

Sarracenia

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Newsletter of the Wildflower Society of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Contents

AGM December 7th 2011.....	26
5th Annual Photography Competition – 2012.....	27
Uncommon Wildflowers of Newfoundland 10: Purple Loosestrife (<i>Lythrum salicaria</i> L.) By Henry Mann.....	28
Joseph Banks Exhibition at The Rooms.	30
Book review - "Flower Hunters" by Mary & John Gribbin By Carmel Conway.....	31



Purple Loosestrife and habitat. (see p. 29) H. Mann

AGM December 7th 2011

At the delayed 2011 Annual General meeting the Board of Directors for 2011/12 was elected, and our Treasurer, Karen Herzberg, presented the financial statement for the financial year ending in March 2011.

This was followed by a Christmas Social and the annual members slide show collated, as usual, by John Maunder. There was no photo competition in 2011, but this is being restored for 2012, details to be found on page 27 of this issue.

The editor apologises for the lateness of this issue caused by a shortage of material and personal problems.

The 2011-12 Executive		
President:	Carmel Conway abcrrhynd@nl.rogers.com	722-0121
Vice-President:	John Maunder	335-2462
Past President:	Glenda Quinn	834-8588
Secretary:	Heather Saunders	368-6935
Treasurer & Membership Sec:	Karen Herzberg karenherzberg@warp.nfld.net	753-6568
Sarracenia Editor:	Howard Clase	753-6415
Board Members:	Judith Blakeley, John Bridson, Todd Boland Daphne Gillingham, Helen Jones Glen Ryan, Ross Traverse Brenda Turner, Roger White.	

Financial Statement as of March 31, 2011

Assets:

2011	2010	2009	2008
\$2,033.38	\$2,084.13	\$1,044.42	\$318.93

Revenue:

Membership fees	\$714.50
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Disbursements:

Wine for speakers gifts and Xmas party	\$202.60
Gifts to John Maunder and Wilf Nicholls	\$228.00
Website for 3 years (until Aug. 2013)	\$242.05
Newsletter costs (print and postage)	\$69.20
Bank fees (\$1.95 monthly for 12 months)	\$23.40
Total	\$765.25

Revenue	\$714.50
Disbursements	-\$765.75
Deficit of Revenue over Disbursements	-\$50.75

Balance from 2010	\$2,084.13
	-\$50.75
Balance for Mar. 2011	\$2,033.38

Karen Herzberg - Treasurer

5th Annual Photography Competition – 2012

Rules:

1. Entrants should submit their images **by Oct 15th, 2012.**
2. **Six Categories -**
 - a) **Portraits - Flowers:** including grass, sedge, rush, and conifer flowers.
 - b) **Portraits - All other plants:** ferns, horse-tails, quillworts, seeds, berries, old cones, mosses, liverworts, algae (including seaweed), mushrooms, lichens, buds, leaves, bark.
 - c) **Plant/animal interactions:** including mushrooms & lichens – but NOT people!
 - d) **Macro:** plant, mushroom, lichen close-ups (original subject area should have been no larger than a postage stamp)
 - e) **Plant artistic/abstract compositions:** including, mushrooms, lichens, (subject must be recognizable.)
 - f) **Plants in their Environment:** scenic photos showing plants in their broader surroundings (includes wide vistas but not close ups.)

A MAXIMUM of TWO entries per category. Total number of images which can be entered (all categories included) is 12.

3. All plants photographed must be "native" species, or naturally-growing introductions - NOT cultivated exotics, or horticultural varieties.
4. No geographic restrictions, but photos taken in Newfoundland are encouraged.
5. No date-taken restrictions.
6. All entries must be digital.
7. Photos should NOT have been submitted in a previous annual photo contest, or to any previous Christmas Slide Show.
8. Photos should be submitted in 1024 x 768 .jpg format if at all possible (for those who cannot manage this, John will adjust the images to that standard at his end).

(Why the 1024 x 768 pixel standard? it's to keep the presentation's total file size manageable.)

9. Entrants must clearly state which category each submitted photo is meant to be in. Judges will be free to disqualify any image they feel is in the wrong category.

Submitting entries:

1. Submissions via e-mail are OK, but remember to keep the total file size of any e-mail, including attached photos, to below 5 megabytes; this may require the sending of more than one e-mail.
2. The preferable photo submission method is CD or DVD, using "snail mail" (i.e. Canada Post), or direct hand delivery.
3. Request "confirmation of receipt" from compiler.
4. Contest Compiler: John Maunder,
P.O. Box 250, Pouch Cove, NL, A0A 3L0
e-mail: jem@nl.rogers.com

Remember that the contest is about having fun, getting out and seeing new things, and honing one's photography skills.

Good Luck, and Happy Shooting!

Snap it like Lydia!



Member Lydia Snellen with 27 years of awards.

Uncommon Wildflowers of Newfoundland 10: Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria* L.)

By Henry Mann

Beautiful, productive - appreciate!
Horrible, destructive - eradicate!
Take your pick. Which you choose will depend upon what you have been told, what you believe, and to which "lobby" you belong, consciously or unconsciously. Upon "Googleing" the name "Purple Loosestrife" it becomes clear that in thousands of sites we are being told the second option above; it is difficult to find a site promoting any virtues of this species. Yet its beauty as a

wildflower and a garden perennial is unquestionable, and if we dig deeply into the literature we find that it is a superb honey plant producing copious nectar and premium honey for the bee industry. I have stood and observed in a patch of blooming plants on a warm August day and was amazed at the audible hum of uncounted insect species visiting the tall magenta inflorescences. When its detesters claim that it has no redeeming qualities, only destructive

ones in wetland habitats, do they not consider the insect and small bird community of any value in the ecosystem?

Purple Loosestrife is a native of Europe introduced to North America in the 1800's. It has dispersed across much of the continent and in favourable climates and habitats can form dense stands which decrease habitat desirability for waterfowl and some wildlife, making it a species of concern for wildlife managers.



Figure 2: Loosestrife has a compact slender inflorescence.



Figure 4: Fireweed, *Chamerion angustifolium*, for comparison.



Figure 3: Loosestrife petals tend to be somewhat wrinkled and the style is relatively small.



Figure 5: A Fireweed flower has 4 broad petals, 8 stamens and a conspicuous protruding style with a four-parted stigma.

It is a perennial herb of a meter or more in height with several stems arising from a rootstock (Figure 1 – see cover). Leaves are opposite, entire and sessile on square stems. Plants are usually pubescent especially in upper parts. Flowers are produced in elongate, narrow spike-like clusters (Figure 2). Each flower has 5 to 7 often twisted or wrinkled magenta petals (Figure 3). Its stature, growth habit and flower colour is similar to that of Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium*) and might be mistaken by the casual observer from a distance (Figure 4). However, loosestrife flowering “spikes” are narrower and more compact and flower colour is a deeper magenta. Individual flowers of Fireweed have only 4 broader petals and leaves of Fireweed are alternate on rounded stems (Figure 5). Purple Loosestrife grows in wet habitats, ditches, shores and shallow water, whereas Fireweed grows in drier open forest habitats.

Seeds of Purple Loosestrife are tiny with no special adaptations for dispersal. They are usually

dispersed within a watershed by flowing water, but are small enough for limited wind dispersal probably not more than tens of meters. Plants can sometimes be encountered in wet upland situations where water and wind transport is not likely so other means of seed dispersal must also occur, perhaps by birds or by animals such as muskrat, beaver, otter and others that also travel extensively across upland areas. Of course, human dispersal is often a factor as well. This species, its cultivars and close hybridizing relatives have had a long association with humans in their herbal and showy perennial flower gardens. Plants do not naturally spread vegetatively by roots or rhizomes, but rootstocks will send up more stems each spring or after stems are cut during growing season.

Although still rather uncommon provincially, more sightings are being noticed across the Island. Whether it is actually increasingly dispersing or just being more often noticed by botanically aware individuals is not clear, perhaps both. The species

has been known from the Corner Brook area since at least the 1940's, but still shows no indication of being an overly aggressive invasive as it has in the more moderate climates on the mainland. It tends to grow in the same habitats as our Common Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) and Cattail is showing much more aggression and vigour in our wetlands than Lythrum, at least here in the Humber Valley, which is just opposite reports from more moderate mainland climates. I have not yet seen a location in Newfoundland where Purple Loosestrife has formed dense monocultural stands in our wetlands crowding out other native vegetation and creating a so-called “biodiversity wasteland”. For much of the 20th century the prevailing attitude and wisdom can be summarized as, “Purple Loosestrife threatens the biodiversity and function of native ecosystems”. This “wisdom” has been considerably promoted by the hunting and trapping lobbies who noted that concentrated stands of loosestrife somewhat deceased (not destroyed!) desirability of the aquatic

habitat for waterfowl, muskrats, beaver, and other wildlife of direct economic interest to humans. Tales of danger, destruction, invasion, and such make good readership and are often the ticket to fame and fortune, much more popular and exciting reading than the virtues of a pretty wildflower. Until fairly recently there were few basic ecological studies carried out that might challenge this conventional "wisdom". From more recent literature it appears that in some instances Purple Loosestrife actually increases biodiversity of vegetation, birds, insects, and no doubt other groups not so easily observed and measured. What Purple Loosestrife takes from hunters, trappers and wildlife

managers, it gives back to the honey industry, to birdwatchers, wildflower enthusiasts, gardeners, and those interested in its considerable medicinal virtues. Such is normally the way of nature, the dynamic give and take in an ever changing biosphere. It then appears that in at least some situations the above statement might be revised to read, "Purple Loosestrife "enhances" the biodiversity and function of native ecosystems"! Recent research indicates that as Purple Loosestrife moves northward in Ontario it rapidly loses its vigour and fecundity. The same can probably be expected for Newfoundland where vigorous southern CFA's often meet their ecological limits in the climate and

hardy adapted native vegetation.

I suspect the species will eventually integrate into our native vegetation as another pretty wildflower and will not become "the doomsday weed from hell" as some label it elsewhere. But who knows? No one can precisely predict fifty, a hundred years or more down the road with dynamic ecosystems, changing climatic events or trends, introduced predators, pests, diseases, human ecosystem carnage, and a host of other unforeseen possibilities. We as naturalists can but watch and wonder at what unfolds before us.

Happy Botanizing!

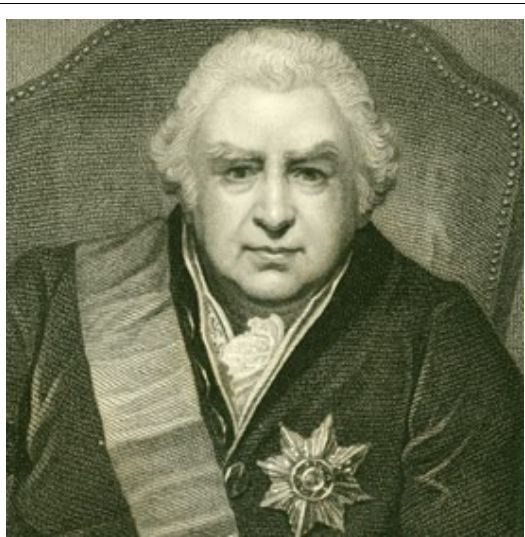
Joseph Banks Exhibition at The Rooms.

Nathalie Djan-Chekar will give us a tour of the present exhibition taking place on world famous botanist- Sir Joseph Banks.

Friday, March 16th at 11:00 am Meet at the Information Desk in the main lobby. Nathalie will begin with a talk on Sir Joseph Banks, followed by a tour of the exhibition.

Members will be reminded of this tour a week before, and if we could then confirm total attendance, Nathalie will arrange for a group pass for our Society.

We remind members that in Fall 1996/Winter 1997 Sarracenia (Volume 7, November 1, Past-President, Glenda Quinn wrote a very informative article on Sir Joseph Banks entitled : Joseph Banks: Naturalist Extraordinaire. Well worth a reread! Can be obtained from our website: www.wildflowersocietynl.ca/ .



Sir Joseph Banks
First Director of Kew Gardens

Excerpt from "Flower Hunters" by Mary & John Gribbin, (see below)

"There is little record of Bank's childhood, except that he spent four years at Harrow, and then, at the age of 13, went to Eton, where he was regarded as an amiable character who enjoyed sport and outdoor activities, but had no academic pretensions. Many years later, he told a friend that his interest in botany had been awakened a year after he joined Eton, when he had gone swimming in the river with some friends. Lingerin in the evening sunshine and the last to get dressed, he was walking back alone through a lane with high banks on both sides where wild flowers were growing in profusion. Struck by their beauty in the light of the setting Sun, he decided at that moment to learn everything he could about plants."

Book review - "Flower Hunters" by Mary & John Gribbin

(320 pp. Oxford University Press 2009, \$21.95)

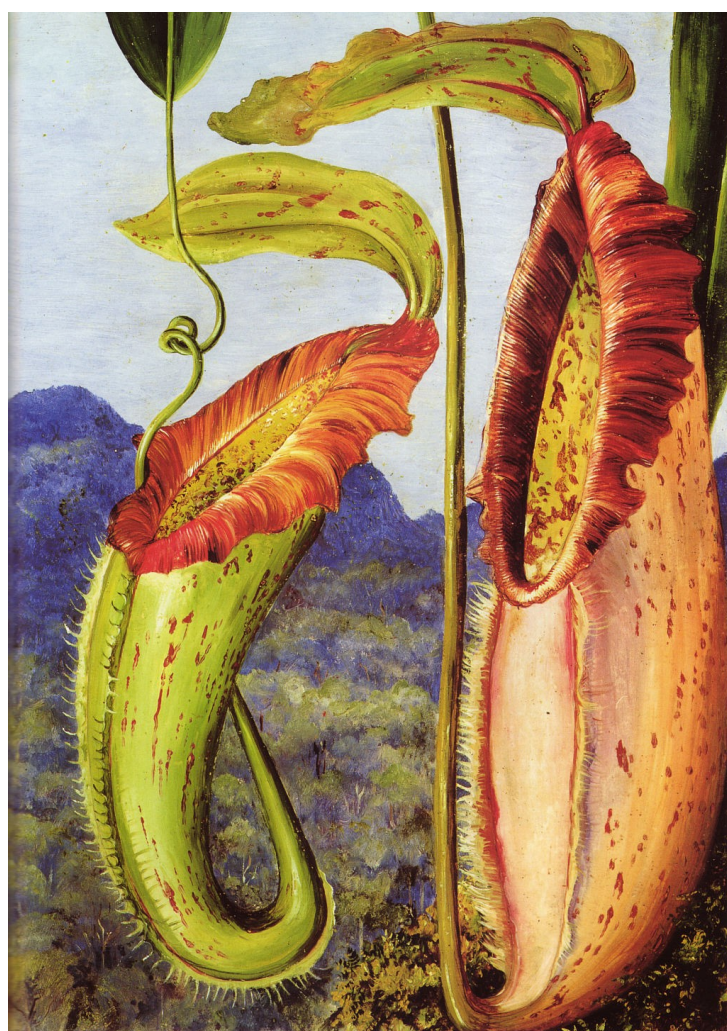
By Carmel Conway

This is a great book for any amateur wildflower enthusiast! While most of us know a little about the famous botanists, Carl Linnaeus, Joseph Banks, David Douglas, or Joseph Hooker, this book offers an in-depth analysis of their lives, their friendships and their rivalries. **Flower Hunters** makes for some incredible story-telling.

The book is divided into nine chapters, each one covering the life of a famous explorer or flower hunter. In particular, one chapter highlights the life of Marianne North, and her story, I found, was truly extraordinary, and one I would like to share with you.

Marianne North was born in 1830 in Hastings, England. She was the eldest daughter of a very prosperous land-owner and seven-term parliamentarian. Marianne's mother died when she was young. She subsequently became the mistress of her father's home, and mother to her younger siblings. Marianne was blessed with a remarkable voice, and developed a passion for singing. However, when her voice began to give way, she decided to take up flower painting, which was considered a respectable hobby for an affluent young woman of her time.

Marianne received painting



Nepenthes northiana
Painted by her and named after her.

instruction from the famous Dutch artist Miss van Fowinkel, and later one of Queen Victoria's flower painters Valentine Bartholomew. It was through her father she was introduced to Sir Joseph Hooker, who gave her specimens to sketch from Kew Gardens. This helped refine her skill as an artist. Through her acquaintance with Hooker along with her many travels with her widowed father Marianne developed a keen botanical interest. The death of her father proved devastating and

only through her passion for wildflower painting and near obsession with discovering new species of plant did her career as an amateur botanist truly come to life.

Marianne set off on a lifetime of travel - trekking across parts of Canada, United States, Jamaica, Japan, Ceylon, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Seychelles, Borneo, Japan, Chile and, on the insistence of Charles Darwin, to Australia. It is here she accumulated a record number of paintings. Her paintings of plants in their natural habitat gave the world a glimpse of plants inaccessible to most people. Imagine too, this was the period of great exploration and discovery under the harshest of conditions, especially for an unaccompanied woman! It was said that

Marianne started off in the company of a friend or acquaintance, only to abandon them partway through the trip. Without doubt, Marianne North's vast wealth provided her this unique opportunity with the assistance of guides who would carry her supplies. What is remarkable is that her early writing reveals a woman who despite tremendous physical hardship which played havoc on her health, never complained about her conditions, but revealed her to be a true explorer with insatiable curiosity, remarkable



***Banksia* sp.**
by Marianne North - named after Banks

endurance, and deep respect for native people. In fact, she could be considered perhaps one of the world's first environmentalists, as she made mention in her writing of the cutting of forests in North America, and its impact on native people.

North's volume of painting is vast. In 1879 Marianne gave her entire body of work to the Kew as a donation, offering the monies required to construct a gallery to house her collection. Her paintings are easily recognizable for their incredibly vivid colours and accuracy of plant detail.

Marianne also had a keen interest in zoology, as evidenced by the many birds, insects, fish and other animals in her paintings. Today, 832 of her 849 paintings are housed in her permanent gallery at the Kew. I would encourage all members to go visit the Kew Gardens website and enjoy her work.

Finishing the chapter, I could not help but think that as we set off on our wildflower adventures, how easy it is to give up due to inclement weather. We would do well to give some thought of this remarkable woman who could have easily lead a life of leisure. Marianne North has had several plants named in her honour including *Nepenthes northiana*, one of the largest pitcher plants. Marianne North died on August 30th. 1890, just short of her 60th birthday in Gloucestershire, England.

Should any member care to borrow this book, please contact me at: abcrhynd@nl.rogers.com.

Index to Scientific Names in Volume 19

Abies	Eriophorum	Ilex	Saponaria
balsamea.....6	russeolum.....8	mucronata.....7	officinalis.....17, 19, 20
Alliaria	Fritillaria	Limonium	Shepherdia
petiolata.....18	pubida.....21	carolinianum.....10, 12	canadensis.....20
Botrichium	Gaultheria	Lythrum	Solidago
virginianum.....23	hispidula.....21,22	salicaria.....28	sempervirens.....10
Centaurea	Geum	Matteuccia	Triglochin
stoebe.....5, 6	rivale.....1	struthiopteris.....23	maritima.....10
Chamerion	Glaux	Myrica	Tussilago
angustifolium.....29	maritima.....10	gale.....14	farfara.....8
Cornus	Heracleum	Onoclea	Typha
alternifolia.....1, 3, 4	mantegazzianum.....18	sensibilis.....23	latifolia.....29
canadensis.....16	maximum.....18, 24	Plantago	Vaccinium
	spondylium.....18, 24	maritima.....10	angustifolium.....7

(Scientific names without authorities follow: "Annotated Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Newfoundland and Labrador" by Susan J. Meades, Stuart G. Hay, and Luc Brouillet, 2000.)