

Native Orchid News:

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THE NEWSLETTER OF NATIVE ORCHID CONSERVATION INC.



Eugene Reimer

Native Orchid Conservation Inc.

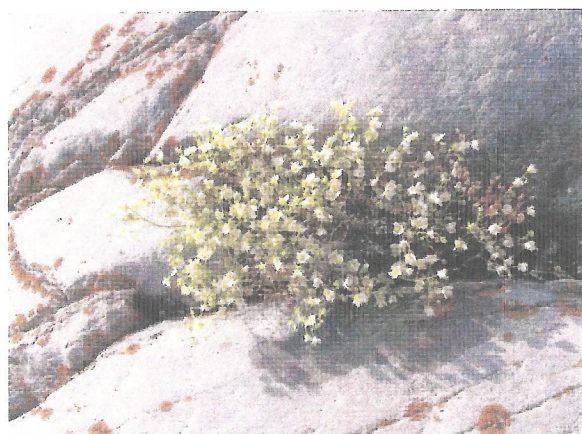
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Field Trips
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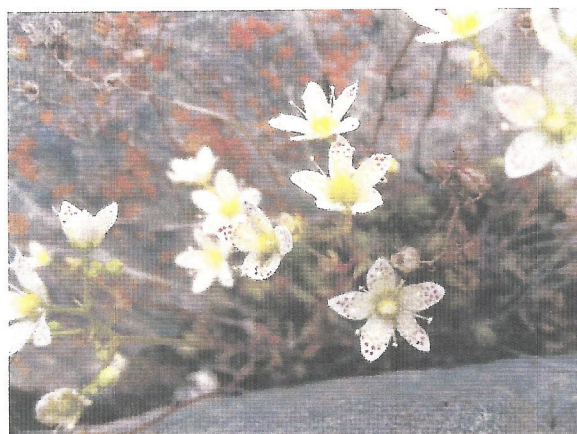
Plant of the Month
Three-toothed saxifrage
(*Saxifraga tricuspidata*)

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Chris Neufeld



Chris Neufeld



Eugene Reimer

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Doris Ames

Elections to the NOCI board took place on Friday, February 25, 2005 at our Annual General Meeting and Peggy Bainard Acheson, Bob McGillivray and John E. Neufeld were elected by acclamation. Your new board of directors is as follows:

Doris Ames	president
John Neufeld	vice-president
Ellen Johanneson	secretary
Eugene Reimer	treasurer and webmaster
Peggy Bainard Acheson	membership chair
Bob McGillivray	field-trip coordinator
Richard Reeves	newsletter editor

Please read Peggy's report for more details about that enjoyable evening.

We have been notified that Manitoba Conservation will assist with funding for our latest Educational Resource project. We will receive a grant for \$22,200 from their Sustainable Development Innovations Fund towards this project, which involves the production of informational resource products such as public service announcements on television and a DVD that would educate people about native orchids and the need for their conservation. See <http://www.nativeorchid.org/videoProjectIntro.htm> for more information.

Spring is in full swing and I have never seen such a display of prairie crocus! There are literally hundreds of plants blooming on the side of the highway and in every other sunny place. The field-trip schedule is included in this newsletter. Please contact our new field-trip coordinator Bob McGillivray at 261-8347 to sign up. We will only be running three trips this year as we have are going to have a very busy summer this year publishing our field guide, working on our new educational resource project and assisting with the NOC conference. I look forward to seeing you out in the field.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Three-toothed saxifrage (*Saxifraga tricuspidata*)

By Doris Ames

This little plant is not rare and it is not an orchid but it is one of the prettiest and most interesting plants I have ever seen. It is common at Churchill and around Hudson Bay. The genus was named *saxifraga*, which means "rock-breaker", because the plant's tiny taproots break down stones into smaller components that can be used by other plants. The species was named *tricuspidata*, which means "three-toothed", because of the three sharp points at the tip of each leaf. This accounts for its other common name "prickly saxifrage".

Three-toothed saxifrage blooms from late June to early August in Churchill and can be found in dry, sandy or rocky places along the coast, in crevices in the rocks and on gravel ridges.

The flowering plant is a low-growing perennial 5-15cm tall that grows in dense, matted bunches. The hairy, branching stems are trailing and have clusters of oblong, leathery, reddish-brown leaves, each leaf having three sharp points at the tip. The withered, dead leaves persist for several years. Three to ten creamy-white flowers, 5-15mm long, with yellow to red spots are found in open-branched clusters on each plant. Each flower has ten prominent white stamens, two styles, five triangular-shaped sepals and five oval petals. The small, exquisite flowers are best appreciated with the use of a magnifying loupe or camera lens.

Syrphid flies are believed to be the pollinators but this plant can also be self-pollinating. The cone-shaped seed capsules are stiff and erect, each with two beaks spreading away from one another. They slowly split open with the onset of winter. When the wind reaches a certain speed the seeds gradually shake out and land on the hard, smooth surface of the snow where they can travel for great distances, often lodging in rock crevices. This plant employs many adaptations to deal with the severe growing conditions; its low stature and dense tussocks make it less vulnerable to evaporation from cold, severe winds and from the mechanical abrasion of blowing sand and snow. The hairs on the stems prevent it from drying out, and the clusters of old, dead leaves prevent new buds from freezing.

Indigenous people once used the three-toothed saxifrage leaves as bedding for Husky puppies. Walking on the prickly leaves caused the pads on the dog's feet to toughen up and they were less likely to need booties when pulling a sled or komatik. The leaves of saxifrage family members were also rubbed on traps as bait to attract foxes.

NATIVE ORCHID CONSERVATION INC. 2005 AGM REPORT

NOCI's seventh Annual General Meeting was attended by 38 members and five guests on Friday, February 25, 2005 at the Dakota Lawn Bowls Club. In addition to the business meeting, the enjoyable evening included two PowerPoint presentations, and the ever-popular raffle and silent auction.

Doris Ames gave the annual President's report of our many projects and events. The business meeting resulted in the re-election by acclamation of board members John Neufeld and Peggy Bainard Acheson, and newcomer Bob McGillivray.

We were pleased to have Dr. Graham Young, Curator of Geology and Paleontology at the Manitoba Museum, give a PowerPoint presentation called "Tropic of Churchill: Ancient Islands in Northern Manitoba" on the geology of Churchill. Dr. Young was one of the paleontologists who discovered the largest recorded fossilized trilobite in the world. Over 70 cm in length, the 445 million-year-old fossil is 70% longer than the previous record holder. The fossil now resides in the Manitoba Museum (http://www.manitobamuseum.mb.ca/mu_trilobite.html). Trilobites are an extinct group of sea-dwelling arthropods (joint-legged animals) distantly related to crabs, scorpions and insects.

John Neufeld and Eugene Reimer's PowerPoint presentation of the joint NOCI/MOS trip to Churchill last summer was also fascinating. Their presentation included many of the beautiful and rare plants and animals they encountered in the Churchill area during their stay at the Northern Studies Centre. If you missed the AGM and would like to see the slideshow and commentary, go to <http://www.nativeorchid.org/CSS-ChurchillSlideshow.htm>.

Former board member, Bob Joyce ably conducted the draws for the door prize, raffle and silent auction. Winners of the silent auction and raffle were:

Bep Vanderwoude	Judy Moxley
Huguette Calvez	Peggy Bainard Acheson
Eugene Reimer	Tom Kucera
Iris Reimer	Diane Beaven
Aileen Huss	Birnie Reid
Mary Smith	Les Pelletier

Everyone seemed to enjoy the raffle and silent auction very much. Evenings like these do not happen by themselves, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped to set up and take down, prepare the lunch, or donated articles for the auction/raffle, and generally contributed to making this evening run smoothly and a lot of fun!