

Erythronium

IOWA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2026



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Iowa Wildflower Month

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Erythronium is the official publication of the Iowa Native Plant Society. It is published twice per year in the winter and summer. If you are interested in writing for *Erythronium* newsletter, please contact us at iowanativeplantsociety@gmail.com. Include your idea, photos, relevant experience, and any other information to support your idea.

Volume 31 | No. 1

Leaves From the President's Notebook

Greetings Iowa Native Plant Society (INPS) members and friends! I hope you all are finding rest and peace as we move into winter. Gentle snowflakes are falling from the sky as we await another round of snowfall in central Iowa. Winter is not everyone's favorite season, but I am welcoming it with open arms. Cold temperatures and shorter days are seasonal reminders for us to slow down and observe.

It is hard to believe another year is coming to an end. The INPS has much to be proud of this past year. We spent time in northeast Iowa, southeast Iowa, and the Loess Hills. We learned about the geological features of pahas and did restoration work at Polk City Cemetery. We were also fortunate enough to be part of a newly discovered public remnant prairie dedication at Don Williams Park in Boone County.

We awarded over \$5,500.00 to grant recipients. Funds supported youth learning about restoration, land acquisition, floristic inventory research, and other remnant restoration projects. We conducted a photo contest and debuted new photo notecards for purchase. Last but not least, have we mentioned this year marked INPS' 30 year anniversary?! A wonderful year indeed. We appreciate everyone's involvement in helping make 2025 so special. We have much to be excited about moving into 2026 as well.

Thank you for all your support! We cannot do all this important work without our generous members and donors, field trip leaders and attendees, grant applicants, newsletter contributors, and photographers. We look forward to seeing you at similarly exciting events this spring and on the Iowa landscape this coming growing season. ■



Sarah Nizzi, President
Iowa Native Plant Society





Thank You, Carl

By the Iowa Native Plant Society

The Iowa Native Plant Society (INPS) would like to extend a thank you to Carl Kurtz for his 12 years of serving on the INPS Board of Directors.

The notecards and posters with his photos were greatly appreciated and enjoyed by so many. He has welcomed INPS field trips to experience the results of his 50 years since he first planted prairie. His book, *A Practical Guide to Prairie Restoration*, has a greatly updated second edition available from the University of Iowa Press and is filled with information about reconstruction and management of prairie. His prairie has 180 species of native plants, and he has sold seed for restorations.

Thank you, Carl, for serving on the INPS board and for your efforts at promoting Iowa's native plants. ■

Photo by Iowa Learning Farms



Contemplation and Anticipation

Article and photo by Tom Scherer

As I put together this article for our Iowa Native Plant Society (INPS) winter newsletter, on the first day of December, we have 10+ inches of snow on the ground, with additional light snow falling. Winter is asking for patience and a bit of reflection.

I am grateful for knowing so many of you and sharing your joy and excitement over the years of INPS field trips and friendships. Thank you to all our field trip leaders, board members, both past and present, and our great community of INPS members.

INPS is planning our 2026 field trip schedule as I pen this article. One of our first INPS field trips will be to Cedar Bluffs State Preserve in Mahaska County, on May 2. Our field trip leader will be Dr. Tom Rosburg. Dr. Rosburg shares his knowledge and experience across several disciplines. Please keep your eye on upcoming events on the INPS website and Facebook. We will be adding more field trips as our schedule is finalized. My anticipation is on high alert for new forays, meanders, and learning experiences as the INPS field trip schedule unfolds.

What are all of you thinking as you read this note about when the frost begins a retreat and our woodlands and prairies and all the wildflowers recharge your dreams? As I get older, I find getting flat on the ground to photograph becomes more difficult. But isn't that where you discover these delicate structures of beauty? Nature isn't easy but it rewards those who begin the hike up a ravine, squish through a wetland or swat a few mosquitoes on a native prairie.

How about discovering endangered species? Or threatened and endangered flora? Iowa has more than a few left in protected tracts and on private lands. One needs only to approach with respect and awe. Butterflies, dragonflies, moths, and all sorts of pollinators always give me excitement and joy.

Whatever we dream we will find in nature. And for myself, this all gives me peace.

Attend an INPS field trip in 2026. You will not be disappointed. Journey with us as we begin a new native plant season. See you out there. ■

We Planted Four

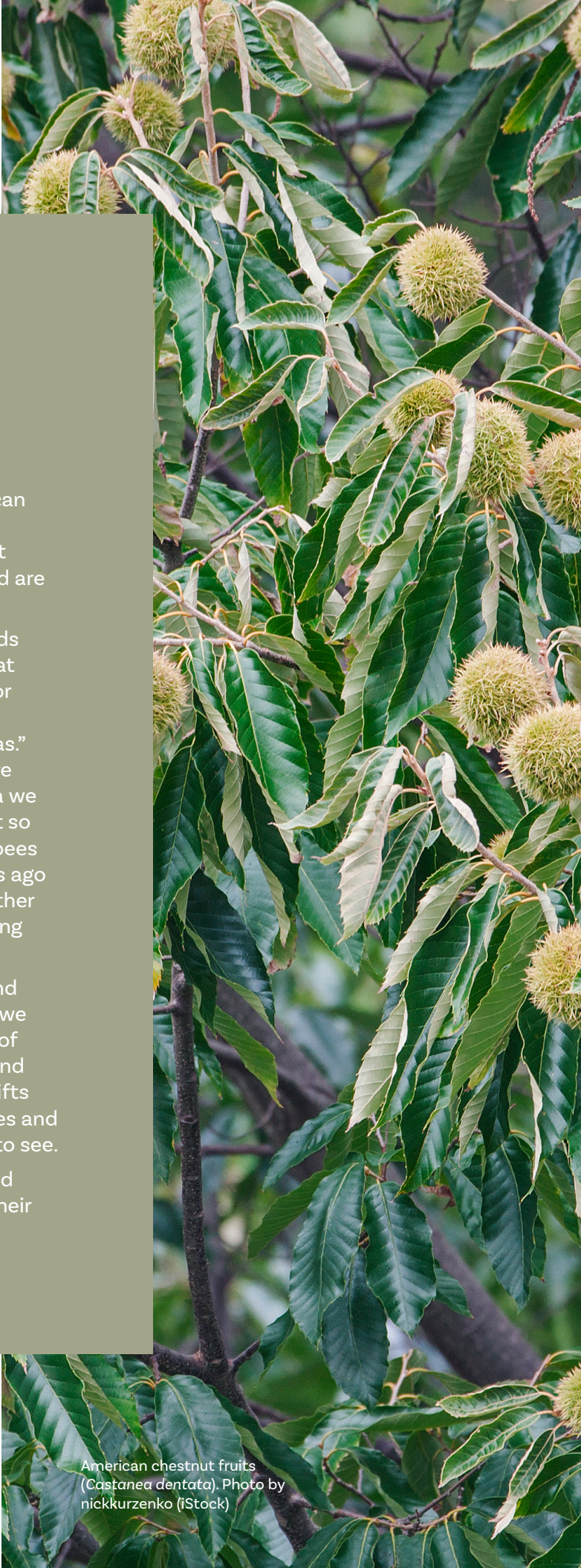
By Danielle Wirth

We planted four, two-foot-tall American chestnut trees gifted to us by new friends. We learned chestnut seeds do not spike allergies like other nut seeds can and are superbly nutritious.

In turn, we shared pawpaw seedlings, seeds from American Wahoo, and wild senna that emerged after we burned a prairie edge for the first time this past spring. We've been calling the pawpaw fruit "Savanna Bananas." You either love them, or you don't. They are spreading slowly through the oak savanna we are restoring. Pawpaws are shade tolerant so they could be invasive here. We flag escapees from the little grove planted over 40 years ago and dig them up to share. Who knew, another super food that nourishes and holds healing properties as well.

We who are so disposed, blessed with Land bought, rescued, foraged on, or inherited, we share envelopes of native seeds. Labeled of course with species name, site location, and harvest date. We give and receive these gifts with kindred spirits, always with the wishes and prayers for a future that we grow too old to see.

For the chestnuts, we welcome, praise, and thank them. Whether we get to stand in their shade or taste their mast is not the point.



American chestnut fruits
(*Castanea dentata*). Photo by
nickkurzenko (iStock)



We plant them for our community members, human and more-than-human. All are vitally integral to this Land.

More than prayers the Land heals, thrives, and shelters those who dwell here. We have a conservation easement with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF). We trust our intentions towards the Land that holds us now, and will continue to do so into the future.

Of course, it will take younger, intelligent hands to continue the progress. Hope for the Land and faith in the ecology of place, we wish for reverent dwellers on this Land, always.

So we step back, with confidence in the next generation. Some of us know them as students, mentees, even offspring. They are ready to step forward onto the foundation we pieced together.

As one of a dozen founding mothers of the Women, Food, and Agriculture Network (wfan.org), I rejoice that the current board holds new professionals, advocates, academics, and activists. They are SO talented, smart and passionate.

My suggestion to those of us who have done hard work and want to see our dreams continue: take a deep breath, let these young people flourish. We can make suggestions and offer help, but our role as community elders is to nurture these young champions.

Anyone who knows me understands I'd rather... shovel compost, freeze my fingers harvesting prairie seeds, or trip in a gopher hole in the moonlight than deal with a computer. Our younger members, in contrast, are digital natives. I liked paper newsletters, but it is more efficient and draws in more new people if we embrace some levels of technology.

Wishing everyone a blessed and peaceful winter solstice. May your winter findings remind you of many joys of the Land. ■

Iowa Field Guides Volume 1 Explores Poetry and Prose on the Prairie

By Amie Adams (with artwork by Claire Jussel)

For the better part of a decade, a new genre of writing has been appearing across the country. My first encounter with a “literary field guide” occurred when I picked up a copy of *A Poetic Inventory of Rocky Mountain National Park* (Wolverine Farm, 2013) at a thrift store while living in Fort Collins, Colorado. Several years later, after completing a graduate degree and moving back home to Iowa, I was introduced to another anthology: *Cascadia Field Guide: Art, Ecology, Poetry* (Mountaineers Books, 2023). Inspired by this genre, I wanted to plant a seed here in Iowa, in the heart of the tallgrass prairie, a seed I hope will grow into a grassroots conversation that will continue to evolve with time.

Since I returned to Iowa in 2020, I’ve grown as a writer, editor, and prairie enthusiast. I’ve fallen deeply back in love with my home state, and I’ve had the opportunity to fill the huge gaps in my understanding of prairie ecosystems. It’s been quite

“I wanted to plant a seed here in Iowa, in the heart of the tallgrass prairie.”

the journey thus far—a journey that has taken me to 36 state preserves, Lakeside Laboratory, numerous Iowa Prairie Network and Iowa Native Plant Society events, the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar, and the North American Prairie Conference. I’ve attended prairie walks, hosted writing workshops in prairies, and I’ve met people from all kinds of backgrounds who—despite their differences—are united by their passion for prairies.

In response to the warm welcome into the prairie world that I’ve received, I wondered what I might offer in return.

Last year, I put out a call for submissions for the first volume of a grassroots anthology series called



Amie Adams is a writer, editor, and creative assistant.

Iowa Field Guides, and the response I received was wonderful. I'm very excited and humbled to announce Volume 1 will be published in 2026 and is available for preorder now at iowafieldguides.org.

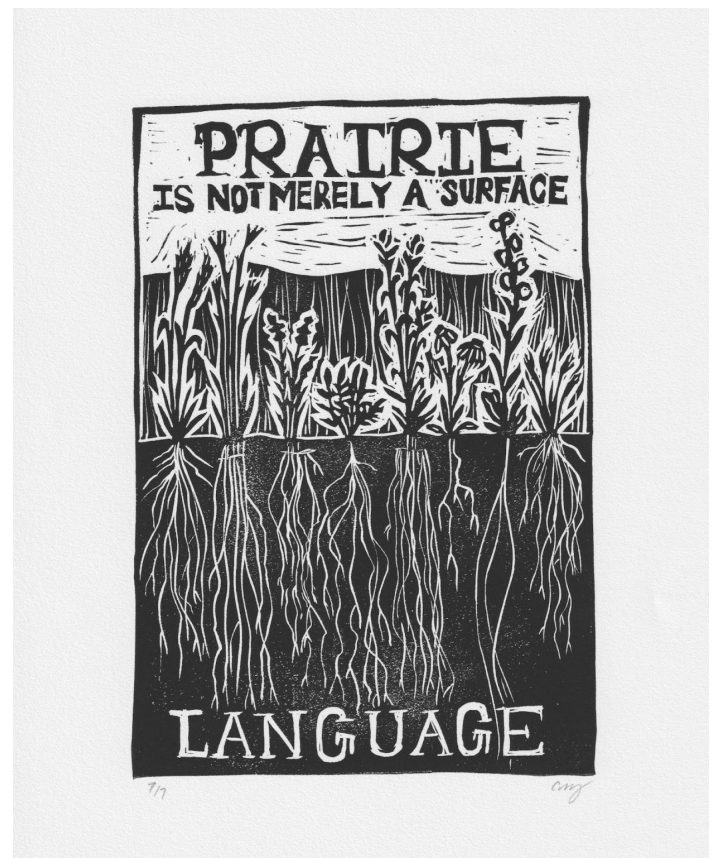
This small-batch publication will feature artwork, poetry, and prose from 30 contributors with heartfelt connections to prairies across the state of Iowa. In its pages, you'll encounter a living landscape intricately rendered in a tapestry of hues and textures. You'll journey with these writers and artists as they carefully attend to both the nuances of the external and internal landscapes they inhabit. You'll hear stories of encounter, grief, beauty, and resilience. The prairies these writers and artists know and love are awash in memory, full of surprise and possibility. Through their offerings, you will encounter miles of bluestem, soaring Kestrels, darting skippers, grazing bison, blooming asters, and if you're lucky, maybe even a prairie rattlesnake slinking by.

My hope in this project and beyond is that we will all find ways to keep telling prairie stories, and by doing so, we'll continue to fall in love with prairies and work together to care for this endangered ecosystem—our home. ■



Scan this QR code to visit Amie's website and learn more about the *Iowa Field Guides* project

“My hope in this project and beyond is that we will all find ways to keep telling prairie stories, and by doing so, we’ll continue to fall in love with prairies...”



BUCKTHORN AND THE SHADOW

By John van der Linden



Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) fruit.
Photo by Karel Bock (iStock)

Note: I am not currently a land steward; when I refer to land stewards as “we” I am acknowledging my past participation in land stewardship.

I think there is some projection of the human shadow happening in the mainstream perception and treatment of invasive plants. I can’t tell how much,

or where in the perception exactly. I just sense it is there. And I’m beginning to believe that the extent to which one understands the shadow side—of life generally, of oneself, of humans or our culture specifically—is the extent to which one understands invasive plants.

A long-standing tradition in psychology asserts that we

all have parts of ourselves that linger unseen and yet unconsciously influence behavior. The time I’ve spent looking outward and inward as a naturalist has taught me that some of these hidden parts can be powerfully triggered during efforts to grapple with invasive plants. I was activated in such a way myself when working with buckthorn in college. Thanks

to a friend who helped me see what was happening, I discovered that my alarmed activation—a response to what I had been learning about buckthorn from colleagues, filtered liberally through some other troubles I was having at the time—led me to pull buckthorn from college land with an angry zeal that embodied the very aggression I had been taught to hate and fear in the plant. (Sometimes I was a pretty angsty college student...!)

Reflecting on that moment over the years, I have often wondered if other land workers have played out a similar pattern in their own labors. Of course we are a diverse lot, and people will have different experiences when removing invasives. But if my buckthorn story from college is any indication, sometimes a person has pain from somewhere in their life that isn't getting expressed, and in that environment, invasive removal can seem cathartic, like a safe and acceptable place to get that grief out—especially for biologists who share a common understanding about the dangers of invasive plants and who struggle “alone in a world of wounds.” Buckthorn’s scientific name ends in “cathartica,” and in a way,

like European ancestors who used the plant medicinally as a strong purgative, some of us land stewards may be finding a certain “catharsis” in buckthorn even in present-day North America.

I am suggesting that land stewards may be founding such a modern catharsis in the control, killing, and extermination of the plant, in order to protect and encourage native species. It’s interesting to me that some of our ancestors or past leaders participated in the first waves of eradication of so much life from this continent, a history that we find so troubling, and now some of us are attempting to eradicate buckthorn. One might say, “yes, and this one is a GOOD eradication;” and yet, that would not be the first time humans have claimed such a thing, only for eventual hindsight or current conscience to insist otherwise.

What defines a good, or a justified eradication? If a person sprays their home for pests, they may reduce their stress and protect their belongings, while also not in any way endangering the global population of the pest, but they may also introduce new problems, such as pesticide contamination in their living space, and



Common buckthorn bark. Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org



Common buckthorn fruit. Photo by Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org



Buckthorn inner bark. Photo by Billy Beck, Iowa State University



Common buckthorn flowers. Photo by Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org

the creation of pesticide resistance that could worsen the pest problem in the future. It might be a matter of weighing pros and cons to cause the least harm, which is fine, but my personal experience suggests there can be a lot of harm in plant removal campaigns that gets downplayed or excluded from the balance sheet.

For example, in the early 2010s, I watched managers treat buckthorn-removing laborers with (in my opinion) cynicism, dismissiveness, and objectification. I have seen forests with native creatures I treasure get scorned and derided by stewards because the forests also host a lot of invasives. A year or two ago, I came upon invasives in a public area that had apparently been sprayed, but the spray had also damaged natives and no signage to inform human visitors was evident. I have seen one of the fullest and loveliest patches of bloodroot in a city park system get completely smothered under an enormous pile of invasive slash, cut by people who usually burn the piles—scorching the soil and killing tree branches overhead, all in the name of protecting natives. It's difficult to see such themes crop up across the Upper Midwest, as I have,

and not begin to feel that something dark or obscure in the human psyche is creeping, unheralded, into the enterprise—though certainly, not every effort in every place is like this.

Intriguingly, both past generations of humans in Europe and present-day native birds in North America have made use of buckthorn in a way that works directly with the potential of the living, intact plant. These uses might be imperfect or “tricky”—I’ve read that buckthorn fruits may nourish birds less fully than native berries, or ply their medicine potently in humans or livestock, requiring careful use. But there they are: ways of working with the plant in situ, as it presents its living self to our bodies, senses, and places, granting it enough dignity and worth that we could even imbibe it. It’s true in the European context, buckthorn is native—but I have seen no evidence that geographic location affects buckthorn’s medicinal power, and since it’s the same species there and here, one might think at least some of its useful inherent properties would also hold in the New World. And it’s not just birds and humans: in my local area, buckthorn also feeds a tiny, host-specific leaf-mining

moth. Some native plants here (e.g., leatherwood) host the same number of leaf-miners, while others, such as jack-in-the-pulpit and skunk cabbage, host fewer.

When I consider these things alongside the fact that the fight against invasives can feel hopeless and Sisyphean, I wonder: is that battle the most effective way to approach the loss, upheaval, and transformation in our plant communities? Might we have the opportunity today to step into a slightly deeper or more nuanced relationship with buckthorn or the other shadowy plants we call invasives—whether that be the revival of a medicinal use, or the creation of something new we haven’t even dreamed up yet? If we did so, would we be maturing helpfully in our relationship with shadow, or would we be merely backsliding into permissiveness toward plant aggression?

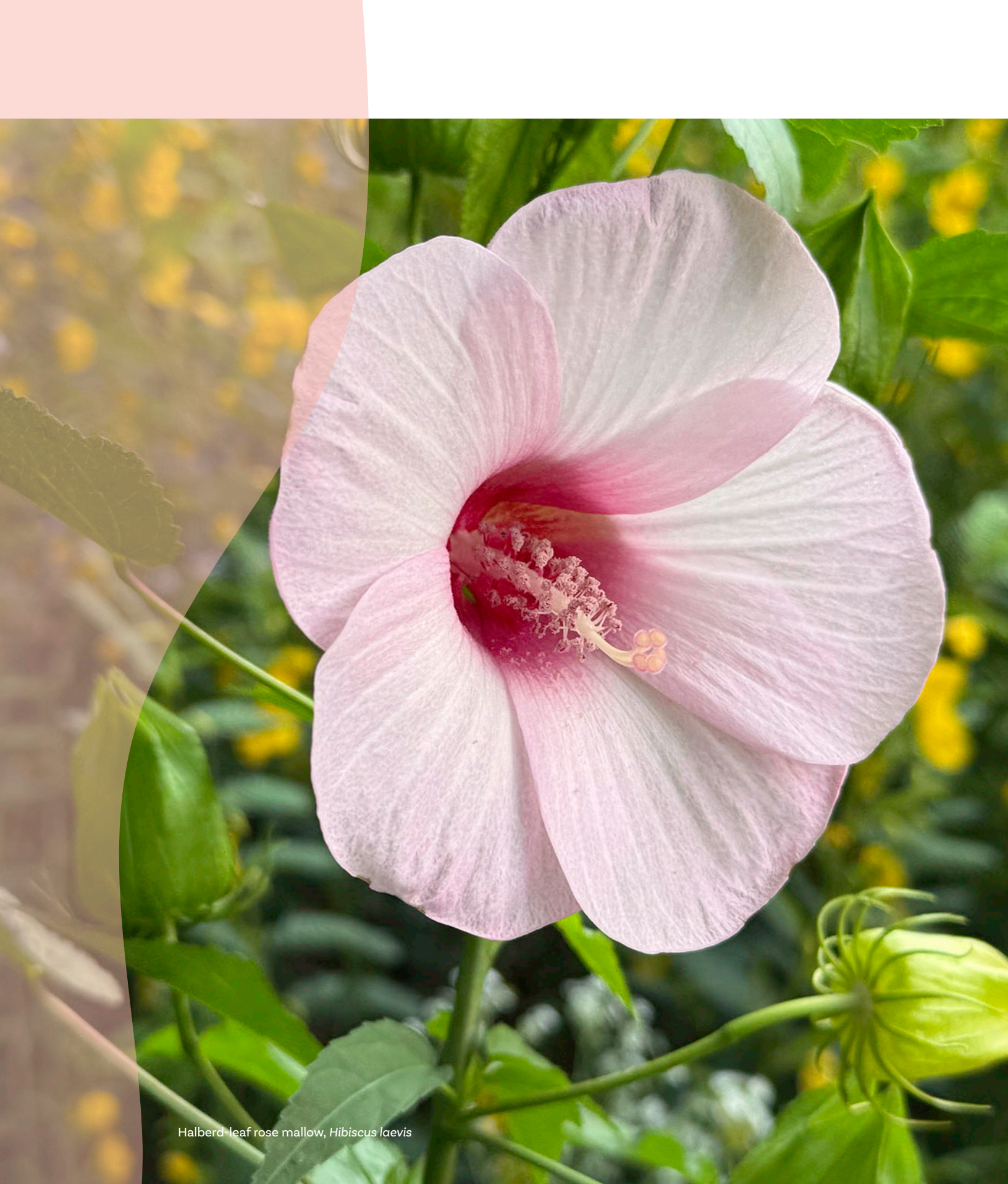
And while we’re on the subject, what is the nature of plant aggression anyway? We certainly have mechanistic explanations, such as chemical allelopathy—but to me, the spite some of us use to describe a plant like buckthorn almost seems to imply a certain inner state of the plant, perhaps an intent or will to harm on its

part. Could that really be so? To what extent does plant aggression possess the quality of interiority? How might the answer to that question affect how we relate our own human inner states to those of plants, in language, thought, and action? Might we still have more to learn about how plants themselves, and ecosystems more generally, experience the interactions between native and non-native plants?

If plants could talk—and some say they can, in one way or another—I wonder if we have fully heard what they have to say on these matters. I certainly know with humans that sometimes I am pretty darn sure I “get” someone’s experience, and then when I ask to confirm my guess, their reality turns out to be different than I had imagined—sometimes in subtle ways that are crucial to a deeper understanding of the situation.

I don’t have the answers to these questions, but I am certainly leaning into the question nowadays, and wondering what others might have to say, too. ■

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Halberd-leaf rose mallow, *Hibiscus laevis*

Our Own Hibiscus

Article and photos by Diane Porter



Hibiscus Turret Bee, *Ptilothrix bombiformis*

Growing up in southern California, I saw hibiscus flowers that were flamboyant and as big as dinner plates. I left them behind when I moved to Iowa. How pleased I was to discover Iowa has its own hibiscus, a native wildflower commonly called Halberd-leaf rose mallow (*Hibiscus laevis*).

Our own hibiscus is closer to the size of teacup saucers than dinner plates, but it's as pretty as any hibiscus I've seen. It grows wild in wetlands and along muddy banks, where butterflies and bees feed on its pollen and nectar. The flower also does well in gardens, if provided with plenty of water.

Its own bee!

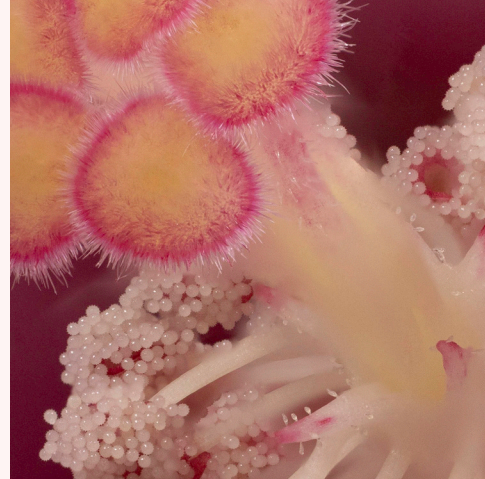
Our hibiscus has its own bee, the Hibiscus Turret Bee, which dedicates itself to hibiscus flowers.

The female Hibiscus Turret Bee goes down into the heart of the flower, where she flails about, collecting pollen on the specialized hairs of her legs and body.

The pollen is what she feeds to her young. After digging a hole in damp soil, she lays an egg (or sometimes two), and leaves a ball of pollen inside for each larva to eat when it hatches from the egg. Their food source comes exclusively and always from the pollen of this hibiscus.

Why she loves hibiscus

The pollen grains of hibiscus flowers are about 0.005 inch in diameter, which is slightly greater than the width of a coarse human hair. That's pretty big, as pollen goes. Thus, it's highly rewarding to a mother bee gathering



Hibiscus flower's reproductive column, magnified. Pollen grains appear whitish.

food for her young.

Tiny spines radiate from each whitish pollen grain. Those spines help the pollen stick to the bee's hairs so she can carry it to her nest.

Recipe for a pollen grain

Pollen of different species vary in their mix of nutrients. Larva of Hibiscus Turret Bees are perfectly adapted to the amino acids and protein-lipid balance of hibiscus pollen. Pollen of other flowers would not allow the larvae to develop normally into healthy bees. So the females don't bother with pollen from any other flowers.

To find a female

If a female's guiding passion is finding pollen for her nests, the male's passion is finding females. And what better place to find one than in a hibiscus flower?

A male lives entirely on nectar. Since he is not provisioning larvae, he doesn't need pollen. He could drink his lunch from any flowers, not just hibiscus. However, he hangs out

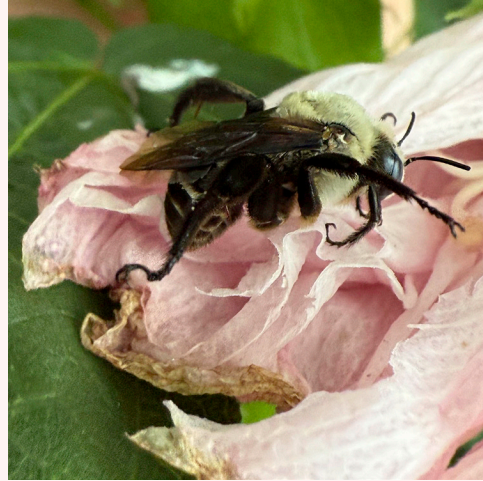
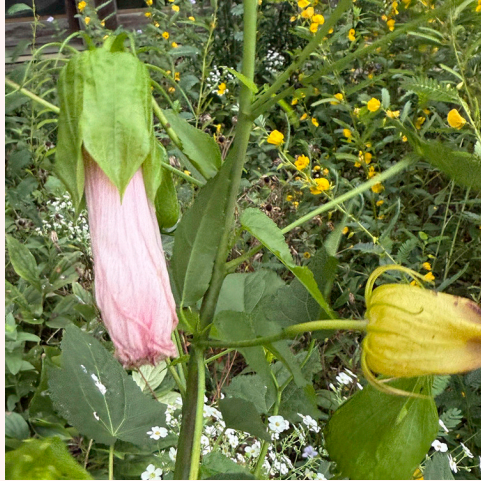
deep in a hibiscus blossom because that's where he can meet females.

Where he sleeps

Hibiscus flowers bloom only for the day, opening in the morning and collapsing before dark. In the afternoon, as petals wilt and begin to close up, the male bee hunkers down inside a flower, completely enclosed.

It's a safe place to spend the night, protected from weather and predators. And in the morning, he's already right there on the hibiscus plant, ready to welcome female visitors.

I peeled back a couple of wilted petals early one morning and was startled to see a Hibiscus Turret Bee looking up at me. He was probably not quite ready to emerge from his pink blankets, but he crept out and let me get a good look at him before he flew away. I suspect he was the same individual I found several times that day among the newly opening flowers.



Wilting hibiscus flower in late afternoon | Bee comes out in the morning.

Only males roost in the blossoms, by the way. Females spend the night in one of their underground burrows.

Big bold hibiscus

Although the flowers of our native Halberd-leaf rose mallow are smaller than the exuberant and often exotic hibiscus grown by gardeners, I treasure it. It has come down through the ages, since before we were here with our notes and names. It is Iowa's own hibiscus, and it is home to its own special bee.

Halberd-leaf hibiscus has been in my garden for three years. I've always been hoping to find a Hibiscus Turret Bee among its flowers. I had little expectation of success, because the bee is rare in Iowa. It was first found in the state only in 2022, by students at Luther College.

When I found one last summer, I could hardly believe my eyes. I sent my photos to BugGuide, a repository of insect records for North America (<https://bugguide.net/node/view/2481811,2481174,-2481023>).

The BugGuide experts confirmed it as Hibiscus Turret Bee, *Ptilothrix bombiformis*. I had a big grin on my face for a whole day. ■



Halberd-leaf Rose Mallow in my garden

INPS' 30-Year Celebration

Article and photos by MJ Hatfield

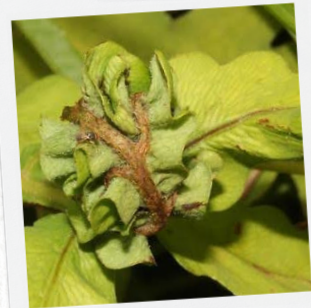
The Iowa Native Plant Society (INPS) 30-year celebration, held May 17-18, 2025 in Fayette County, was excellent. It included visits to Backbone State Park, Becky's Fen, Soules Prairie, and Upper Iowa University's museum and herbarium. The Saturday evening dinner with friends was followed with a presentation by Deb Lewis (and Bill Norris in absentia).

Thank you to all those who thought of and planned this reunion and then made a deal with the weather to cooperate. As I age, I—probably like you—find that being with old friends has become even more special. Our celebration had ample time with these, plus heartwarming times with young people and new friends, all native plant (and insect) enthusiasts. The weekend put a smile on my face for days.

After the INPS field trip to Soules Prairie, I headed

to another site in Fayette County, Fringed Fen, to meet friends. We had a mission to find fern frond tips woven with silk that I suspected were home and food for the larvae of the Gold-headed leafroller moth, *Olethreutes aurica*. I was late by an hour (verboden as a retired UPS driver), but Lydia, Lucas, and Kristin were gracious and forgiving. We set about searching for patches of sensitive ferns (*Onoclea sensibilis*) and other ferns that might have these silken wads.

But first, some history. On July 4, 2016, I found silken wadded fronds on sensitive fern at Feather Fen in Mitchell County. Opening the wads, there was fly larvae and frass (pooh). On July 11, 2024, again I found this sign of woven fronds on ferns at Fringed Fen in Fayette County. Unwrapping a few of the wads, I found ants, fly larvae, spiders, and what again looked like lepidoptera frass.



July 4, 2016: Opened the wads to find fly larvae



July 11, 2024: Again, found this sign of insect life

Checking BugGuide, Marcie O'Connor, Wisconsin, had reared a fine looking moth from similar sign on lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), but earlier in the year. July was too late to find moth larvae as by that time they would be moths.

Back to May 18, 2025. The previous year's patch of sensitive ferns was absent, but Lucas found new patches. Unfortunately, these had no waddings. However, Lydia and Kristin also found a new patch of ferns and these had silken wads. We opened one and found a caterpillar, so we collected a few wads from this new patch. I have learned that multiple collections of larvae increases the odds of successfully rearing at least one adult. Our search also proved that more searching eyes increases the chances of finding what we are looking for—another reason why it's so much fun to be in the field with others.

On June 9, 2025, I thought it might be time to check the vials. There were no moth in the first vial, or in the second, so I wasn't quite as careful checking the third, just tapped out the contents. And there, sitting still, right in front, was a very fresh

and beautiful Gold-headed leafroller moth. This was the first documentation of this moth for Iowa. It is posted to both BugGuide (<https://bugguide.net/node/view/2460286>) and Jim Durbin's "Insects of Iowa" (https://www.insectsofiowa.org/taxon/olethreutes_auricapitana).

Many thanks to Lydia, Lucas, Kristin and those who protect Fringed Fen! ■



Gold-headed leafroller moth
(*Olethreutes auricapitana*)



Dusky lacewing
(*Coniopterygidae*)

“Because flowering plants and insects coevolved, I take special notice of insects that require ferns as their host plant.”



Promoting a variety of perspectives and voices is a key part of TNC's work to advance the use of controlled fire. Photo by The Nature Conservancy

Trailblazers Academy: Where Experience Meets Opportunity

Ready to grow your fire skills? Trailblazers Academy is a nationally recognized training program designed for both beginners and seasoned fire professionals—whether you're a natural resource manager, private landowner, or conservation enthusiast.

Why Attend?

- **Hands-On Training for All Levels:** Learn the fundamentals or refine advanced tactics through real-world burn scenarios.
- **Leadership Development:** Step into mentoring and leadership roles in a supportive, inclusive environment.
- **Ecological Fire Practices:** Connect fire management to land stewardship, restoration, and community.
- **Networking & Mentorship:** Build lasting relationships with fire practitioners from across Iowa and beyond.



A prescribed fire in the Loess Hills. Photo by Karlee Ketelboeter



2024 Academy participants sit in a Utility terrain vehicle. Photo by The Nature Conservancy

“It is inspiring to witness women from diverse backgrounds and professions coming together to support and learn from one another. We aim to foster a community where women can confidently thrive and excel.”

— Amy Crouch, Little Sioux Project Director

“Trailblazers gave me the confidence to lead burns and mentor others,” said Maria G., Burn Boss, Colorado. “It’s the most empowering fire training I’ve ever attended.”

Built for Women, Open to All

Trailblazers Academy centers women in fire, creating space for mentorship, growth, and leadership—without barriers.

- **Location:** Broken Kettle Grasslands, Westfield, Iowa

- **Dates:** First week of June
- **Learn more:** The Nature Conservancy’s Trailblazers Academy web page and freelance writer Bethany Kaylor’s story, *Baptism by Fire*.
- **Questions?** Email: trailblazersfireacademy@gmail.com

Keep an eye out for registration details!

Trailblazers Academy isn’t just a workshop—it’s a movement. Come blaze trails with us! ■

IOWA


Wildflower MONTH

By Dianne Blankenship

Each May, the Iowa Native Plant Society (INPS) requests a proclamation by our governor declaring the month of May as Iowa Wildflower Month. We invite organizations, agencies, schools, libraries, etc. to host field trips, walks, or programs that will help get people outdoors to view the early blooms in our parks, gardens, and natural areas and to learn more about our native plants. INPS will promote your events. Please send your plans or questions to iowanativeplantsociety@gmail.com.

The Loess Hills Prairie Seminar is celebrating its 50th anniversary on May 29-31, 2026. This annual event offers indoor and outdoor programs featuring the loess hills and general nature themed activities. The event is free, meals can be ordered, and people of all ages can attend a few sessions or all of it. Educators can receive credit by registering with the Northwest AEA. Families are especially welcome as special programs are offered for children. Primitive camping is available at the outdoor site. To view last year's schedule and to register so you will get updates about the 2026 program and when meals can be ordered, please visit <https://www.loesshillspiraieseminar.com/> ■

Photo by Sarah Nizzi



Celebrate **IOWA'S** Outdoors Day

Save the Date
03/24/2026 • Iowa State Capitol

===== *Do you love Iowa's outdoors?* =====

Iowa's **parks, trails, wildlife, soil and water** are all part of our **quality of life** and cause for celebration!

Meet Iowans passionate about protecting spaces for outdoor recreation and caring for our natural resources.

The day will feature **a meal, engaging speakers, displays** and the opportunity to **share your own motivations** for celebration. This year's celebration will culminate in the Iowa DNR's annual Gift to Iowa's Future Day, an event that honors Iowans who've donated their land in the past year.

All are welcome; come for any or all of the day!

**Your presence will help show lawmakers that
Iowans care about nature.**

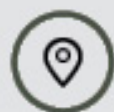
Contact Anna Gray, Public Policy Director and Counsel at Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, **for more information by emailing agray@inhf.org.**



Buchanan County Conservation Board

Bearbower Sand Prairie Prairie Walk

Join the Buchanan County Conservation Board and Iowa Native Plant Society in exploring Bearbower Sand Prairie.



Program Location:

Bearbower Sand Prairie: SE Parking Lot
1777 Benton Buchanan Ave.
Rowley, IA 52329



Date and Time:

- June 20th, 2026
- 10:00 am



What You Will See:

Expect to see Leadplant, Purple Prairie Clover, Pale Purple Coneflower, Pasture Rose and many more native wildflowers.



Purple Prairie Clover (*Dalea purpurea*)

Bearbower Sand Prairie

Bearbower Sand Prairie is a unique remnant prairie located in Homer Township near Brandon, IA. The 40-acre site was acquired by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in 1985 and supports over 100 native plant species. Since its purchase, the Buchanan County Conservation Board has managed the property and recently renewed a management agreement to care for the site until December 31, 2047.

This prairie walk will include a tour of the south parcel at Bearbower Sand Prairie. Participants can expect to see many native wildflowers in bloom and learn some basic plant identification. Conservation Director Ben Bonar will provide an overview of recent and future restoration efforts at the site.

For Program Information:

- 📍 1777 Benton Buchanan Ave, Rowley, IA
- 📞 (319) 636-2617, or email bbonar@co.buchanan.ia.us
- 🌐 www.buchanancountyparks.com

0.1%

Did you know that only 0.1% of the original prairie still exists in Iowa today?

Spend the summer with *Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation*

Be part of one of the most respected internship programs in the state!

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation is a statewide nonprofit conservation organization that works with private landowners and public agencies to protect and restore Iowa's land, water, and wildlife.

As an INHF intern, you'll contribute to habitat restoration, bring our work to new audiences and visit some of Iowa's most beautiful and unique places.

Available internship opportunities:

- **Communications**
- **Graphic Design**
- **Conservation Programs**
- **Land Stewardship**

Gain hands-on experience with:

- **Stewarding Iowa's land, water and wildlife:** chainsaw operation, plant ID, ecosystem management practices and more
- **Conservation communications:** grant and creative writing, visual storytelling, graphic design
- **Networking:** meet with staff and partners in a variety of roles to gain a vision for your desired career path

Competitive pay rates. Application deadline is February 2, 2026.
Learn more and apply at www.inhf.org/internship



Iowa
Natural Heritage
Foundation

Upcoming Events

Iowa Prairie Network 2026 Winter Seminar

Date: Saturday, January 24, 2026

Time: 8:30 am–5:45 pm

Location: Ames High School,
1801 Ridgewood Avenue,
Ames, IA 50010

Visit www.iowaprairienetwork.org to learn more.

INPS Field Trip to Cedar Bluffs State Preserve

Date: Saturday, May 2, 2026

Time: TBA

Location: Cedar Bluffs State
Preserve, Mahaska County

Led by: Tom Rosburg

Visit <https://www.iowanativeplants.org> calendar to learn more.

INPS Field Trip to Yellow Banks Park

Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026

Time: TBA

Location: Yellow Banks Park,
Polk County

Led by: Lael Neal and Loren Lown

Visit <https://www.iowanativeplants.org> calendar to learn more.

Iowa Women in Natural Resources Annual Conference

Date: Friday, February 27, 2026

Time: 9:00 am–3:00 pm

Location: Middleswart Lodge,
15875 118th Avenue, Indianola,
IA 50125

Visit <https://www.iwinr.com/annualconference> to learn more.

50th Anniversary Loess Hills Prairie Seminar

Date: Friday, May 29–Sunday,
May 31, 2026

Time: 5:00 pm–10:00 pm
(Friday); 6:00 am–10:00 pm
(Saturday); 6:00 am–2:00 pm
(Sunday)

Location: Loess Hills Prairie,
Monroe County

Celebrate the 50th year of the LHPS! Participate in just one session, the entire day, or stay the whole weekend. Free camping is available as well as hotel, area Airbnbs, and a few county-run cabins.

Visit www.loesshillsprairieseminar.com to learn more.

INPS and Buchanan Conservation Board Field Trip to Bearbower Sand Prairie

Date: Saturday, June 20, 2026

Time: 10:00 am

Location: SE Parking Lot,
Bearbower Sand Prairie, 1777
Benton Buchanan Avenue,
Rowley, IA 52329

Visit <https://www.iowanativeplants.org> calendar to learn more.

INPS and Dubuque County Conservation Field Trip to Kaufman and/or Sunnycrest Prairies

Date: Saturday, August 15,
2026

Time: TBA

Location: Kaufman and/or
Sunnycrest Prairies, Dubuque
County

Visit [https://www.
iowanativeplants.org](https://www.iowanativeplants.org) calendar
to learn more.

INPS Field Trip to Squirrel Hollow County Park

Date: Saturday, September 12,
2026 (Rain date: October 3)

Time: 10:00 am–12:00 pm

Location: Squirrel Hollow
County Park, Greene County

Led by: Lee Searles

Visit [https://www.
iowanativeplants.org](https://www.iowanativeplants.org) calendar
to learn more.



A birding session led by the Brogies at the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar. Photo by Don Poggensee



A session atop the Sylvan Runkel State Preserve at the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar. Photo by Don Poggensee

Join the Iowa Native Plant Society!

Iowa Native Plant Society (INPS) members receive the biannual newsletter, updates on all native plant happenings across the state, and discounts on INPS merchandise.

Dues are payable on a calendar year basis (from January 1 to December 31). Annual contributions beyond the basic membership level are tax deductible (marked with * below).

**Please complete and mail this form along with your dues to:
Iowa Native Plant Society, 4486 88th Street, Urbandale, IA 50322**

Your information is *never* distributed to other organizations or companies.

For questions, please contact membership.inps@gmail.com.

Contact Information

First and Last Name

Street Address

City/State

Zip Code

Phone Number

Email Address

Membership Type

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Membership (\$25) | <input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Student Membership (\$5) (school email required) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anemone (\$40)* | <input type="checkbox"/> Botrychium (\$50)* <input type="checkbox"/> Calamagrostis (\$100)* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dodocatheon (\$150)* | <input type="checkbox"/> Erythronium (\$200+)* |

Newsletter Sign-Up

I wish to receive the biannual newsletter by: ☐ Email ☐ USPS (\$10 extra)

Iowa Native Plant Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.