



Prairie Originals

WILDFLOWERS
NATIVE GRASSES



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June is here and warm weather is on the way, we hope! Some heat would be much appreciated by the plants and us humans would love it as well. Even though the weather has been cold this spring, there is always an upside. Germination of some of the "difficult" species has been excellent in May this year. These include Wild Ginger, Crowfoot Violet, Baneberry, Sarsaparilla, Snowberry and Pincherry. Some we are gradually figuring out how to propagate and some just need the cold weather to germinate.

What's Blooming Now?

Heartleaf Alexander *Zizia aptera* is just starting to send out flowers now. It is a handsome plant for early flowers in the garden and in the prairie. It can be identified by the big heart shaped leaves at the base of the plant. It grows about 60cm tall (2 ft.) and blooms throughout June. Heartleaf Alexander grows in sunny locations with dry to moist soil. It is common in the prairies, parklands and foothills of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. It is found as far north as the southern Yukon and grows across North America with the exception of the Maritimes and the SW United States.



A very close relative is the **Golden Alexander** *Zizia aurea* with similar yellow flower clusters. The difference is in the leaves and growing conditions. Golden Alexander leaves are all three lobed. It grows in sun or part shade and medium to wet soil. Golden Alexander grows as far west as Saskatoon and is native in Eastern Canada and the US. Both types self seed fairly easily but not to the point of being a problem.

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They are excellent sources of pollen and nectar for many beneficial insects. They are members of the Carrot family which also includes parsley and dill. All these members of the Carrot family including Heartleaf and Golden Alexander are host plants for the Black Swallowtail butterfly caterpillars. So if you would like to attract these butterflies you need to have these plants in your garden.



Black Swallowtail Caterpillar



Black Swallowtail Butterfly

Both Alexanders are available in 5 packs of plugs and in 4.5" pots. Heartleaf Alexander is also available in seed packages.

Downy Yellow Violet *Viola pubescens* is also blooming now. This is a great little shade plant for spring blooms. It grows about 30 cm tall (12") and blooms throughout June. It has large heart shaped leaves. It grows as a clump but spreads by reseeding easily in moist soil.



Downy Yellow Violet



Downy Yellow Violet closeup

Also blooming now are Saskatoons, Hawthorn, Early Blue Violet, Northern Bog Violet, Western Canada Violet, Tall Bluebells, Star Flowered Solomon's Seal, Saline Shooting Star, Pussy Toes and Three Flowered Avens.



St. Norbert Farmer's Market

We will be at the Market with a whole selection of plants every Saturday starting June 4th, rain or shine. The Market is open 8 am to 3 pm. We generally don't take shrubs so if you want us to bring shrubs please phone ahead. We can also bring seed to the Market if requested.

The Market has a great day of entertainment lined up for opening day. There is a children's entertainer at 10 am, A Local Food Race, and Manitoba Fiddler Michael Audette is playing at 11:30 am and 12:30 pm. See <http://www.stnorbertfarmersmarket.ca> for location and more information on the Market. You can sign up for the market newsletter at their site too.

We continue to be open at our Selkirk location 7 days a week until June 19th. Beginning June 20th we are open Monday to Saturday and closed on Sundays for the remainder of the season.

Bird and Butterfly News

I guess the biggest news on the butterfly front is that we have had no sightings at all yet this year. It has just been too cold for much activity. If you would like to learn more about Monarch butterflies and their migration an excellent site is <http://www.monarchwatch.org>

Their blog gives updates on the population status every year. They have done a lot of research on Monarchs and are actively promoting planting milkweed, which Monarchs require, in all parts of North America to help provide habitat for these enchanting creatures. There is a wealth of information on their site.

We always carry lots of Milkweed ourselves for gardeners here. We have three types, Swamp Milkweed, Whorled Milkweed and Dwarf Milkweed available in plug and pots.

New for 2011

Two Leaf Solomon's Seal *Maianthemum canadense* is a low, groundcover type plant for shady woodland gardens. It grows 10 – 15 cm tall (4-6") with 1-3 shiny, ovate leaves and blooms in June. The fruit is a small, pale red berry.

It slowly spreads by the roots. It is native in Manitoba and all across Canada and the northern and eastern US. It is also sometimes called Canada Mayflower.



Great Book

A recently published book came to my attention this spring. It is called ***Edible & Medicinal Plants of Canada*** by MacKiinnon, Kershaw, Arnason, Owen, Karst, Hamersley and Chambers. It is full of lots of pictures and fascinating information about our native plants.

Fascinating Facts

Wild Bergamot *Monarda fistulosa* is a member of the mint family so it has square stems. The leaves have a citrus fragrance so it was named after the oranges (*Citrus bergamia*) grown in Bergamo, Italy by one of King Charles 1's gardeners. Earl Grey tea is flavoured with Oil of Bergamot from the oranges. Our prairie Bergamot is not used in the Earl Grey tea however the fresh or dried leaves do make excellent tea. Fresh leaves can be used in salads and in poultry stuffing too. Aboriginal people have used Bergamot tea for stomach aches. Boiled leaves were also used to treat acne and fresh crushed leaves were applied to soothe insect bites.



Gardening for Life

I recently read an article on the Wild Ones website that makes a very strong case for planting native plants in our gardens. It offers a different perspective on gardening. I urge you to check it out at <http://www.for-wild.org/download/gardeningforlife.pdf>

"The Wild Ones : Native Plants, Natural Landscapes" promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. They are a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization. They are based in the US however most of their information is very relevant to us here in Canada as well.

Invasive Plant Alert

Oxeye Daisy *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum* syn. *Leucanthemum vulgare*

Introduced from Europe in the early 1800's primarily as a grass seed contaminant, and subsequently spread as an ornamental, Oxeye daisy has become a serious invader of pastures and natural areas throughout North America. It is a perennial herb that reproduces both by seed and shallow rhizomes. Single plants quickly become patches that continually increase in size. Plants flower June-August and its seed germinates throughout the growing season. Oxeye Daisy and the very similarly flowered Scentless Chamomile can be considered conspicuous, as **there are no native white flowered daisies on the Canadian Prairies.**



An ISCM Fact Sheet is available in PDF format from <http://www.invasivespeciesmanitoba.com>

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Identification:

Stems: Multiple, un-branched stems grow up to 1M tall and are smooth, frequently grooved and generally hairless.

Leaves: Basal and lower leaves are lance shaped with "toothed" margins and petioles that may be as long as the leaves. The upper leaves are alternately arranged, narrow, and stalkless with wavy margins. Leaves progressively decrease in size upward on the stem.

Flowers: Flowers are borne singly at the end of stems and can be up to 5 cm in diameter, with yellow centers, and 20 to 30 white petals radiating from the center. The petals are slightly notched at the tip.

Seed: Individual plants can produce over 500 flat, black seeds that are viable in the soil for 2-3 years or more. Seeds have no dormancy requirement and are viable upon dispersal.



Prevention

The availability of closely related plants through the nursery and seed trade contradicts the perception of Oxeye as an invasive plant. Shasta daisy is a cultivar (originated from) of Oxeye and was originally sterile, but can revert back to being fertile.

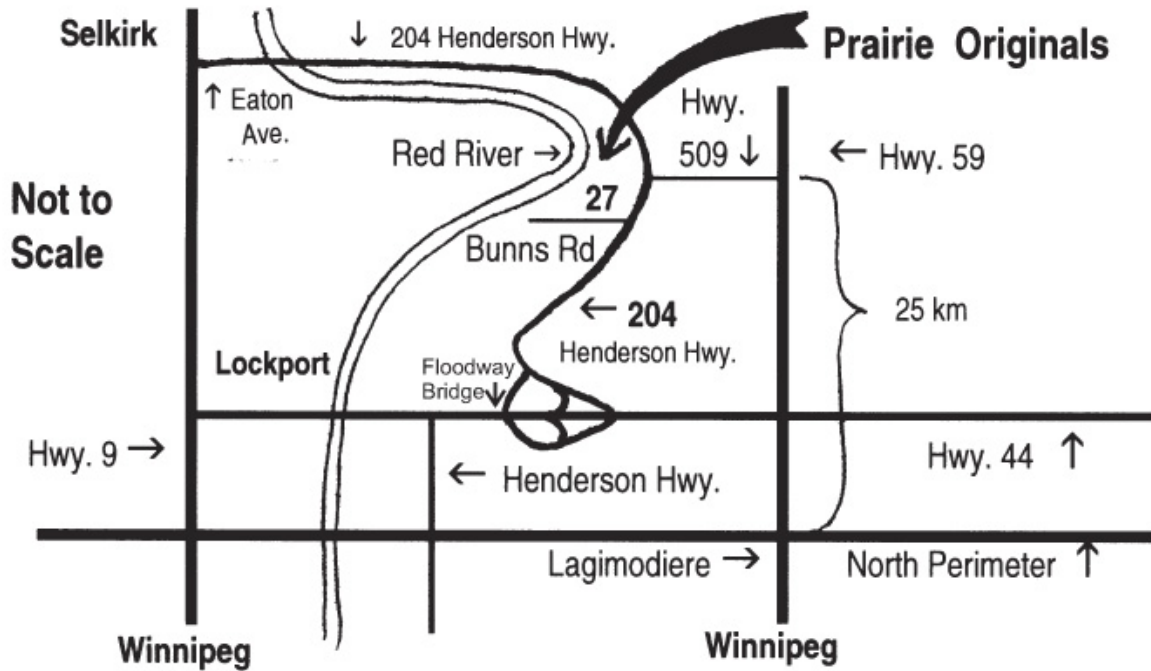
Oxeye plants can be found sold through nurseries and as seed in wildflower mixes. The two plants can cross breed, resulting in an invasive hybrid that is difficult to distinguish from either parent. This fact makes public awareness critical to prevention and control. Do not purchase nursery plants or seed labeled as Oxeye daisy.

Consumers should carefully read the contents of so-called 'wildflower' seed mixes and avoid those containing invasive ornamentals. Healthy, fertilized grass pastures are resistant to invasion.

**Until next time,
Shirley Froehlich, Alexis Nazeravich, Stefania Johnson,
Brenda Stewart and Erica Robb**



LOCATION



HOURS

May 12 - June 30

Monday to Friday

10 am - 6 pm

Saturdays

9 am - 5 pm

Evenings by Appointment

Sundays - until June 19

11am - 5 pm

July, August, September - Usually open Monday to Saturday but **phone to confirm**

ST. NORBERT FARMERS MARKET

June 4 - mid Aug.

Saturday

8 am - 3 pm

Located on Pembina Highway, about 1/2 km south of the perimeter.

