



Sarracenia

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Newsletter of the Wildflower Society of Newfoundland and Labrador

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General Announcements:

Dues for the upcoming year are now payable. Our membership runs from September to September. The \$10 fee may be paid to our Treasurer Carmel Conway at the regular meetings or use the membership form at the back of the newsletter to send your payment. Checks are payable to The Wildflower Society of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our mailing address is on the provided form.

Any articles from members would be welcomed and may be sent via email to myself at tboland@nfld.com or via regular mail

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Fall Program

November 1, 2000: Wildflowers of Greenland Speaker: Dr. John Myers

Dr. Myers is a relatively new faculty member in MUN's Dept. of Earth Sciences. He has traveled and photographed wildflowers in Australia, Labrador and Greenland. His presentation should show us some familiar faces as well as a few new ones.

December 6, 2000: Annual Christmas Social and Member's Slide Show

This meeting is an opportunity to share your slides or photos taken over the past summer. Have any unidentified plants? Now's the chance to have them IDed! To help in the festivities, please bring along some goodies.

**All meetings are at 8 pm at the MUN
Botanical Gardens, Mt. Scio Rd., St. John's.**

2000-2001 Executive

Howard Clase	President	753-6415
Glenda Quinn	Vice-pres.	834-8588
Todd Boland	Editor	753-6027
Carmel Conway	Treasurer	722-0121
Maggie Piranian	Secretary	895-3904
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A Message from your President

After what seemed to me a successful series of summer field trips concluding with a wonderful walk and barbecue at Ross Traverse's home we have started our winter program, which has the unplanned theme "Wildflowers and Geology". After a very enjoyable visit to Labrador, courtesy of Bruce Ryan in October, another geologist, John Myers, will take us even further north to Greenland on November 1st. Our talks for the first few months of the third millennium are still in the planning stage, but they will include one by your editor, Todd Boland on plants of the serpentine, and one by Nathalie Djan-Chekar, subject to be announced. We should be very happy to have suggestions or volunteers for the other two meetings.

Probably the most significant botanical event of the summer though was the release of a preliminary version of the new "Annotated Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Newfoundland and Labrador." by Susan J. Meades, Stuart G. Hay, and Luc Brouillet. Eventually it will be available on line on the internet, but at present it is only in the form of a set of Word Perfect files. Copies are available on request, but remember it is still being revised. It is a wonderful piece of work, which must have involved innumerable hours of painstaking research and will be invaluable to all serious botanists interested in the plants of our province. The names are based on "Flora North America" and it includes the latest changes in taxonomy, with some surprising name changes and reorganization of families. It is hoped that a printed version similar to Rouleau's Checklist, which was available from the MUN Botanic Garden will be produced in due course. More of this in a later issue of *Sarracenia*.

Following a suggestion from Henry Mann we are proposing that next year's big field trip be based on St John's and the Avalon Peninsula during the week of July 21 - 28. We will mostly sleep in our own beds and hopefully be able to provide accommodation for most visiting out of town members, but, in the tradition of our other trips we'll try to all eat out together each evening. Most of the trips will be day trips with perhaps one or two overnight stays, e.g. in Trepassey so that we can explore places like Cape Race without too much driving in one day. We could also make use of the facilities in the Botanic Garden or University for talks and slide shows. This format will enable people who cannot commit a full week to join us on one or two of our day trips. Full details will be worked out during the winter and we should be pleased to receive suggestions.

The Wildflowers of Point Amour *by Todd Boland*

Over the last ten years I have been fortunate to be able to visit the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland many times. This area of the Island is rich in many arctic-alpine plants, which, as a rock garden enthusiast, are among my favorite group of plants. Many times as I drove along the section of the Viking Trail between the communities of St. Barbe and Eddies Cove East, I longed for the opportunity to visit the adjacent area of SE Labrador and see how its plants compared to those of the Island. The shores of Labrador are easily visible from St. Barbe, there being only 17 kilometers separating the Island of Newfoundland from the Labrador coast. A scan of the Labrador coast with binoculars will present one particular dominant feature; the Lighthouse of Point Amour.

This past August I was invited to visit SE Labrador. From St. Barbe, it is a 90 minute ferry ride across the Strait of Belle Isle to the Quebec port of Blanc Sablon. From there, you can drive the coastal road from Blanc Sablon to Red Bay, Labrador, the famous whaling station of the Basques during the 1600's. Partway along this route is the tallest lighthouse in Atlantic Canada, the Point Amour Lighthouse. Having seen this lighthouse from the Island side, I was anxious to investigate it and the surrounding area.

The first feature which struck me was the difference in the landscape on the Labrador side of the Straits. Along the adjacent shore of the Island of Newfoundland, the landscape is dominated by relatively flat limestone barrens. On the Labrador side, the landscape is composed of several terraces separated by large, U-shaped valleys where glaciers once ruled. Physically, the Point Amour area is composed of three terraces; a rather shallow terrace along the shore, then a 6m cliff rising to a second, wide terrace, upon which the lighthouse is built, then another 6 m rise to a large third terrace that eventually blends with the coastal hills. Upon initial view, the vegetation is typical barrens around the lighthouse but to the left of the lighthouse is a large gravelly area that looks like an abandoned parking lot. The story behind this 'gravel parking lot' will be discussed later.

When I first arrived, I did the 'tourist' thing by touring the lighthouse. The Strait of Belle Isle has treacherous waters due to shallow submerged rocks, persistent fogs and in late winter-early spring, arctic ice. Many a ship ended its days by wrecking near Point Amour. So early on, the Dominion of Canada made arrangements with Newfoundland to build a series of lighthouses along the Straits (Newfoundland was not part of Canada until 1949). The Point Amour

lighthouse was among the most intense undertakings of the time. The lighthouse took three years to complete and was made from limestone rock quarried about a quarter of a kilometer north of the present lighthouse location. The base of the lighthouse has walls six feet thick and rises to a height of 109 feet (not surprising that its visible from the adjacent coast of Newfoundland). The lighthouse was completed in 1857. Today, visitors can ascend to the top of the lighthouse and be rewarded with a wonderful view across the Straits. The lighthouse keepers' home has been reconstructed and there are exhibits that portray the history of the Labrador Straits. A craft shop is also located on the premises. For any visitors to the Labrador Straits, a stop by the Point Amour Lighthouse is a must.

Once the lighthouse tour was complete, I could concentrate on the plant life around it. The first area to check was the shallow coastal terrace. This first terrace ranges in width from 10 to 30 m from the ocean to the first step-like cliff. The vegetation here was dominated by a lush carpet of grasses intermixed with scotch lovage (*Ligusticum scoticum*), hemlock parsley (*Conioselinum chinense*) and seaside angelica (*Coelopleurum lucidum*). Of course, visiting the area in August meant that many plants were past flowering. However, in peak bloom were scattered drifts of riverbeauty, *Epilobium latifolia*. In areas where the grass was thinner, the vegetation was dominated by large mats of swedish bunchberry (*Cornus suecica*) which was orange-red with its abundant berries. Closer to the shore, there were patches of typical Newfoundland seaside plants such as sea lungwort (*Mertensia maritima*), false arnica (*Senecio pseudarnica*), beach-head iris (*Iris setosa* spp. *canadensis*) and sea chickweed (*Honkenya peploides*). Below the low coastal cliff grew fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*) and cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*). Poking out among the cracks in the cliff were delicate clumps of fragile fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*).

The second terrace varies in width from 100 to 350 m. Here the vegetation contained typical coastal barren plants dominated by dwarf shrubs such as sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolium*), sweet gale (*Myrica gale*), Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), black crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) and mountain cranberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*). This later species is locally called partridgeberry and is a Newfoundland delicacy. Its tart berries are used for jams, jellies, pies, muffins and even wine! Another common shrub in the area was alpine bilberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*) locally called ground-hurts. This blueberry relative has similar blue berries that are even sweeter than the standard blueberry. Perhaps the most abundant of all were the cloudberry, *Rubus chamaemorus*, locally called bakeapple. The large amber-colored raspberry-like fruit of this plant is another Island delicacy prized for jams and wines and nowhere do they grow in more abundance than in SE Labrador.

Among these more familiar plants were some that are uncommon or absent from barren areas near my hometown of St. John's, Newfoundland. Dominant among these were dwarf birch (*Betula pumila*) and arctic willow (*Salix arctophila*). Also common were plumboys (*Rubus arcticus*) with sweet shiny-red raspberry-like fruit on 10 cm plants. One thing I quickly realized was that this area is full of wonderful berry-producing plants, and a trip in late August meant I could reap the benefits!

Herbaceous plants were far from dominant in this area. The most prevalent plants among the dwarf shrubs were alpine bistort (*Polygonum viviparum*), extremely dwarf plants of hemlock-parsley (many only 10 cm high) and yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus cristigalli*).

However, the vast majority of interesting arctic-alpines grew in the adjacent gravel area to the left of the lighthouse. This area was originally to be the starting point of an undersea tunnel that was to join Labrador to the Island of Newfoundland. The tunnel was to be constructed to allow power lines to cross the Strait of Belle Isle, but after penetrating a few hundred feet, an impenetrable granite layer permanently canceled the project. The hole was filled in and the area leveled and left to go back to nature. Not surprisingly, this area offers plant species quite different from the surrounding barrens. As a rule, many arctic-alpine plants are rather poor competitors and could not hope to compete with the more vigorous barren plants dominant in the undisturbed areas. Dwarf shrubs were mostly absent from this gravel area allowing the arctic-alpines to dominate.

Most common were the three-toothed cinquefoil (*Potentilla tridentata*) with its deep green shiny tufts of leaves and small wiry stems topped with white flowers. Scattered among this cinquefoil was another species, Crantz's cinquefoil, *Potentilla crantzii* (aka *P. neumanniana*), with bright yellow-orange flowers on prostrate 10 cm stems. Overlooked unless on your hands-and-knees, were diminutive plants of knotty pearlwort (*Sagina nodosa*) with multitudes of tiny white flowers held flat to the ground. In full bloom during late August were the blossoms of our gentian-relatives, the marsh felwort (*Lomatogonium rotatum*) and the common felwort (*Gentianella amarella*). The former produces porcelain-blue star-like flowers on 10-15 cm plants while the latter have more tubular mauve to lilac blossoms on 15-20 cm plants. Looking like a dwarf version of the common yarrow, were plants of the northern yarrow, *Achillea borealis* (aka *A. millefolium* ssp. *lanulosa*). Here and there were short yellow spires of bottlebrush-like flowers produced by stunted hairy goldenrod, *Solidago hispida*. Along the roadside to the lighthouse there were dark-green prostrate clumps of foliage produced

by two locoweeds, *Oxytropis johannensis* (aka *O. campestris* var. *johannensis*) and *O. foliolosa* (aka *O. deflexa* var. *foliolosa*). The former still had a few scattered stems topped by indigo-blue, pea-like flowers in rounded heads. The scattered plants of arctic willow and dwarf birch were evidence that the area would soon revert back to typical barren-land vegetation.

Closer to the cliff that separates the second terrace from the third, grew a band of stunted, windswept balsam fir that we locally call tuckamoore. The trees in this area close to the shore rarely exceed a meter or two. The vegetation atop the third terrace was again

dominated by dwarf shrubs that was interspersed with tuckamoore. Typical coniferous forest does not occur until well inland from the sea.

The several hours I spent at the Point Amour Lighthouse was everything I had hoped it would be. Wonderful plants, breathtaking scenery and a lighthouse second-to-none. Many tourists visit the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland each summer, but few make the jaunt to nearby SE Labrador. With a convenient ferry ride from St. Barbe and good accommodations in nearby L'anse-au-Claire, an overnight detour to this untamed area of Labrador is well worth the minimal effort involved. And if fortunate to be there in late August, be sure to bring a container for berry-picking!

Please find enclosed \$10.00 for my membership fee for September 2000-August 2001.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number (home and/or work): _____

E-Mail: _____

Mail To:

The Wildflower Society of Newfoundland and Labrador
 c/o MUN. Botanical Gardens
 Memorial University of Newfoundland
 St. John's, NF, A1C 5S7

RARE NEWFOUNDLAND WILDFLOWERS 18

In order to develop a better understanding of the distribution of our rare plants, especially those of the West Coast, a series of these sheets will be made available to interested naturalists. Each sheet will deal with a single species known only from a few localities on the Island. Please report any sightings of rare plants to Henry Mann, Biology Department, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Corner Brook, Newfoundland, A2H 6P9, or call 637-6245 (work) or 686-2340 (home). Records will be kept in the S.W.G. College Herbarium.

Plant Name: Common - Velvet Bells, Alpine Bartsia

Scientific - Bartsia alpina L.

Characteristics:

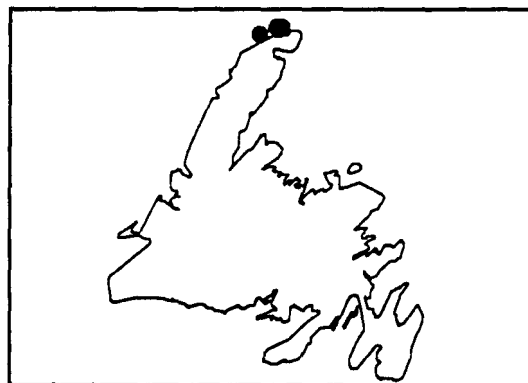
This is a small herbaceous plant usually from 5 to 20 centimeters tall with opposite leaves attached directly to the stem without petioles. The whole plant is purple-tinged and is more or less hairy especially the upper parts in the flowering region. Each tubular flower is a velvety deep purple, the uppermost lip forming a hood over the 4 stamens, and the lower lip with three lobes. The anthers of the stamens are white-hairy and contrast with the dark color of the corolla. Flowers are produced in a tight leafy cluster at the top of the stem with often one flower in each axil of the leaf-pair directly below the cluster.

Habitat:

Open limestone barrens in slightly sheltered locations on turf or peaty patches with other low herbaceous vegetation.

Flowering Season:

Plants have been seen in bloom from early to late July in the Cape Norman area.



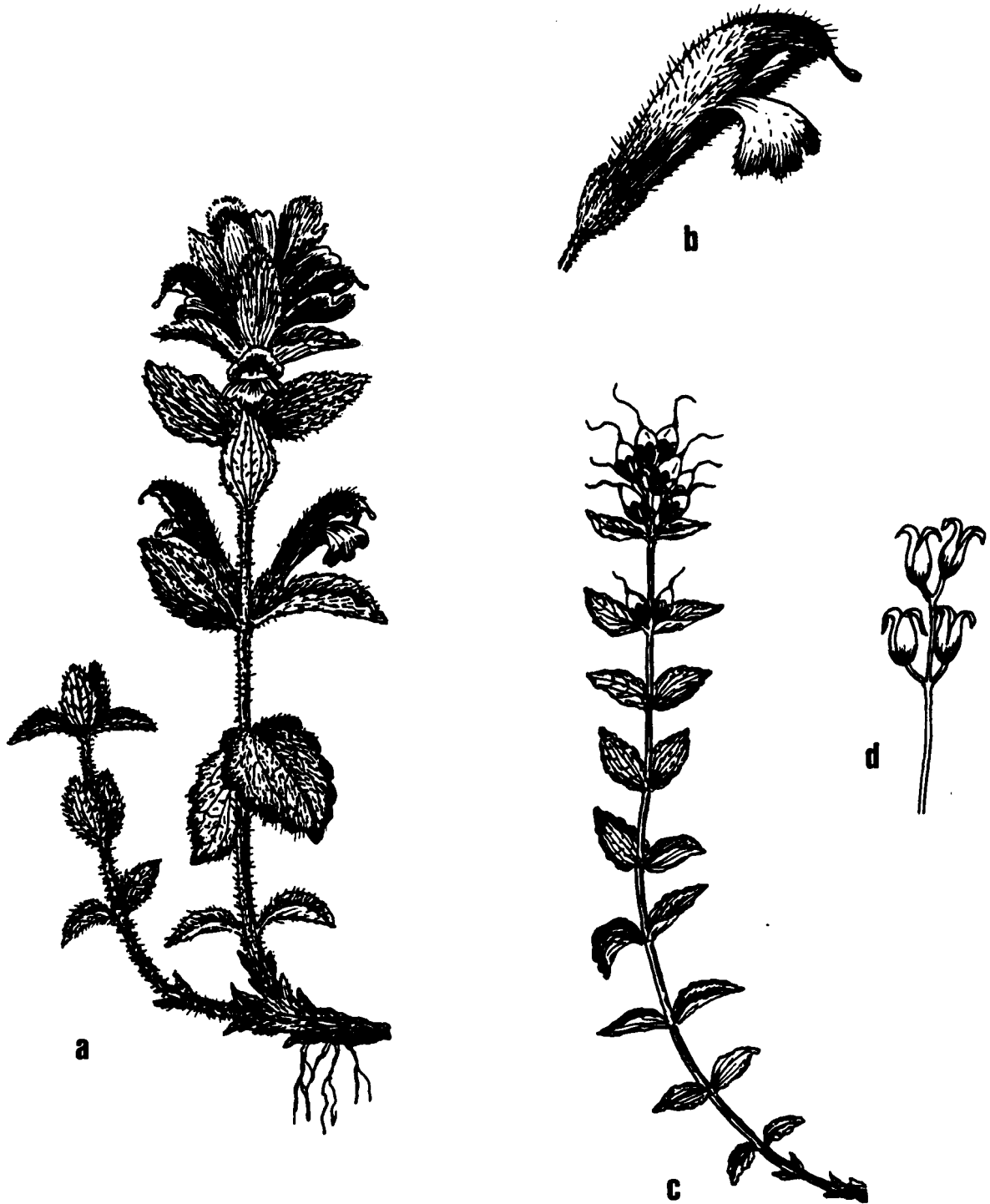
(Distribution Map After Bouchard et al 1991)

Known Distribution:

This is an arctic species of eastern North America and Greenland extending into northern Europe and Asia. On the Island it is only known from coastal areas with subarctic climate on the tip of the Great Northern Peninsula such as Burnt Cape and Cape Norman.

Diagrams: See reverse side of page.

A photograph and description are also found in Bill and June Tifford's book "A Traveller's Guide to Wildflowers of Newfoundland, Canada", Flora Frames, St. John's (1995), pp. 48-49.



Bartsia alpina L. (Velvet Bells). a. entire plant. b. single flower with stigma protruding from beneath the hood, and a 3-lobed lower lip. c. plant with mature capsule fruits. d. old capsules after seeds have been shed.

RARE NEWFOUNDLAND WILDFLOWERS 19

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Plant Name: Common - Flame Lousewort, Fiery Lousewort

Scientific - Pedicularis flammea L.

Characteristics:

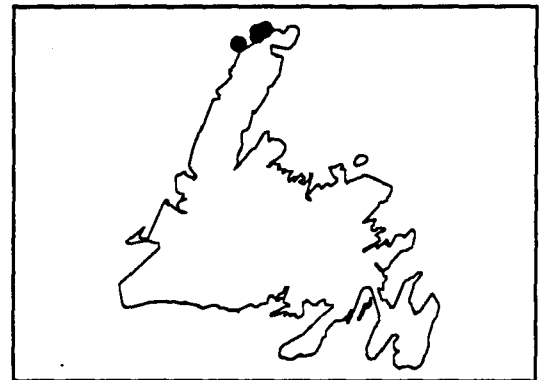
A small herbaceous plant of about 5 to 20 centimeters high with a single unbranched stem. The elongate leaves have characteristic lobing and most arise from the base of the stem with a few smaller ones further up., Leaves and stem have a reddish or bronze color. The flower has a three-lobed lip and an extended "helmet" which encloses the stamens and pistil. In full bloom the flower is bright yellow with a red, reddish-purple, or reddish brown "flame" on the tip of the helmet.

Habitat:

Moist peaty or gravelly areas in the limestone barrens.

Flowering Season:

From the little phenological data available for Newfoundland, the blooming season appears to be from mid-June to mid-or late July.



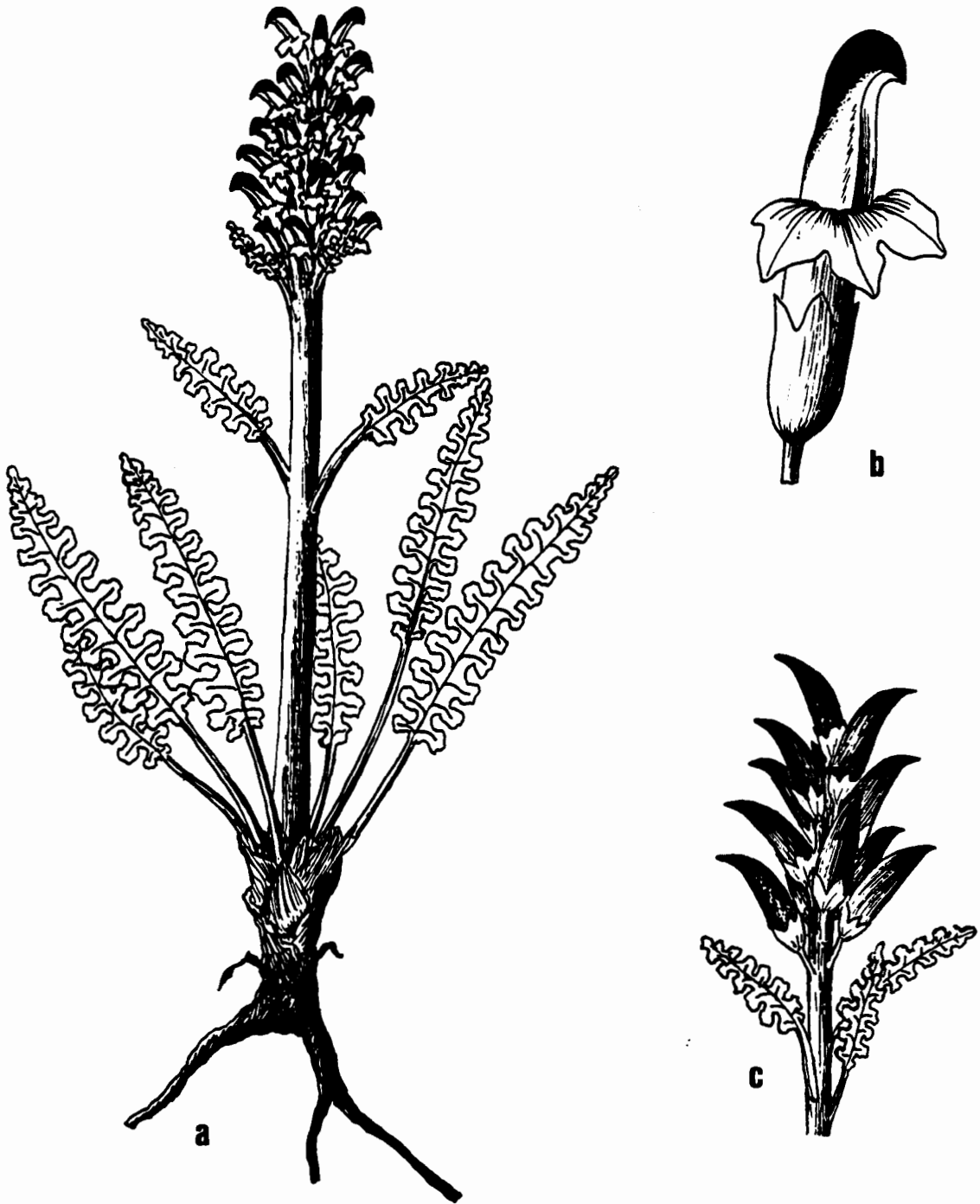
(Distribution Map After Bouchard et al 1991)

Known Distribution:

This is an arctic-alpine species of northern North America and northern Europe. In Insular Newfoundland it is known only from the sub-arctic climates of the coastal limestone barrens in the Strait of Belle Isle and the tip of the Great Northern Peninsula.

Diagrams: See reverse side of page.

It is difficult to find good drawings and/or photographs of our arctic-alpine species. Most are not included in the Peterson or Newcomb's guides or other popular literature. Many are illustrated in A.E. Porsild and W.J. Cody (1980), "Vascular Plants of the Continental Northwest Territories, Canada", but the diagrams are small, sometimes lacking in important detail.



Pedicularis flammea L. (Flame Lousewort). a. plant in flower. b. single flower with flame-tipped hood or "helmet". c. upper portion of plant with mature fruits.

RARE NEWFOUNDLAND WILDFLOWERS 20

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Plant Name: **Common -** Chives, Chibbles, Ciboulette

Scientific - Allium schoenoprasum L. var. laurentianum Fern.

Characteristics:

Plants 20 to 60 centimetres tall arising from small bulbs. The leaves are basal, round in cross section, and hollow. Leaves of the native variety (var. laurentianum) are usually shorter than the flowering stalk, whereas they tend to be longer in the cultivated variety (var. schoenoprasum). Flowers are clustered into an umbel at the top of a single flowering stalk. Individual flowers have 3 petals and 3 sepals, both of which are coloured and look similar. Petals and sepals range from pale pink to deep pink/purple in the native variety. Crushed leaves have a distinct onion odour.

Habitat:

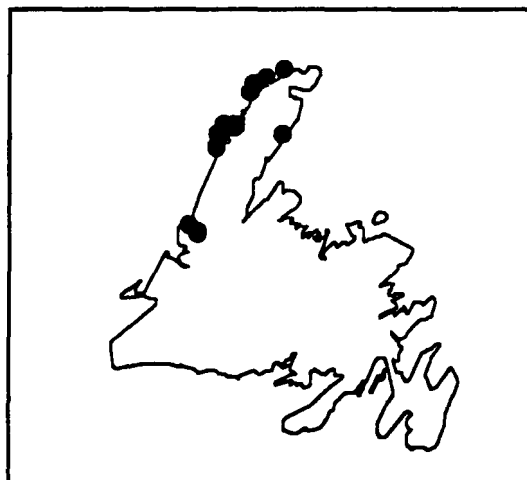
Limestone barrens, calcareous cliffs, shores, and other exposed calcareous sites.

Flowering Season:

Late June to early August.

Known Distribution:

Recorded from Bonne Bay and north on the Great Northern Peninsula. The common cultivated variety (var. schoenoprasum) may also occasionally be found around abandoned homesteads and waste places. Native chives range across Canada, especially the north, and across Eurasia.



(Distribution Map After Bouchard et al 1991)

Diagrams: **See reverse side of page.**

This species is not illustrated in the common wildflower guides of our area, (Peterson and Newcomb's).



Allium schoenoprasum L. (Chives).

- a. entire plant. In the native variety (var. *laurentianum*) the leaves are usually somewhat shorter than illustrated relative to the flowering stalk.
- b. an individual flower with similar showy sepals and petals.