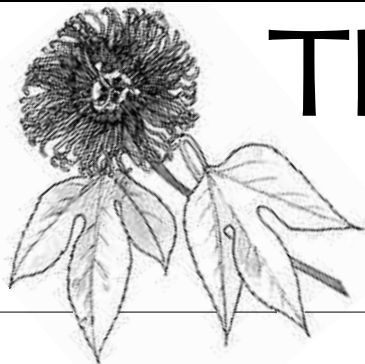


TENNESSEE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



Volume 34, Number 3

August 2010

Cool Programs on TNPS Annual Meeting Agenda

Registration Deadline August 31

The TNPS Annual Meeting always includes a mixture of indoor programs about native flora and field trips to nearby native plant habitats—as this year at the Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center, Sept. 17–19.

If it's possible to improve on the past, 2010 may do it, beginning with a program on rare plants by Todd Crabtree, state botanist, that follows the opening supper on Friday, Sept. 17.

The next evening, Saturday, Dwayne Estes of Austin Peay State University will provide a program about recent discoveries of new plant species in Tennessee and the southeastern U.S. (See related story.)

Between these programs, on Saturday morning, members are invited to follow Bart Jones and Allan Trently to explore the habitats of Dry Branch State Natural Area in Lewis County. (See description beginning on this page.)

Members wishing to stay closer to the base, in the cool environs of the conference center, can find instruction in botanical drawing led by Mary Priestley, informal discussions of plants, or a good book.

Members will also have their photography on display, and some of this work will be for sale, as will TNPS merchandise.

The annual business meeting will be held just prior to Saturday evening's program. The agenda will include discussion of TNPS projects, election of officers and directors, and the announcement of the annual Conservation Award. The TNPS board will meet Sunday morning.

If you have not yet registered for the annual meeting, please act quickly. The deadline for registration is August 31. You will find a registration form and other information on page 3. ■

Join Exploration of Western Highland Rim

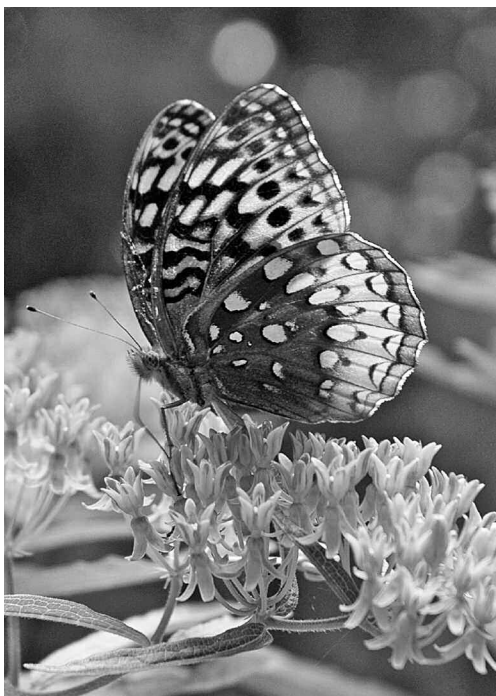
For this year's annual meeting, Bart Jones and Allan Trently will lead the main field trip to Dry Branch State Natural Area in Lewis County. There resides a population of Tennessee yellow-eyed grass, a federally protected species.

"Although it most likely will not be in flower," Bart said, "we will be able to locate plants and observe their habitat. We will also see *Parnassia grandifolia*, a Tennessee rare plant, hopefully in flower in the same habitat as the yellow-eyed grass.

This habitat is generally referred to as a *Parnassia* seep. So everyone planning to join the hike should be prepared for creek wading—bring appropriate shoes.

"Above the creek and seeps

—Continued on page 3



*A great spangled fritillary on
butterflyweed, Asclepias tuberosa*

LATHAM DAVIS

Botanical Programs Highlight Meeting

Two key members of Tennessee's botanical community will provide programs at the annual meeting Sept. 17–19.

State Botanist Todd Crabtree and Dwayne Estes, assistant professor of

—Continued on page 8

TNPS Newsletter

August 2010

Vol. 34, No. 3

This newsletter is a publication of the Tennessee Native Plant Society and is published four times a year, generally in February, June, August, and November.

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.

Dues for each calendar year are

Regular: \$20

Student: \$15

Institution: \$50

Life: \$250

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

Officers

Mary Priestley, President
Todd Crabtree, Vice-President
Bart Jones, Secretary
Darel Hess, Treasurer

Directors

Bertha Chrietzburg
Lorie Emens
Michelle Haynes
Dennis Horn
Larry Pounds
Susan Sweetser

Latham Davis, Editor

Please send comments or material for the newsletter to TNPS Newsletter, P.O. Box 856, Sewanee, TN 37375 or lathamdavis@bellsouth.net

TNPS Website:
www.tnps.org/



From the President

Today I took an early-morning hike in nearby Franklin-Marion State Forest. Basically a rim trail, the path ducked just below the escarpment briefly, where alumroot, Appalachian bunchberry (*Veratrum*), and spikenard were in full bloom. Back on top of the cliffs, blazing star, ironweed, and sunflowers ruled in forest openings and around rock outcrops. Late summer is a glorious time of year!

I am looking forward to our gathering at Linden Valley in September. Many thanks to Lorie Emens for handling reservations. Bart Jones has field trips lined up, and Todd Crabtree and Dwayne Estes promise excellent evening programs. For those who opt not to spend Saturday afternoon in the field, I am offering a workshop on Wildflowers in Pen and Ink. The four beginning drawing classes that I have taken, three of which I completed, give me just enough credentials to provide a fun afternoon activity. Beginners through advanced are welcome to participate in this decidedly low-key venture. Plants and drawing materials will be provided, or participants may bring their own.

Also on my docket this fall is a presentation Oct. 9 by Dennis Horn and Lorie Emens for the annual conference of the Friends of State Parks groups. This year the meeting is at Montgomery Bell State Park. Last year's conference, at Fall Creek Falls, featured an excellent presentation on invasive exotic plants by Margie Hunter, Ann Tidwell, and Clint Strohmeyer. My tongue-in-cheek "demand" for equal time for the natives led to a generous invitation to speak this year. So Dennis and Lorie are teaming up to give "Wildflowers of Tennessee—At Home in Our State Parks." That same weekend, Bart Jones will be representing TNPS at the Mid-South Native Plant Conference in Memphis.

I am now headed to get my annual meeting registration in the mail to Lorie. Then I'll sit back and dream about spending a mid-September weekend on the Buffalo River and finding the *Parnassia* that Bart predicts will begin flowering in the seeps just in time for our arrival.

See you at Linden Valley!



TNPS Annual Meeting September 17-19, 2010 Linden Valley Conference Center

FRIDAY

2:00-6:00 PM—Check-in
5:00-6:00 PM—Social hour
6:00 PM—Dinner
7:15 PM—Program, Todd Crabtree:
Rare Plants of Tennessee

6:00 PM—Dinner
7:00 PM—Botanical photography
display through the
evening
7:15 PM—Annual membership
meeting, followed by
Dwayne Estes: New Plant
Species in Tennessee

SATURDAY

8:00 AM—Breakfast
8:45 AM—Field trips, morning and all-day
1:00-3:00—Mary Priestley: Wildflowers
in Pen & Ink workshop
5:00 PM—Social hour. Botanical
photography display

SUNDAY

8:00 AM—Breakfast
9:00 AM—TNPS board meeting.
Open to the membership

2010 TNPS Annual Meeting

September 17-19, 2010

Please complete and return by August 31

Registration fee per person \$15.00 # _____ @ \$15.00 _____
 Room (rate per night, single or double occupancy) \$62.00 _____

Those sharing a room should register together. Two checks may be sent.

Friday dinner	_____	@ \$8.50	_____
Saturday breakfast	_____	@ \$5.75	_____
Saturday lunch	_____	@ \$6.75	_____
Saturday dinner	_____	@ \$8.50	_____
Sunday breakfast	_____	@ \$5.75	_____
		TOTAL	_____

Registrant #1 Information:

Name _____
 Address _____
 Telephone _____
 Email _____
 Special Needs _____

Registrant #2 Information (if sharing a room):

Name _____
 Address _____
 Telephone _____
 Email _____
 Special Needs _____

Mail check(s) payable to TNPS to:
 Lorie Emens
 557 N. Mendenhall Rd. #6
 Memphis, TN 38117

Annual Meeting Field Trip

Continued from page 1

is a dry ridge that should hold lots of good old fall composites," Bart said.

A description from the Department of Environment and Conservation tells us this:

"Dry Branch is a 2,169-acre natural area . . . on the Western Highland Rim. It was previously a registered state natural area owned by International Paper, and was sold to The Nature Conservancy of Tennessee in 2006. The State purchased the property in 2007 when it was designated a state natural area.

"Dry Branch supports the largest population of Tennessee yellow-eyed grass (*Xyris tennesseensis*) known in Tennessee, which is both a federally endangered species and one of the rarest plants in the state. The plants are growing in both seeps and growing in limestone edges and cracks at seven locations along a 1.5-mile stretch of Dry Branch Creek and its tributaries. The seeps and other *X. tennesseensis* locations within the Dry Branch watershed make up about 900 acres of the natural area. The remainder is upland buffer land and was previously planted as pine plantations.

"While most known occurrences of *X. tennesseensis* are typically associated with seeps, the majority of occurrences here are along the banks of the creek. The surrounding tree canopy is dominated by various species of oak and hickory, red maple, and alder. Common associated herbs include hog peanut (*Amphicarpaea bracteata*), small-headed rush (*Juncus brachycephalus*), grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia grandifolia*), and blackeyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *umbrosa*). . . . Two of these species are listed as rare plants in Tennessee: *Juncus brachycephalus* (Special Concern) and *Parnassia grandifolia* (Special Concern). Dry Branch has the highest biodiversity rank under the Natural Heritage ranking system (B1)." □

Have You Found These Late Bloomers?

by Yolande Gottfried

Labor Day is not the end of summer but only the start of the blooming season for some of our wildflowers on the Cumberland Plateau. A walk along a lake shore or some other wet area will likely lead the hiker to a few botanical gems.

The orchid, white nodding ladies'-tresses, *Spiranthes cernua* (L.) L.C. Rich., is quite noticeable with its rounded white flowers, base arched downward, apparently spiraling around the stalk, which can reach one foot in height. The common name is due to the resemblance of the inflorescence to some styles of braided hair, while the genus name is derived from *speiros*, spiral, and *anthos*, flower. The flowers are often quite fragrant. This orchid is second only to rattle-snake plantain, *Goodyera pubescens* (Willd.) R.Br. ex Ait. f., in having the largest population of an orchid species in the southern Appalachians, and is found throughout eastern North America.

A similar orchid, slender ladies'-tresses, *Spiranthes lacera* (Raf.) Raf., blooms somewhat earlier in the summer. These orchids have an interesting relationship with their bee pollinators. The flowers mature starting at the base of the spike, so that the lower flowers are ready to receive pollen while the upper ones are still releasing pollen. The bees begin at the spike base and move up, then fly to another and begin at the base again, thus picking up pollen and transferring it to the flowers ready to receive it.

White turtlehead, *Chelone glabra* L., is found in some of the same wet areas as the ladies'-tresses, in moist, sunny spots. *Chelone* is not really the most appropriate name for it, since it means "tortoise" in Greek and tortoises live on dry land, not the water. It is a member of the figwort family, *Scrophulariaceae*, which has one of the longest family names in plant taxonomy and includes the garden snapdragons. The turtlehead flowers, strongly two-lipped and more than an inch long, are "densely bunched like a tight, dirty white bouquet at the stem tops" (Eastman, 1995), which sometimes fall over from the weight. These flowers rely for pollination on larger bees, which have the strength to force their way through the tight lips and past the green sterile filament to

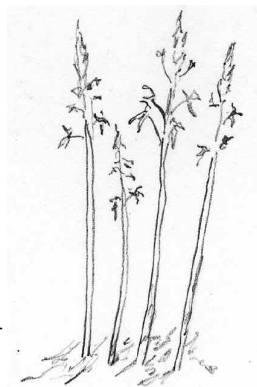
get to the nectar deep in the flower tube. Turtlehead are widespread in eastern North America but usually occur in small clumps in scattered locations.

Another wildflower of damp places that relies on large bees, especially bumblebees, for pollination is the bottle or soapwort gentian, *Gentiana saponaria* L. The vase-like flowers clustered at the tip of the foot or more high stems are a striking blue color and the petals are connected and nearly closed at the tip. This protects the nectar from rain and other insects, but the bumblebees can push their way in. The name "gentian" is said to come from King Gentius of ancient Illyria, in the region of Albania and the former Yugoslavia, who used the roots of the European yellow gentian medicinally around 200 B.C. Gentian extract is still used today, in Angostura Bitters and other products.

Along streams and in wet meadows grows the kidney-leaf grass-of-parnassus, *Parnassia asarifolia* Vent., which is not a grass at all but a member of the saxifrage family. The basal leaves are in fact kidney-shaped as is the smaller, clasping, single stem leaf. The single flowers rise six inches or so above the ground and have five cream-white petals with prominent green veins. These veins act as nectar guides, showing up well to pollinators against the white, which weakly reflects UV light. A further attractant for pollinators are the sham nectaries, stalked filaments that bear glands that look like nectar droplets but are actually dry. A related Old World species, *Parnassia palustris*, was supposedly first discovered on the slopes of Mt. Parnassus in Greece.

Each of these flowers is quite distinctive and attractive, once they are spotted among the grasses and sedges and other plants of the wet areas where they grow. Others that also bloom late are harder to observe. The autumn coralroot orchid, *Corallorhiza odontorhiza* (Willd.) Poir., has no leaves and very small purplish-green flowers on thin six-to-eight-inch stems, making it quite inconspicuous. The absence of leaves is a clue that it finds its nourishment through an association between its rhizomes (underground stems that look like branched, knotty coral) and a fungal partner, which is interconnected with the roots of green plants nearby. This arrangement is called epiparasitism.

Other epiparasites that can be found blooming in the fall are Indian-pipe and pine-sap, both in the genus *Monotropa*. The pale, nearly leafless flowering plants are only a few inches high and hard to see against the leaf litter of the forest floor. Indian-pipe has a single flower and is commonly



white, while pine-sap has several flowers and is more yellowish-brown.

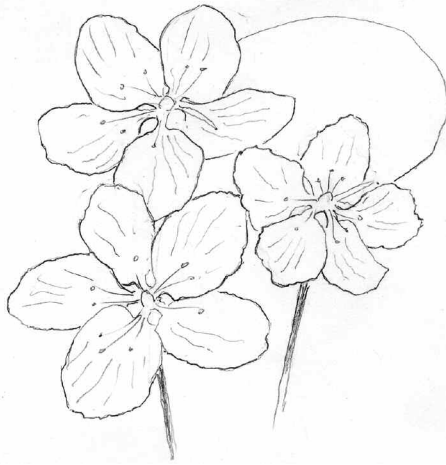
A non-flowering plant, the evergreen grapefern is also often overlooked in the fall, although this is when it bears its fertile fronds and releases pollen. Another member of the same genus, the rattlesnake fern, *Botrichium virginianum* (L.) Swartz, is much more noticeable in the spring, when its herbaceous sterile and fertile fronds rise well above the forest floor.

It seems fitting to conclude with a small tree or shrub which can be considered either the last or the first to flower, American witch-hazel, *Hamamelis virginiana* L., which can be found in bloom from September to December. The yellow spidery flowers usually occur in groups of three in the leaf axils and the fruits mature the following year at flowering time, so the plant is dispersing seed at the same time that the next generation is being fertilized. This plant is the source of the familiar witch-hazel oil. Look for it in dry to mesic woodlands, sometimes along streams, for a breath of "spring" as winter approaches. □

Yolande Gottfried is Associate Curator of the Sewanee Herbarium.

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TCV Legislative Summary

Each year, the Tennessee Conservation Voters Policy Council, comprised of representatives from its 30 member groups, works to create a set of priority issues for the coming legislative session. For the 2010 session the priorities included:

- Restoration of the Real Estate Transfer Tax funds (for land acquisition, wetlands, etc.)
- Water quality
- Mountain top removal mining
- Air quality
- Other environmental funding

Here is a summary of how these issues fared in the 2010 legislative session from Chris Ford, TCV executive director:

The restoration of land conservation funding was our top priority for 2010. Record state deficits made this a considerable challenge. However, against the odds, the legislature passed a budget with full funding—more than \$16 million—for land conservation. It is clear that environmental advocates tipped the balance on this issue.

This year saw far fewer bills related to water quality that moved through committees—although troubling bills were introduced. Thankfully, SB 1331/HB 1204 that would have allowed harmful levels of selenium discharge from coal mining operations was not resuscitated.

Two bills (SB 1398/HB 455 & SB 1406/HB 899) filed in 2009 would have restricted mountain top removal coal mining. Disappointingly, HB 455 failed to advance out of the House Environment Subcommittee again this year. There is still a victory to be celebrated in a new EPA ruling that protects communities and waterways from the impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining.

We are greatly concerned that TDEC's program budget has been reduced significantly over the past several years. We applaud the current Department's efforts to maintain standards with a shrinking budget and will continue our efforts to secure resources for TDEC.

There were several other issues that TCV lobbied for or against, including bills dealing with restricting the processing and storage of nuclear waste in Tennessee. We closely monitored the bills that would have broadened the use of ATVs. The bills were overly broad and did not provide clear protections for land, water, or public safety. We will be watching and requesting help on these and other issues in the future.

Join TCV on August 31 for Nature Votes Chattanooga, an evening honoring environmental champion Senator Andy Berke, and on September 8 for Nature Votes Memphis. You can learn more about these events, see the upcoming 2010 TCV Scorecard and sign up for legislative updates at www.tnconservationvoters.org. □

June 5, 2010

Fiery Gizzard Micro-Safari

“Come prepared to focus your mind’s eye on ‘the little things that run the world,’” read the intriguing description in our calendar. It brought about 20 people to the Fiery Gizzard for an early-June micro-safari, led by Alabama bryologist Paul Davison. Participants included a 13-year-old, several college students, TNPS members, and other amateur naturalists.

Off we ambled into the beautiful “Gizzard,” sporting hand lenses and carrying simple equipment for gathering and observing some of the tiny organisms with which we share this planet. We were in search of mosses and liverworts, but also springtails, pseudoscorpions, rotifers, and—yes—water bears!

For a successful Davison-style micro-safari, all you need is some kind of screen, a white surface, and a magnifying lens. “Let’s look into the leaf litter and see what we can see that’s creepy-crawly—just because we can!” Paul tossed some leaves from the forest floor into a paper grocery bag whose bottom he had replaced with a piece of plastic needlepoint canvas.

He sifted the contents onto a white plastic tray, and we crowded around to look. Nothing happened. “No worries! With leaf litter shaking there’s a 20-second delay before things start moving.” And there they were: beetles, ants, and spiders, scurrying around on the tray. Paul pointed them out with his pencil and quipped, “Sometimes the ants drop and play possum at the sight of a pencil.” Really?!

The group observed minute organisms not only in the leaf litter, but among the liverworts, on the tree trunks, under the rocks, and in the stream. “I’ve got some life for you!” promised Paul as



Margie Hunter focuses on a lichen.

“These are my dried birdbath crumbs,” he explained. “I generally don’t wash out my birdbath because I know it has rotifers in it.” He wetted some of the crumbs, popped them onto a slide, and placed it on the stage of his field microscope. Sure enough—life spinning all over the place!

“One day I decided to look at the stuff in my vacuum cleaner bag. Another thing I’ve done: put my dog in a tubful of water, filtered the water, and checked it out.” And on we went.

Although we did enjoy observing plenty of plants, including several green adder’s-mouth orchids (*Malaxis unifolia* Michx.) in bloom, the animals held center

stage. The neatest of all were probably the water bears—tiny tardigrades that live among the wet mosses. When Paul focused his microscope on those miniature beasties, the excitement attracted curious hikers. The line waiting for a glimpse through the microscope stretched down the trail. “Every water bear could go extinct and I doubt if the ecosystem would skip a beat. But they’re part of diversity, and they’re fascinating,” he remarked.

Nature study, according to Paul, is a valuable activity for people of all ages. “In terms of sustained interest, adults are actually more receptive than kids. They’ve lived long enough to appreciate the small things.” He has done micro activities with children, sent micro-aquaria home with them, teeming with life. And later he’d hear that they held the parents’ interest for weeks after their children had tired of them.

Ours was one of Paul’s first attempts at leading an adult micro-safari, and he observed that it was a challenge. “Enjoying the micro world is a solitary venture. It’s not easy to share in a group setting.” But everyone enjoyed the experience. “I could stay here all day,” commented one of the college students.

At safari’s end, Paul gave each participant a micro-aquarium that he had designed and which is now sold by Carolina Biological. And he urged each of us to continue checking on this world of the small. “The discoveries that you’ll make on your own are the most thrilling,” he promised. “There are so many other parts to the ecosystem—legs to the table—than what we can see with our naked eye.”

Paul’s webpage has links to a wealth of botanical sites: www.una.edu/faculty/pgdavison/.

For his micro-aquarium and ideas for using it, go to Carolina Biological Supply www.carolina.com and search for MicroAquarium.

Mary Priestley



Paul Davison spreads leaf litter on a tray to demonstrate how to find microscopic organisms.

June 26, 2010

Couchville State Natural Area

We started our trip with a review of *Echinacea tennesseensis* and its current status as a federally listed endangered species. The species was discovered in 1897 by Eggert on a gravelly hillside near LaVergne in Tennessee. The population that Kral was aware of in 1967 which apparently still existed at that time may have been the type locality.

By 1968 searchers who looked in that area could not find any plants. Fortunately in that same year a new site was discovered several miles to the north. In the years that followed the known range was expanded but was still limited to a very small area in middle Tennessee. Because of its limited range, restricted habitat requirements, and threats from encroaching residential development, the Tennessee coneflower was one of the first species to be listed under the new Endangered Species Act. The listing was finalized in 1979.

Since then a recovery plan has been written and acted upon. This plan includes strategies for protection and recovery that benefit the coneflower. These strategies have been implemented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, and many other partners. Through the purchase of lands and agreements with private landowners, many populations have been protected.

A few new sites have been discovered since the species was listed. New populations have also been introduced on protected lands. Much research by universities and individuals has contributed to our current knowledge of the unique requirements of this species. These factors and more are the reason that we are nearing the end of a process with a goal to remove *Echinacea tennesseensis* from the endangered species list.

Geoff Call from the Cookeville Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service joined us for the hike. He made us all aware of Endangered Species Day. It is a day of celebration established by the United States Senate to highlight the importance of protecting endangered species.

For this hike we missed it by about a month. The official day was May 21, but the coneflowers didn't know about it because they flower later than that.

Couchville State Natural Area is one of the properties purchased by the State of Tennessee to aid in the recovery of Tennessee coneflower. We saw many flowering here. It is an amazing plant. On a day when the high temperature in Nashville was recorded as 90 degrees, the plants were unfazed. The flowers showed no sign of wilting in the heat even though the temperatures in an open cedar glade can be as much as 30 degrees higher than those recorded at nearby weather stations.

It survives this extreme environment in part by investing much of its energy in a stout root system that extends over a foot deep into the soil and even into tiny cracks in the rocks to seek out every bit of moisture. The higher temperatures in the glades extend the growing season for the coneflower, and it is not uncommon to see plants flowering as late as Thanksgiving day.

The nine participants of this hike endured the heat as well and continued down the trail to find another endangered species. *Dalea foliosa*, leafy prairie clover, occurs primarily in the Midwest. A few populations are known in Tennessee. It has the curious habit of being sparse one year and abun-



DARRELL HESS

TNPS members prepare to enter the cedar glade.

dant the next in the same location. The population we observed tends to be sparse every year, and that is what we found as we searched for it but only found a few plants and they were not flowering.

Another interesting plant that we saw here is a grass. Little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, is usually an erect and green plant. The plants we saw have a pronounced blue tint and decumbent secondary stems. There are two varieties in the Southeast with decumbent stems, but they are associated with the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. There is also a variety that is sometimes decumbent but it occurs in pinelands.

It appears that the glaucous decumbent plant that occurs in the cedar glade environs is either an undescribed variety or a distinct form not worthy of a separate description. It can be found in other cedar glades of middle Tennessee but is not abundant anywhere.

I know everyone left with an appreciation for the adaptations of cedar glade plants to extreme conditions. As we all sought respite in air conditioning and cold drinks, the plants of the cedar glade endured and will continue to do so with our efforts to maintain and provide protected areas for them to exist.

Todd Crabtree

Just before press time, Todd reported that *Echinacea tennesseensis* has been delisted from the endangered species list.

Botanical Programs Highlight Annual Meeting Sept. 17–19

Continued from page 1



Dwayne Estes

botany at Austin Peay State University, will give programs on rare plants and new species respectively.

Formally, Dwayne's program will be "Recent Discoveries of New Plant Species in Tennessee and the Southeastern United States."

"People often assume that the flora of the eastern United States is well known and that there is little work left to be done,"

Estes said. "It is often assumed that new botanical discoveries are only being made in the Tropics. In

this talk I will review some of the more interesting examples of botanical novelties discovered in Tennessee in the last 30 years and compare this to the rate of new plant

discoveries in the southeastern U.S. In addition, I will provide preliminary information on several putatively undescribed taxa that are currently being studied."

Todd Crabtree, who is a key person in the Heritage Program of the Department of Environment and Conservation, has intimate knowledge of rare plant species in the state. Members may want to "google" the Heritage Program and rare plant website before attending the annual meeting.



Todd Crabtree

Are Your Dues Due?

Check your mailing label—the year through which you have paid dues is printed at the top. If the date's 2009 or earlier, please send a check promptly to Darel Hess, our treasurer. TNPS, P.O. Box 159274, Nashville, TN 37215.

TNPS Newsletter
P.O. Box 856
Sewanee, TN 37375