



Koma Kulshan Chapter WNPS Newsletter

Inside this issue

p1 President's Corner
p1 Plant Sale
p1 Conservation Committee
p2 Red Cedars
p2 First Flower
p2 Limericks
p3 Programs
p3 Field Trips

Find Koma Kulshan Online

Website: www.wnpskoma.org
Facebook: WNPSKomaKulshan

Koma Kulshan Plant Sale

It's back! We will be using a new online ordering system through the Washington Native Plant society website:

<https://www.wnps.org/komakulshan-programs-plantsale>

Plants can be ordered April 10-26, as long as supplies last. Plant pickup will be via drive-up, at the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, 3057 East Bakerview Road, Bellingham, WA, 98226. Plant pickup will be on May 1st. When you place your order, you will be given a 15-minute time slot to pick up plants.

Volunteers are needed!

There will be a work party on Sunday, April 25 from 1 to 3 pm, to prepare plants for pickup. We also need volunteers on May 1 between 10 am and 4 pm to help with plant pickup. To volunteer, contact Molly Porter:
mollymaclaughlin@hotmail.com.
Include the day/time that you can help.

Spring (April, May, June) 2021

President's Corner

by Allan Richardson

Things are gradually opening up in the world of native plants, but COVID restrictions will be with us for a while yet. Chapter meetings will be webinars in April and May, with only a slight hope of holding an outdoor picnic in June. Our annual plant sale will be preorder, prepaid, as detailed elsewhere in the newsletter. There will be no introductory plant walks this year, since it is tough to control the numbers and limit the interaction on these. Field trips with up to 12 participants are now possible with various restrictions, as detailed below. Perhaps things will be more normal for July through September field trips, and maybe we will be able to meet in person in the fall.

April is Native Plant Appreciation Month! There are lots of virtual events detailed on the WNPS state website. Be sure to sign up for the big, featured event on April 10. You can close out the month with a local event at Turner woodlands on the 28th; the details are in the field trips section of this newsletter. Another twist on native plant appreciation is the botanical limerick contest that will be hosted by our chapter for the month of April--see Abe's write-up on page 3.

Applications are now available for our native plant stewardship course, which will start on August 19. If you are somewhat new to working with native plants and want to know more about their habitats, and how to restore these, this could be the class for you. Go to our chapter website under stewardship for more information and a link to the on-line application.

The conservation committee is now established and ready to advocate for native plants and habitats. Jim Davis provides further details in a separate article.

New Koma Kulshan Chapter Conservation Committee

by Jim Davis

The Koma Kulshan Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society has formed a new Conservation Committee to address native plant conservation issues in Whatcom County. The Committee will advocate for the conservation of native plants, native plant habitats, and associated native fauna, such as pollinators. We will partner with tribes, local government agencies, and other conservation groups. The full scope of the Committee responsibilities includes drafting policy statements, educating the public, writing comment letters, circulating petitions, developing legislative proposals, providing support for conservation initiatives of partners, and helping identify and implement stewardship projects.

A very small core group has already met to identify some of the local native plant conservation issues and begin the process of selecting priorities. The group has committed to responding to federal, state, and local agency proposals for projects that will impact native plants. We are also interested in proactive advocacy to protect native plants on public lands (e.g., National Forest lands, State Department of Natural Resources lands, and Larrabee State Park). Other priorities will arise as we continue our discussions.

If you are interested in joining the Committee, contact Jim Davis (jimdavispcp@comcast.net), Analiese Burns (analiese@gmail.com), or Fritz Ulrich (fritz365@gmail.com) for more information.

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Using iNaturalist to Track Red Cedar Dieback

Western red cedars tolerate shade, flooding, and poor soils, thriving where other trees don't. But they are declining, and researchers are alarmed. It's been a pattern in recent years, with more trees found dead or dying. Researchers believe the problem due to longer, hotter droughts, but they don't know if precipitation, temperature, consecutive dry days, or other environmental factors are the main factor.

The Forest Health Watch program, started last year, is recruiting citizen scientists to research the causes of dieback. Individuals can help by recording and photographing sites where trees are healthy, dead or dying back. People can also identify sites and conditions where trees may be vulnerable, and watch for signs of disease or pests. Contribute using the Western Redcedar Dieback Map on iNaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/western-redcedar-dieback-map>).

"Once we have a strong understanding of the areas where trees are vulnerable, we can begin to explore options for keeping trees healthy in those areas," said Joseph Hulbert, who is a postdoc at Washington State University and the founder of Forest Health Watch.

Ultimately, the observations could help screen seed sources and tree genotypes to find varieties that can stand up to a hotter, drier climate. Hulbert also envisions future regional forest health projects with other species such as western hemlock or bigleaf maple, but his larger goal is a trained network of community scientists who are reliable observers of tree health.

The western red cedar has historically provided Native American tribes with much of the materials for practical objects and culture. Red cedars can reach nearly 200 feet in height and live for more than a thousand years.

First Flower of 2021?

by Bob Lemon

I'll get to that "first of '21" soon. Back a bit to 2003; Annie Prevost and I led an October field trip near Rainy Pass for fall colors, especially golden larches. With even late flowering plants long wilted, what else might get one's attention? A small heath family bog plant was removed for further, later examination. Some kind of buds were present at the twig's end. Hmm; looks green and pleasant in a vase by a west window. Remarkably, a flower unfolded from the terminal bud, and identification became a certainty! Trapper's tea, then *Ledum glandulosum*; however, our Ledums are now Rhododendrons, and *R. glandulosum* is now *R. columbianum*.

January 2021; on an Abe Lloyd-led field trip to a recently drained beaver pond, in the Chuckanuts, a lot of small heath family bog plants were present. One was removed for further, later examination, in a vase by a southeast window. Perhaps after two weeks of winter gloom: When slowly a flower unfolded from the terminal bud, an identification certainty! This time bog laurel, *Kalmia microphylla*.

Two dark season flowerings, 18 years apart, symbolically bookending a pair of naturalist's still budding relationship.

Appreciate our Native flora with Poetry

by Abe LLoyd

April is Native Plant Appreciation Month. Since COVID has made it difficult to share the joy we all have for our flora in person, we've dug deep and come up with a scintillating alternative: poetry. In the tradition of the great poets like Rumi, Shakespeare, and Dickinson, we propose the high form of the limerick. For those that didn't take a graduate seminar in advanced verse, the form can be executed by quilling five lines with the following verse meter: The first rhyming couplet sets the stage with seven syllables each, in what are colloquially known as the "A" verses; the second rhyming couplet builds tension by dropping down to just five syllables each, known as the "B" verses; resolution comes in the last verse with a return to the "A" pattern. Proper execution of these rules never fails to elicit gasps for air, tears of joy, and more than likely, yogic enlightenment. Surely the provided example alone is enough to satisfy the simple task of appreciating our flora. Never-the-less, other attempts are encouraged.*

*intended to be read with sarcasm

Rosa gymnocarpa: by T. Abe Lloyd

Roses are red they aren't blue
They've thorns on their stems it's true
Five petals above...
Don't you see my love
That botanists can woo too.

The contest: Submit poems by April 15th to [arcadianabe\[at\]yahoo\[dot\]com](mailto:arcadianabe@yahoo.com) to be posted on our Chapter Website. Poems can be viewed by visiting www.wnpskoma.org/poetry, which will launch April 1st.

Even if you don't write a poem, please read and "rate" other submissions. The author of the highest rated poem will receive a \$50 gift certificate to our Chapter's native plant sale.

Spring (April, May, June) 2021

Chapter Meetings

Meetings begin at 7pm and have been moved to a Zoom meeting format, except where noted. For updates on future webinars, watch for announcements on our chapter website (wnpskoma.org) and the wnps-koma email list. To register, go to the state events website (<http://wnps.org/events>) and click on Koma Kulshan events. There you can also find other Zoom webinars sponsored by WNPS.

April 21 (ZOOM): Bees and Seeds: Exploring the Wonders in our Backyards

Join author and biologist Thor Hanson for a fascinating exploration of two essential backyard wonders: bees and seeds. These common marvels reveal incredible secrets about evolution and biology -- nature, and our connections to it. And in today's increasingly indoor, media and technology-focused world, we need such touchstones more than ever before. With stories and pictures from his research and award-winning books, Hanson's presentation is a fertile reminder of how close we are to nature, wherever we happen to live. Thor Hanson is a Guggenheim Fellow, a Switzer Environmental Fellow, and winner of the John Burroughs Medal. His books include *Buzz*, *The Triumph of Seeds*, *Feathers*, and *The Impenetrable Forest*, as well as the illustrated children's favorite, *Bartholomew Quill*. He co-hosted the PBS Nature series *American Spring Live*, and has been a guest on programs ranging from *Fresh Air* to *Science Friday*, *On Point*, and *Book Lust* with Nancy Pearl. Hanson lives with his wife and son on an island in the Pacific Northwest. Learn more at <https://www.thorhanson.net/>.

May 19: To Be Determined

Field Trips

WNPS field trips have been suspended for quite awhile, but now with state office support, Koma Kulshan is ready to once again host field trips. These are much like field trips of years past, but with a few new requirements for COVID safety, listed below. Please consider yourself invited to join the field trip as long as you accept these new requirements:

- * Up to 12 participants are allowed per field trip, including the leader. You must contact the leader in advance to request a spot.
- * All hikers must carry face masks and use them when 6-foot distancing cannot be maintained, unless you have a legitimate medical exemption as determined by a physician.
- * All hikers must carry hand sanitizer.
- * No carpooling allowed between members of different households.
- * A separate liability release form is required for each participant, to be signed at the start of the field trip.

More info at <https://www.wnps.org/home/covid-19resources>.

April 24, Saturday, 9am-12 pm: Larrabee Right-of-Way Native Plant Work Party

We will be planting a native plant pollinator garden and hedgerow, including native wildflowers, trees, and shrubs to attract beneficial pollinators and birds. Native plants have been purchased with funds donated from the WNPS Koma Kulshan Chapter, Happy Valley Neighborhood Association, with support of City of Bellingham Parks and Public Works Department. We will be joined by Bellingham Parks volunteers for this Earth Day work party. This is a collaborative project led by the Happy Valley Neighborhood Association. Larrabee Avenue Right-of-Way between 21st and 22nds St, Bellingham. Park on 21st or Larrabee Ave. Bring mask, gloves, and your own tools for planting (shovels, pruning shears, pick ax, spading fork, dibble, wheelbarrow, hori hori knife). Wear a mask, gloves, sturdy shoes/boots. The ground is wet and you will be digging. Wear weather-appropriate clothing to stay warm and dry! Questions? Wendy Scherrer 360-319-9518 bluegreen.northwest@gmail.com

April 28, Wednesday, 7:00 pm: Woodland Restoration and Spring Wildflowers

Location: Turner woodlands, 4682 Wynn Road, Bellingham. Meander the paths through low-elevation second growth forest under bigleaf maples, red alders, black cottonwoods, and the occasional mature conifer. Enjoy spring flowers like bleeding heart, fringe cup, piggyback plant, and nettles. Explore the dense shrub layer of thimbleberry, salmonberry, snowberry, and elderberry. Visit areas that are in the process of recovering from severe blackberry infestations and learn about the techniques Mark, Brian, and Natalie have used to restore these areas, opening them up and planting conifers. You might walk as much as a mile if we visit every path. These 3 acres of woods are our respite and we welcome you to enjoy them with us.

May 8, Saturday, 8:30 am: Red Mountain Bald

The bald on Red Mountain is one of the largest and best examples of a bald habitat in Whatcom County. Camas, death camas, and many other colorful wildflowers are abundant, as well as some unusual species known more from North Central Washington. I visited the site last May and have not met anyone who knows of it. The Washington DNR is granting us access to the forest roads to make the hike in much shorter. The forest road is surfaced with large bumpy rocks, but clearance is not an issue. The hiking is flat on a boot path that is a 2 mile round trip. Meet the caravan at the Squalicum Lake parking lot at the intersection of Y-road and Mount Baker highway at 8:30 am. We will return in the early to mid-afternoon. We will be following Washington State COVID safety protocol for recreational gatherings. Please RSVP and direct questions to me (Abe) at arcadianabe@yahoo.com.

June 12, Saturday, 8:30 am: Wetlands with Vikki Jackson

Meet in the southeast corner of Safeway off Sunset. We will be caravanning. Normal passenger cars are fine, but our route in the field will be off trail so wear suitable clothing (hiking boots, long sleeved shirts and pants). This will be a full day trip. Let's go discover things! Join Vikki Jackson on an off trail, bush whacking trip into some obscure, but stunning wetlands in the upper North Fork Nooksack River drainage. Be ready to be wowed- but you will have to earn it. Please register with Vikki at 360.319-6988.

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If you would like to join WNPS

Please return the membership application form to:
Washington Native Plant Society
6310 NE 74th St., Suite 215E
Seattle, WA 98115

Please make checks payable to WNPS
(outside US add \$5 to dues)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Koma Kulshan Chapter Total Enclosed: _____

Membership Category:

\$20 Budget (Senior/Student)

\$40 Individual

\$55 Family

\$75 Club/Institution

The Koma Kulshan chapter of WNPS is dedicated to the preservation and study of native plants and vegetation of Washington State and the education of the public to the values of native flora and its habitat.

WNPS -- Koma Kulshan Chapter
Newsletter Editor
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