

# Native Orchid News:

The Newsletter of Native Orchid Conservation Inc.

Volume 11 Issue 4 December 2009

ISSN 1499-5468



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### AGM Reminder

Friday, February 19, 2010

### Plant of the Month

Green-flowered Milkweed

(*Asclepias viridiflora*)

## Plant of the Month

Green-flowered Milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora*)

By Doris Ames

This interesting and uncommon (S3) member of the Milkweed Family gets its name from two Greek words “Asclepias” from the Greek god of healing Asklepios and “viridiflora” meaning “green-flowered”. It can be found occasionally growing in sandy soil in sandhill complexes, abandoned fields or dry ditches. It blooms May to August.

The plant is a perennial herb with reddish stems and a large taproot. It grows 20-120cm tall, is covered with downy hairs and has milky juice. The leaves are opposite, lanceolate, wavy-margined and downy underneath. They have very short petioles and there are often more than 6 pairs of leaves to a stem.

The small flowers are greenish-yellow with green hoods and reflexed petals. Each flower has a white tip. They hang down in very large drooping clusters from the top of the stem and from the leaf axils. The huge clusters of flowers make the plant quite showy and attractive to pollinators. The flowers are followed by large pods containing seeds lying on silky hairs as is usual with milkweeds.

Plants in the genus *Asclepias* have their pollen grains united in small sacs called pollinia, which are buried within the other flower parts and can't be seen without dissecting the flowers. As insects are crawling around on the flower their legs slip into slits and get snagged on the pollinia. These pollinia will then be carried away by the insect to ensure cross-pollination.



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# President's Report

By Doris Ames

We started doing survey trips in late April this year and I found myself still gathering orchid seeds on November 15! Nevertheless in spite of such a long field season it still doesn't seem the right time to send out the last newsletter of the year.

NOCI board member John Dyck did a wonderful job coordinating the field trips in 2009 and they were well attended. John suggested that if you have some especially nice pictures that you took on any of our field trips this year please e-mail our webmaster Eugene Reimer at [ereimer@shaw.ca](mailto:ereimer@shaw.ca) and ask him the best way to send them for possible use on the NOCI website. We can't use all of them but I am sure Eugene can pick some that will fit nicely. While I am still on the subject of photographs, Bill Bremner has kindly offered to do another Photo Clinic for us this spring. Please let Peggy know at 261-9179 if you are interested in signing up. We will notify you of the date in the new year.

We have an exciting year ahead of us with a number of upcoming events including a presentation of our slide show "Winnipeg to Inuvik by Land" on February 1 to Nature Manitoba members, followed by our Annual General Meeting on February 19, the Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference February 25, 26 and 27 and the Manitoba Orchid Society's orchid show March 26, 27 and 28. By then it will be time to prepare for our 2010 field trip season. See the NOCI website at [www.nativeorchid.org](http://www.nativeorchid.org) for more information on these events.

December is the time for membership renewal and also the time when we ask you to make a donation towards our conservation work. This year we made something for you. We are sending a pocket-sized calendar with this newsletter. I hope you like it. Thanks to Eugene Reimer and the other board members who worked hard on its design and assembly.

At this time I would like to thank all our members, volunteers, and fellow organizations who support NOCI by volunteering, coming out to our events and field trips, and with donations. Special thanks to my fellow board members who do all these things. They are the people who year after year continue to make NOCI a success. Thanks also to the Manitoba Model Forest for asking us to do timber sale surveys for them again this year. The contracts they made with us allowed us to visit parts of the province we would never otherwise have seen.

Best wishes for the Holiday Season.

## Wetlands Revisited at Members' Night

By Peggy Bainard Acheson

On Friday, October 23, 2009 approximately 48 members and friends came out to the Dakota Lawn Bowling Club to enjoy our ninth annual Members' Night. It was great to see everyone again – it always seems like such a long time from the last field trip to the end of October. I'm sure everyone was looking forward to hearing about Sex and Murder in the Bog. It isn't often that we pause to speculate on the weird and wonderful ways that bog animals and plants "get along". Thanks, Doris for entertaining and educating us yet again!

After a little break I was pleased to introduce our main feature of the night, Dr. Gordon Goldsborough, Director of the Delta Marsh Field Station, who presented on "The potential for rehabilitation of Netley-Libau Marsh, a degraded coastal wetland of Lake Winnipeg". It was impressive to hear that our coastal wetlands are larger than any found elsewhere in North America. Nevertheless it was disturbing to review the extent of degradation that has changed these wonderful sources of biodiversity and recognize that unless we act now the number of threats to these wetlands will only continue to increase.

There were a lot of interesting sale tables with hand-made items including paintings and cards by Helene Marien, orchid sculpture by Cindi Vogt, cards by Richard Reeves, cards by Rose Kuzina, wooden items by Bill Belcher, cards by Lorne Heshka, and driftwood by Tirzah Ateah. I would like to thank everyone who provided door prizes including Bill Belcher, Rose Kuzina, Lorne Heshka, Ian Ward, Bep Vanderwoude, and Doris Ames. Thank you to Cindi Vogt and Richard Reeves for donating a portion of their sales. The door prizes and other donations are much appreciated and help to offset the evening's expenses.

Door prize winners were Tirzah Ateah, Bep Vanderwoude, Ian Ward, Mike James, Andy Tekauz, Kim Wickett-Momotiuk, Helene Marien, and Anita Cauldwell.

After the presentations were finished and the door prizes given out, everyone enjoyed some refreshments. Thanks to all the board members and others who helped with the set up and take-down, shopped for and helped with the food, set up and provided technical assistance, took photographs, sold books and pins, or sat at the sign in table. We couldn't do this without you.

Again, I think we can say that we were stimulated and inspired, and a good time was had by all. Thanks for coming out to support us once again – hope to see you at the AGM on February 19, 2010.