



MANZANITA

NEWSLETTER OF THE KANE
COUNTY CHAPTER OF THE
UTAH NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

January 2006 News

Upcoming Events

** Note Change in Date for this month's meeting

January Monthly Meeting: Monday, January 9: Adding Color to Garden Design by Allysia Angus. Welcome Allysia back to Kanab (she recently moved to Escalante) as she discusses various aspects of garden design involving color, flair, and style. Allysia is a professional landscape architect (as well as planner) for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. This talk will give you an opportunity to get free advice you might otherwise have to pay big money for – kind of like talking with a doctor at a New Year's Eve party to get free medical advice. The meeting will be at 7 PM in the public meeting room of the BLM Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (between the Holiday Inn and new truck stop). As always, the meeting is open to the public and will be followed by desserts and general socialization.

February 2006 Meeting: Monday, February 6: Seed Exchange

Extravaganza. Have you ever ordered too many seeds for your own use, only to have them languish in a kitchen drawer? Or been stymied from buying

bare-root shrubs by mail because the minimum order amount was ridiculously large? Fear not – for our February meeting will focus on collaboration among our members who want to share their excess seed or join together to place collective orders. Be sure to bring your favorite seed and planting catalogs to the meeting to share, and be prepared to make a new seed-planting buddy. For your entertainment, we will also have a short discussion on the nature of seeds, following on the heels of Carolyn Shelton's engaging introduction to pollination biology last month.

Above: Pericycle Pete behind the bars of his guard cell (by Jane Dorn). From Castilleja (the newsletter of the Wyoming Native Plant Society), February 1991 and reprinted October 2002.

Botanical Dragnet

By John "Barney" Baxter

My name is Joe Friday. I was born in Raceme, Wisconsin. My buddy Spike and I are just umbel cops, but we can go anywhere a catkin, and we always get our man.

It was warm in Los Angeles. It was so warm that Spike and I were beginning to drupe, and we were about to go to Abies bar and get plastid when a call came in that a supermarket had been held up. We drove down there and talked to a checker. She was palea and nervous. "Don't panicle Ma'am," I said, "I just want the fax". "Well lemme see", she said, "this guy came in with a pistil, and I knew he meant to stigma up, so I gave him all the cash. Then I watched him pedicel away on his pericycle. It had one petal missing." I could tell by the style of the caper that it was the work of Pericycle Pete, the notorious supermarket bandit. We spent a week looking for apetalous pericycle, with no success. We were deep in glume.

Then one day there was a knock awn the door. "Come in," I said, and who should walk in but Sadie the Shoplifter, a gal whose favorite trick was to Caryophyllaceae bit of feminine apparel from some display counter. "Boys," said Sadie, "I've stolon my last bit of lingerie -- I'm going straight. And to prove I'm Cereus, I'm going to lead you to Pericycle Pete's hangout."

We hoped that Sadie's change of heartwood meant that she wouldn't stele anymore. She took us to Pete's hideout, a sleazy apartment that he had rented from

those notorious slumlords, Phil O. Dendron and his wife, Rhoda Dendron. "Culm awn out, Pete," I yelled, "You ought to see the nice nucellus fellows have for you. Yew won't pine away --yew'll spruce up fir a change when you cedar cell."

His only anther was to fire a pistil from a window. We let him rachis with fire for a while, then we broke down the door. He had exhausted his ammunition, and the floor was littered with Brassicaceae. "Boys," he said, "I'm glad it's over. I lost my shoes, and mitosis cold."

Sadie warned us that the sapwood try to escape, so we took him to the station and locked him up in a guard cell. Later she cracked up, so we sent her to the insane xylem. Then our Irish police chief, Luke O'Plast, gave me a raise* so now I have a funiculus to jingle in my pocket. I also have my name over my office door inflorescence lights, and I feel quite superior ovary the whole thing. --Ament—

*Later the chief was talking promotions. I thought, "Is he Cereus, or is epigynous a curve?"

[Dr. John Baxter was a retired mycology professor and resident poet for the Wyoming Native Plant Society, where he was bestowed with the titles of "Bard of Burns (WY)" and "Poet Lariat of Wyoming". Barney Burns passed away in 2002 at the age of 84]

Family Portraits: The Dogwood Family

By Walter Fertig

With a name like "dogwood" it is only natural to assume that members of the Cornaceae either bear some resemblance to, or are undeniably attractive to our canine companions. In truth, the word dogwood is a corruption of a Scandinavian term "dag", meaning skewer. The hard woody stems of dogwood are excellent for roasting game over a fire or for use in basketry or wicker. Indeed, the Latin name for the dogwoods, *Cornus*, translates as "horn" in reference to the hardness of the plant's wood, which has often been used as a substitute for metal in the manufacture of weaving shuttles, bobbins, and farming implements.

The dogwoods are a relatively small family, with about 100 species distributed widely across the northern hemisphere, but extending into the mountains of South America and rarely into the tropics. About half of all known species in the

family belong to the genus *Cornus*, although taxonomic splitters have suggested rendering this group into as many as eight separate genera.

Utah is home to only one native dogwood, the Red-osier (*Cornus sericea*, or *Swida sericea* for purists). The Red-osier dogwood gets its common name from the bright red stems (osier is French for long, willow-like shoot) that are especially obvious in winter, when the leaves have shed. In the leafless state the shrub can resemble the colorful branches of willows with which it shares an affinity for wet soils and damp streamsides. In summer, Red-osier dogwood is easily recognized by its oval to elliptic leaves with prominent veins that gently curve to follow the smooth margins of the blade. Dogwoods are among the few tree or shrub species in the west with opposite leaves (occurring in pairs on opposing sides of a stem, rather than singly in a zig-zag fashion) that are neither lobed nor divided.



Above: Leaves and stems of Red-osier dogwood, showing the bright red color of the bark and the distinctive venation of the leaf blades. Photo from Robert H. Mohlenbrock @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / USDA SCS. 1989. Midwest wetland flora: Field office illustrated guide to plant species. Midwest National Technical Center, Lincoln, NE.

The most reliable way to identify a dogwood in leaf is to break the leaf stalk or petiole and slowly pull each half apart to reveal the stringy white pith. The pith is part of the internal network of fibers that give the stem rigidity and flexibility. Dogwood pith is unusual in its elasticity, allowing it to be pulled like cotton candy batter, though it is less edible and brightly colored.

Like most dogwoods, Red-osier has relatively non-descript, small white flowers with four or occasionally five petals borne in a flat-topped umbrella-like cyme. Flowering dogwood (*Cornus*

florida) and Kousa (*C. kousa*) differ in having four large petal-like bracts enfolding the inflorescence to create the illusion of a single enormous flower. Neither of these species is native to Utah, though both are occasionally grown as ornamentals, especially in northern counties. Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) has similar flowers but is a low-growing herb instead of a tree or shrub. Additional anatomical differences have prompted some taxonomists to segregate the herbaceous dogwoods into the genus *Chamaepericlymenum*. Unfortunately for those who enjoy the challenge of tongue-twisting Latin names, this group is not found in Utah (though they occur sporadically in the Rockies and across boreal Alaska and Canada).



Above: *Cornus canadensis* (aka *Chamaepericlymenum canadense*) from the outskirts of Juneau, Alaska (photo by W. Fertig). If *Chamaepericlymenum* were found in Utah, it would own the distinction of having the longest genus name (besting *Krascheninnikovia* by one letter) in the state flora..

Dogwoods produce showy red or white fleshy fruits that are often as attractive (or more so) than the flowers. Technically, the fruits are drupes (like cherries) with a single, hard seed inside. Dogwood fruits are an important food source for songbirds and grouse.

Red-osier was one of several plants referred to as “kinnikinik” (meaning “that which is mixed” in Algonquian, Cree, or Ojibwa) for its use by American Indians as a tobacco substitute. The inner bark of young stems was split and scraped into threads and toasted over a fire before being mixed with real tobacco. Though he never admitted to trying it, edible plant aficionado H.D. Harrington

noted that Red-osier “is said to be aromatic and pungent, giving a narcotic effect approaching stupefaction”. He recommended its use only in moderation.

Perhaps it is fortunate that we have adopted the term “dogwood” over the more linguistically pure “dagwood” for these handsome and useful shrubs. Certainly, the image of a buffoonish cartoon character noted for sleeping on the job and crashing into the postman does not befit the dogwood clan. More importantly, the word dogwood allows for the clever botanical joke, always worth repeating: How do you tell a dogwood? By its bark, of course!

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This edition of the Kane County Native Plant Society news was written by John Baxter and Walter Fertig. Reader submissions are welcome. For more information about upcoming events, contact Walt Fertig at 689-0224 or walt@kanab.net.



Above: Red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) from Britton and Brown 1913 (scanned courtesy of the Kentucky Native Plant Society and on the web at USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada*. Vol. 2: 662).