

Native Orchid News:

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Tree Sale Fundraiser

Information and Order Form

Plant of the Month

Ram's-head lady's-slipper
(*Cypripedium arietinum*)



Peggy Bainard Acheson, Doris Ames and Eugene Reimer at the Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference in Regina. Read more in the President's Report.

President's Report

By Doris Ames

This winter was the warmest on record worldwide and it will be interesting to see what effect this has on our native plants, especially the orchids. Pussywillows have been out for a week now.

Our Annual General Meeting held on February 16th was a very enjoyable event. The new board members and other details are listed in Peggy's report elsewhere in this issue.

Peggy, Eugene and I travelled to Regina to attend the 8th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference March 1-3. The lectures were very informative and we also met some very interesting people from Saskatchewan and Alberta. They had a Silent Auction Fundraiser that included many excellent donated prizes. We tried to outbid each other on the kubasa and burrowing owl photographs especially and much fun was had by all. NOCI member Marilyn Latta received the Prairie Conservation Award for Manitoba for her work with the Tall Grass Prairie. She is a tireless worker for the environment, always willing to "purge more spurge" and a wonderful photographer as well. Congratulations Marilyn!

We continue to be very busy with presentations and displays. Eugene and I will be giving a presentation on carnivorous plants and orchids to the Friends of Assiniboine Park Conservatory on Wednesday, March 21 between 7-9pm.

The Manitoba Orchid Show will be held March 23-25th this year at Assiniboine Park Conservatory. The theme is "Orchid Fascination" and it promises to be an exciting show.

They also have a wonderful new display at the Conservatory featuring Mayan antiquities and the chocolate, coffee, orchids and other plants indigenous to Central America. As well they have an exciting display of carnivorous plants from Southeast Asia. The *Nepenthes* species with their large, colourful, and exotic-looking pitchers made me want to go to Malaysia now! We are so lucky to have these beautiful attractions in Winnipeg and I urge you to go out and see them. A trip to the Conservatory followed by a mellow cup of coffee and a luscious piece of cheesecake ought to banish those winter blues. I hope to see many of you out to the orchid show next week.

We are making plans to hold another Orchid festival this year on June 17th. This time we will hold it in conjunction with the Senkiw branch of the Crow Wing Trail Committee. It will feature a field trip on their lovely trail to see lady's-slippers and other native plants as well as displays, refreshments, etc. You will be hearing more about this later on.

This year NOCI will again be selling conifer seedlings as a fundraiser and to help offset our carbon emissions. Please place your order now (details elsewhere in this issue) as we cannot go ahead with this worthwhile project otherwise.

Enjoy the spring as the snow is melting fast!

Plant of the Month

Ram's-head lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium arietinum*)

by Doris Ames

The botanical name comes from the Latin word *arietinus* meaning "of a ram" because the cone-shaped lip looks a bit like the head of a ram.

This rare orchid is found in shady cool acidic bogs and coniferous forests with underlying limestone in a band extending from the Southeast as far as the northern end of Lake Winnipeg and across to Saskatchewan. It is uncommon globally and is listed as a species of special concern in every state and province where it occurs.

Single or multiple stems up to 30cm tall arise from a knotty root. The entire plant is covered with fine hairs. Three to five bluish-green leaves are spiralled around the upper part of the stem. There are one or sometimes two small flowers at the top of the stem. The lip is white with its round opening covered with white hairs and the conical lower portion covered with reddish-purple veins. The sepals and petals are purplish sometimes tinged with green. The narrow lateral sepals are not fused like other lady's-slippers. There is a white-flowered form.

Ram's-head blooms before the other lady's-slippers in late May while it is still cool. Pollination, when it occurs, is carried out by small bees. As soon as the flower is pollinated the dorsal sepal falls down over the lip sealing it completely and the flower rapidly fades. If not pollinated the flowers will last about one week. The upright seed capsule seems large for the size of the plant.

This delicate little orchid is the smallest of the lady's-slippers with a lip the size of a dime. It is often hard to find in the shady woods where it likes to grow and every year it becomes rarer still.

Clear-cut logging and wetland drainage have been the main threats to its survival and now global warming may become an even greater threat to its existence, as it requires cool soil to grow.

2007 AGM Report

By Peggy Bainard Achison

Forty-five members and guests attended NOCI's ninth Annual General Meeting on Friday, February 16, 2007 at the Dakota Lawn Bowls Club.

NOCI President Doris Ames gave the President's report of our many projects and activities in 2006, including our Seedbank and Brokenhead Trail project. Election proceedings were led by Nominations Chair, Richard Reeves. The election results included re-election of board members Peggy Bainard Achison, John Neufeld, and Iris Reimer.

The 2007 board of directors is as follows:

Doris Ames	President
John Neufeld	Vice-president
Huguette Calvez	Secretary
Iris Reimer	Treasurer and Field Trip Coordinator
Richard Reeves	Newsletter
Eugene Reimer	Webmaster
Peggy Bainard Achison	Membership

Following the business meeting we were pleased to have our member Yvonne Lozinski and her husband Alan Mason present a slide presentation on the rich, natural environments and Mayan Ruin sites of Central America -- Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. Combining the natural with the cultural aspects of a country always gives a more in-depth sense of the country. Thank you Yvonne and Allan!

Thanks to all who donated items for the silent auction, raffle, and door prizes including Nancy Allan, Bill Belcher, Yvonne Lozinski, Birnie and Nora Reid, as well as Board members. Congratulations to the winners of the silent auction, raffle, and door prize draws:

