20 hydrothermal areas (geyser basins) in Yellowstone National Park. What we found was a flora both great in number and extraordinary in resilience.

Across all sites, we recorded 107 vascular plant species: 88 native and 19 exotics. Alongside these, we documented six lichen species, seven moss species, and one green alga associated with biological soil crusts. The most frequently encountered plants were tapered rosette grass (*Dichanthelium acuminatum*) and rough bentgrass (*Agrostis scabra*), each occurring in more than a quarter of all surveyed plots. Where vegetation was abundant, it was overwhelmingly dominated by graminoids (grass-like plants). Yellow spikerush (*Eleocharis flavescens* var. *thermalis*) reached an average cover of 41% in the plots where it occurred, followed by common threesquare (*Schoenoplectus pungens*, 26%) and Nebraska sedge (*Carex nebrascensis*, 22%). Among the forbs, Eaton's aster (*Symphotrichum eatonii*), cottonbatting plant (*Pseudognaphalium stramineum*), and seep monkeyflower (*Mimulus guttatus*) were the most commonly encountered.



Rough bentgrass (*Agrostis scabra*) in the foreground, one of the few vascular plants able to persist in highly acidic soils.

Taken together, our findings reveal that plant life around Yellowstone's hot springs is structured by a hierarchy of constraints, with soil chemistry, especially pH, standing out as the dominant force shaping vascular plant diversity.

So next time you visit Yellowstone, look beyond the spectacle of geysers and the dazzling colors of the hot springs themselves. Take a moment to notice the plants at their edges, quietly enduring heat, acidity, and instability. These modest patches of green tell a story of survival at the very limits of what plant life can tolerate.

Research conducted under Yellowstone Research Permit#: YELL-2021-2024-SCI-08202



Yellow spikerush (*Eleocharis flavescens* var. *thermalis*) growing at the edge of "boiling" water. Visible bubbles often reflect gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂).

As one might expect, species richness increased with distance from the hot spring edge. Yet hot spring temperature did not explain this pattern. Instead, soil pH emerged as the strongest factor shaping plant communities around the springs. Soil compaction, tied to both hydrothermal processes, also played an important role by limiting overall vegetation cover.

During our surveys, we encountered several striking examples of plants pushing the limits of tolerance. Yellow spikerush was found in plots where average soil temperatures exceeded 60 °C (140 °F). Seaside arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*) persisted in soil with a pH as high as 10.3, while rough bentgrass survived in extremely acidic soils with a pH of just 1.62. These observations underscore how steep, small-scale environmental gradients, sometimes spanning just a few steps, can exert powerful controls on which species survive and where.



Tapered rosette grass (*Dichanthelium acuminatum*), one of the most frequent companions of Yellowstone's geothermal landscapes.



Seep monkeyflower (*Mimulus guttatus*), one of the most frequent forbs around hot springs.



Wonder on the Waterline Trail

By Elena Johnson, Kelsey Chapter (All photos taken by Elena Johnson on the lower Waterline Trail in Unionville, MT)

Just a few miles southwest of Helena off Orofino Gulch Road, the waterline loop trail casually meanders along the city's old water supply line, giving a peek into the relationship between landforms and human infrastructure.

While the entire loop makes for a fun hike, my favorite spot is a little shaded section at the bottom of the trail. As you walk, sounds shift and stir between gently rippling water, whooshing cars, chirping birds, falling pinecones, and fluttering leaves. The west facing slope is covered in a mix of conifers that provide year-round structure and mesmerizing dappled light.

Weekly walks from spring to fall give way to new fascinations with every visit. In early spring, darling purple bells of *Clematis occidentalis* drape around tree trunks and across shrub canopies. Delicate *Calypso bulbosa* orchids can be spotted by the careful observer, adding enchantment to the scene.

Clematis occidentalis (left), *Calypso bulbosa* (right)



Next, *Thalictrum occidentale* puts on a subtle, but spectacular show with its dainty chandelier like flowers that flicker in the breeze. Meanwhile, *Mahonia repens* brightens the path with sprays of yellow and *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* puckers with tiny pink and white blossoms.

Come June, fragrant white blooms of *Philadelphus lewisii*, *Cornus sericea*, and *Rosa acicularis* beckon the transition from spring to summer. Beneath the flowering shrubs, an elegant display of beauties such as *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Penstemon procerus*, *Heuchera cylindrica* and *Allium cernuum* bursts and buzzes

Philadelphus lewisii (left), *Fritillaria atropurpurea* (right)



with insects. A lone spotted *Fritillaria atropurpurea* makes for a delightful discovery, and here and there, *Cypripedium montanum* can be found carrying on the orchid magic.

Fascination persists throughout the summer as seedheads, rosehips, and berries begin taking shape and creating new combinations of colors and textures. Shades of reds, whites, blues and deep purples decorate the forest from the ground up.



Clematis occidentalis seed heads (left), *Cornus sericea* berries (right)

Fall brings fireworks exploding with vivid oranges, whites and yellows of dogwoods, chokecherries and rocky mountain maples that descend to an understory tapestry of marbled wild rose, snowberry, and oregon grape leaves.



Once the foliage has disappeared, a mesh of twisting and reaching branches is revealed. It's easy to spot chickadees bouncing around, foraging for food. The minty hues of lichen almost glow in winter's greyness, while deep green masses of moss blanket the forested hillside.

All of this wonder is jammed into a flat trail that's about a quarter-mile long and takes less than ten minutes to get to from my house. As a garden designer, observing the same place(s) regularly throughout the year has an immense impact on my understanding of native plant communities and aesthetics. As a human, there's something truly profound about experiencing the passage of time through nature and I'm endlessly grateful to have access so close to home.

Native Seed Collection Workshop Sponsored by Kelsey Chapter

By Mark Majerus, Kelsey Chapter

At the Landscaping and Revegetation Committee Meeting in Ekalaka, the first topic of discussion was how the MNPS could assist the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Seedling Nursery Native Seed program with seed collection, especially from east of the Continental Divide. There were people interested in making collections, but there was a definite need for formal training. Thus, the Landscaping and Revegetation Committee Co-Chairs Patrick Plantenberg and Mark Majerus organized a Seed Collection Workshop that was held at the 6th Ward Native Plant Garden (135 natives all in one place) in Helena. The session was conducted on July 8th in conjunction with a Grass Identification presentation. Although the 25 participants were mostly from the Helena area, people came in from Livingston, Big Timber, Bozeman, and Missoula. The main emphasis was on determining the stage of maturity/harvest readiness of individual species. A simple tool (fingernail clippers) can be used to cross-section the seed to examine the milk-soft dough-firm dough stages of maturity. The timing of the workshop was such that antelope bitterbrush seed was in the “blood stage” where the developing embryo is surrounded by a red liquid 3-4 weeks prior to maturity.

It was emphasized that the target species need to be located when they are flowering and monitored as seeds mature. In

general, grasses are ready to harvest 6-7 weeks after full anthesis. Timing and ease of harvest varies by species; some have exploding seed capsules (*Geranium*, *Lupinus*), some retain seed in cupped capsules well past maturity (*Penstemon*, *Heuchera*, *Mentzelia*) and some retain seed in dense heads well into the fall months (*Echinacea*, *Ratibida*, *Rudbeckia*). Most wildflowers have indeterminate ripening, often with flowers, mature seed capsules and shattered capsules within the same stand or even on individual plants.



Seed Collection Workshop conducted at 6th Ward Native Plant Garden, Helena



Grass Identification Presentation in conjunction with Native Seed Collection Workshop July 8, 2025; photos by Andrea Pipp

At the recent MNPS Board of Directors meeting in Butte the Landscaping and Revegetation Committee offered to conduct more Seed Collection Workshops during the 2026 growing season. To date, the Clark Fork, Flathead, and Artemisia chapters have shown interest. There is also interest in dove-tailing Seed Collection Training into the Citizen Botany Program. For more information contact Mark Majerus at 406-425-3443 or Patrick Plantenberg at 406-431-4615.

Restoration on the Bison Range

Recently, the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) Bison Range completed a major riparian planting effort designed to restore hydrological function, expand critical wildlife habitat, and strengthen the cultural landscape of this place under Tribal stewardship. Working across low-elevation zones identified through LiDAR, we planted more than 100 native trees and shrubs, including black cottonwood, water birch, and red osier dogwood to help retain water, raise the local water table, and support resilient riparian habitat. We also planted culturally and ecologically important species such as American plum, chokecherry, golden currant, and blue elderberry - plants that have served Tribal food systems and cultural practices for generations, and that provide key late-season forage for omnivores like bears.

This project would not have been possible without the exceptional work of the CSKT Forest Tribal Nursery, whose propagation of native species continues to elevate restoration capacity across the reservation. We are also grateful for the

By Peter Bugoni, Bison Range Research Ecologist Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

collaborative partnership of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Ronan Office, whose commitment to habitat restoration at the Bison Range has remained steadfast even amid recent federal challenges. Together, these efforts reflect the strength of Tribal leadership in conservation and our long-term commitment to restoring resilient, culturally grounded ecosystems for future generations.





Announcing the 2026 MNPS Native Plant Rendezvous

The Valley of Flowers Chapter invites you to join us for the 2026 Montana Native Plant Rendezvous, June 26-28, where we'll explore "Botany on the Batholith." Our base will be the Homestake Lodge, a 150-acre private retreat set within the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Just three miles off I-90 on a well-maintained road, the lodge is nestled right beneath the Continental Divide, within the Boulder Batholith – an inspiring setting for plant lovers and geology enthusiasts alike.

Accommodations will include plenty of space for RV and tent camping (porta-potties/no hookups), a limited number of dorm beds in the Main Lodge, and several modern cabins that will be auctioned off as a fundraiser to attendees seeking a more deluxe stay. Nearby Butte (15 miles) has motel options. As always, the event will feature a full weekend of learning, community, and celebration. In addition to our 37th annual membership meeting, we'll enjoy workshops, field trips, evening programs, merchandise sales, fundraising offerings, and more. Group events will take place in a large outdoor pavilion. Breakfasts and dinners will be catered by The Ore Cart of Butte.

Attendance is limited to 175 people, and registration will be online only this year, starting in early April. More complete information will be available in March on the MNPS website and in the Spring *Kelsey* newsletter.

LODGING AUCTION:

Don't miss your chance to secure some deluxe lodging ahead of time through our online fundraising auction in January. While most attendees will camp or stay in dorm



Homestake Lodge is a 150-acre private retreat set within the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, near Butte; photo: visitmt.com

beds, there are a limited number of premium options for lodging in three modern cabins and a yurt, for groups of 2-6 people. Because these places are so nice, we will be auctioning them off to the highest bidders as a fundraiser. Win a two-night stay for you and friends by bidding in the online auction. Preview the offerings at: <https://new.biddingowl.com/MNPSLodgingAuction>. The auction opens January 5th and will run for three weeks. Members will receive emails with full auction details – stay tuned.

For more information on the event or the lodging auction contact Chairperson Beth Madden at 406-224-1012 or bethmadden64@gmail.com, or scan the QR code:



The plant mascot for the 2026 Native Plant rendezvous is sulphur-flower buckwheat, Eriogonum umbellatum. Photos: E. umbellatum var. majus by Matt Lavin

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

Deborah & Vance Carter-Drain

Clark Fork Chapter

Pamela Armijo
Nancy Inglis
Tamara Mcdermot
Dean Sheldon
Margo Sturgis
Kristen Vondoersten

Kelsey Chapter

Melissa Ackerman
Sofia Franzluebbers
Connie Reichelt

Eastern-At-Large Chapter

Sara Kay Carrell
Colin Brown
Christine Kurtz & Sandra Von Arb

Flathead Chapter

Valley of Flowers Chapter

Anne & Reid Buckley
Cathy Cripps
Andrea Cubberly
Bonnie Gebhardt
Kelly Johnson
Samuel Larkin
Carlisle Segal

MONTANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP





Name (please print) _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 E-Mail _____
 Phone _____

**JOIN, RENEW, OR DONATE
 ONLINE AT:**
www.mtnativeplants.org

Please notify us promptly of address changes (physical or email) at mtnativeplantmembership@gmail.com

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Membership Type	Dues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business/Organization	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	Living Lightly/Student	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifetime-Individual Only (one-time payment)	\$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paper Kelseyia Fee Add \$10 if you wish to receive a paper copy of our quarterly newsletter Kelseyia, otherwise an e-version of Kelseyia will be delivered via email	\$10

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:

	<input type="checkbox"/> Kelseyia — \$50	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bitterroot — \$100	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lupine — \$250	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ponderosa Pine — \$1000	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other — \$ _____	

- *Check if you wish your donation to be anonymous
- Check if you wish to be contacted for volunteer opportunities

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)
- Eastern-at-Large** (Glacier, Toole, Liberty, Hill, Blaine, Phillips, Valley, Garfield, Petroleum, Fergus, & Wheatland Counties)
- Western-at-Large** (Sanders & parts of Lincoln Counties)

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to: **Montana Native Plant Society**
 Please mail this form with your check to:

MNPS
PO Box 8783
Missoula, MT 59807-8783

**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

P.O. Box 8783
Missoula, MT 59807-8783

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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.

Spring issue submission deadline is March 10

(Upcoming deadlines: June 10, September 10, December 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.

Changes of address and inquiries about membership should be sent to MNPS Membership, P.O. Box 8783, Missoula, MT 59807-8783.

Please visit our website at www.mtnativeplants.org

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Moving? Please let us know at mtnativeplantmembership@gmail.com