

Native Orchid News:

The Newsletter of Native Orchid Conservation Inc.

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Bearberry
(*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)



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Plant of the Month

Bearberry (Kinnikinnick)
(*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)

By Doris Ames

This common evergreen shrub is notable for its long name. The genus name comes from the Greek word *arktos* meaning “bear” and *staphlos* meaning “a bunch of grapes”. ‘uva-ursi’ comes from the Latin *uva* meaning “grapes” and *ursus* meaning “bear”. The common name “bearberry” refers to the fact that it is commonly eaten by bears. “Kinnikinnick” is an Algonquian word meaning “mixture” in reference to its use as a tobacco extender.

Bearberry is a circumpolar member of the Heath Family and seldom grows more than 10cm tall. It is found in dry forests, alvar formations, rocks and sand dunes.

It has trailing stems that form mats on the ground. The shiny-green, alternate leaves are leathery, and short-stalked with smooth, slightly inrolled margins. The leaves are ovate to obovate (paddle-shaped). Their reticulate-veining is clearly visible on the paler underside.

The little, pinkish-white urn-shaped flowers appear mid May to June. They form clusters at the end of the branch tips.

The round, red, dry and tasteless berries have four seeds and appear in late July. They stay on all winter unless eaten by bears or birds.

Bearberry has a long history of medicinal use world-wide. Apparently the Cree and Chipewyan ate pounded bearberries mixed with lard and whitefish eggs. The dried leaves and stems contain arbutin and tannins and have antiseptic and astringent properties. They have been used locally to treat urinary infections and diarrhoea. The dried leaves have also been used mixed with tobacco as a ceremonial smoke and in smudges. Although widely used, extended over-use of bearberry leaves can cause stomach and liver problems and caution is advised.

There are several species of bearberry and they are ornamental and useful any time of the year.

NOCI Field Trips 2013

Saturday May 11- East Braintree - Wild Ginger, trailing Arbutus, and other spring flowers. The Boggy and Birch rivers, GWWD railway line and Shoal Lake aqueduct followed by a visit to the Midwinter Heritage Association Museum to learn more about the local history. We will also tour the Manitoba Forestry Trails near Hadashville to see the rare Bloodroot and Crocus and have our lunch near the Suspension Bridge over the Whitemouth River.

Saturday May 18 - Portage Sandhills - Oak, Aspen forest, mixed-grass prairie and the sand dunes themselves provide habitat for the early violets, pigmy flower and other spring flowers, which should be just coming into bloom there. We may spot wild turkeys, grouse and white-tailed deer as well.

Saturday June 8 - Bittersweet Ski Trails - NEW This area is along the edge of the Assiniboine Valley near Lavenham. We will see riverbottom forest and mixed grass and other spring flowers. We will conclude the hike with a visit with Ardyth and Don McMaster. Don is a local historian and painter. <http://members.shaw.ca/aborsuk9/index.html>
Don and Ardyth own over 400 acres and preserve this land as a recreational area. Their land is now a part of the 0.05% of the native prairie left in Manitoba.

Saturday June 15 – Mt. Nebo near Miami Manitoba - Hike a trail around the base of this hill on the Manitoba Escarpment. The unusual understory consists of spotted coralroot, long-bracted orchid, yellow lady's-slippers growing around the creekbed. 80-million-year-old marine fossils are found in the bentonite deposits. A spectacular view of the surrounding farmland is available to those who climb the the spiral path to the top of the hill. We may also see fragile prickly-pear cactus, trillium, spring parsley and violets. Lunch at the Miami town park.

Saturday June 22 - Brokenhead Wetlands - NEW Trail - We will be walking the first part of the Brokenhead Wetland Interpretive Trail. Yellow lady's-slipper, Showy lady's-slipper, pitcher plants and other wetland plants in this coniferous bog.

Saturday August 24 - Roseau River - We will be walking on riparian trails along the Roseau River on the Jim and Marcella Towle property and on the Crow Wing Trail (Trans Canada Trail) at Roseau Rapids First Nation. Butterflies and fall flowers including gentians, Great Plains ladies-tresses, sunflowers, coneflower, false indigo, wild grapes, goldenrod, and asters including the rare Western Silvery Aster. Lunch will be at Roseau River Park.

To register for a field trip please contact our field-trip coordinator John Dyck at 204-222-7188 or email jwdyck.dyck@gmail.com. Please register early as we take a limited number of participants in order to minimize damage to these sensitive habitats. **Note the cutoff date for registering for the trips will be on the Wednesday of the week of the field trip.** There will be a charge of \$15.00 per adult or \$5.00 per child under the age of 18 to help to cover costs and will be required to sign a waiver. Anyone not signing the waiver will not be able to participate. You must be a NOCI member to join us on these trips (becoming a member on the day of the trip is fine). A membership is \$15.00. Please dress suitably as we go rain or shine. Hats, drinking water, a bag lunch, sunscreen and insect repellent are recommended. We will meet at a place in the city that is on a bus route before setting off on the field trip. We encourage carpooling for environmental reasons. If you wish to leave your car at the meeting place and ride with another participant, please be prepared to pay a share of the expenses.

President's Report

by Doris Ames

We had a bit more snow than is usual this winter and now on the 23rd of April there is still some left on the ground; such a contrast to last year when it was all gone by mid March!

The Canada geese, hawks and Sandhill cranes are back and soon all the other birds will follow. I saw many trumpeter swans, pelicans, cormorants, robins etc. in the Crookston MN and Grand Forks ND area this past weekend so I know they will be here soon.

The field trip season will soon be upon us and we have some new locations for you as usual. See John's list elsewhere in the newsletter.

This has been a busy winter with a winter field trip, the MOS orchid show, the annual general meeting (see Peggy's report) and ongoing work on the Brokenhead Wetlands interpretive trails and boardwalks. Work is proceeding and the first part of the trail should be ready by this June and the whole project should be finished by spring 2014. Debwendon Inc. received a FEP grant for the trail signage from Manitoba Hydro and some generous NOCI members also donated to this project. Board member and botanist Derrick Ko Heinrichs is presently working with Heather Miltenburg and other student volunteers to build a native orchid app for both Android and Apple users. We are also working with the Friends of Birds Hill Park and the Invasive Species Council of Manitoba to control invasive plant species in Birds Hill Park and the surrounding area.

There is plenty of moisture in the ground this year so plant growth should be lush and in spite of my arthritic knees I am looking forward to getting out in the field. Hope to see you on some of our trips this summer.

Correction

In the February issue of *Native Orchid News*
"Volume 15 Issue 4 February 2013"
should be
"Volume 15 Issue 1 February 2013"

2013 AGM Report

by Peggy Bainard Acheson

The AGM was held a little later than usual – on March 1st, and perhaps it was appropriate given the very late cold spring we have experienced. Nevertheless I welcomed 37 members and guests to our fifteenth Annual General Meeting. The business meeting was conducted in short order with reports from Rose Kuzina (Secretary), Doris Ames (President), Matthew McBurney (outgoing Treasurer), and Florence McCoy (Membership). After that the Nominations and Election Chair, John Neufeld moved right into the election. Two “old” board members (John Dyck and myself) and one new member (Denny Smith) were elected by acclamation.

Many of you know Denny and his wife Mary, both enthusiastic members of NOCI for eleven years. Denny is a retired prosthodontist with excellent organizational, analytical, and people skills. His hobbies include hiking, nature photography and traveling. Denny has kindly offered to take over the Treasurer’s position.

Welcome to our motley crew, Denny!

After the business meeting John Dyck presented his 2012 field trip report, giving us not only a glimpse of the beautiful places, plants, and people who attended last year’s field trips, but making us dream with anticipation of what is to come for this year! Thanks for the trip down memory lane, John!

After a short break, long-standing member of NOCI, and past president and showchair of this year’s MOS Orchid Show, Lorne Heshka gave us a fabulous presentation on The Wildflowers of Churchill. Your pictures are always a treat – and the stories that go with them give it that extra depth that everyone enjoys. Thanks for the great show, Lorne!

Thanks to Raffle and Door Prize Donors: Doris Ames, David Toop, Mathew McBurney, Rose Kuzina, and Bep Vanderwoude.

Raffle Winners were: Denny Smith, Carol Martin, Donna Krawetz, and Lynn Collicutt.

Door Prize winners were: Wes Enns, Laura Reeves, Denny Smith, Carol Martin, Bernie Reid, and Ian Ward.

At the Membership Table we had four renewals and one new membership. If you haven’t renewed for 2013, please go to our website at www.nativeorchid.org. (If you’re not sure if you’ve renewed, please send Florence an email and she can look it up for you: petermccoy@gmail.com.)

2013 AGM Summary of Income and Expenses

Income

Silver Collection	\$ 16.30	
Raffle	192.00	
Total income	<u>\$ 208.30</u>	\$ 208.30

Expenses

Hall Rental	\$110.00	
Groceries	48.57	
Orchid pictures for raffle	114.19	
Subtotal	<u>\$272.76</u>	<u>\$- 272.76</u>
	Difference	\$ (64.46)

Other: 5 memberships and donations \$ 75.00

Thank you all for your help setting up and tearing down, help with the raffle, and also to everyone who came out, for making this AGM so much fun! Hopefully, once you read this, field trip season won’t be too far away. Hope to see you all out!