

# Sarracenia

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Newsletter of the Wildflower Society of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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*Lathyrus pratensis* in habitat (see p 9.)

H. Mann

## Christmas meeting postponed

Since the Botanical Gardens is having such great success with its Merry & Bright Holiday Light Festival, they have decided to run the event for a longer period. As a result the Wildflower Society "Christmas get together and Slide Show", originally scheduled for December 11th, 2018, will be postponed until Tuesday January 8th, 2019 (weather permitting!).

The silver lining is that this postponement will give members extra time for Fall picture taking, and for selecting images for the slide show. John has set a deadline of December 1, 2018 for photo submissions ... although the earlier you send your photos to him the better. Guidelines for submission of photos will follow soon, although the guidelines will be pretty much the same as they were last year.

## Odds and Ends. By Howard Clase.

Here are some items that have come to my attention in recent months. During recent summers the media (both social and news) have been full of concern about the Giant Hogweed, *Heracleum mantegazzianum*. But I feel the threat of this plant has been exaggerated. There several native relatives especially *H. maximum*, the Cow



*Thermopsis* sp. in Trepassey. J. Cappelman

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Parsnip that contain the same toxin, albeit in lesser amounts, which are not known to have caused problems. Meanwhile, we are overlooking another alien whose threat is more invidious. Japanese Knotweed, or Mile-a-Minute, *Reynoutria japonica*, is a common weed of waste ground and sometimes deliberately planted (e.g. along sections of the Johnson Family Trail network by persons unknown). It or one of its close relatives is often planted as a wind break. In the U.K. this is considered a dangerous weed and it is illegal to propagate it in any way – you cannot even send it to the dump. Why? Because it is known to damage the foundations of nearby buildings. Our president has sent me a link to an article entitled "[Japanese knotweed knocks £20bn \(\\$34bn\) off value of UK property market](#)". Maybe our local politicians should be made aware of this!

John Maunder sent out a request for pictures of a *Thermopsis* sp. that members of our Society saw at Trepassey while on a field trip in 2009. None could oblige, but one of the legions of birders resident in that part of the world, Julie Cappelman, supplied this picture. taken on July 5th this year. Apparently it's quite widespread in communities in that area. For many years there was a large patch of *Thermopsis montana* var. *ovata*, also known as the Mountain Golden Banner, or more loosely as Yellow Lupin, on a triangle of land opposite the cemetery on Mayor Avenue, but this spot has recently been built on. It is probably the same variety, but specimens are needed to make sure, which gives us an excuse for a field trip down that way next summer. It's native in the U.S. Rocky Mountains and sold in some nurseries as a garden plant.



Hunter Library Meadow Bank: 2018:07:10

One day in July when I was picking up a DVD from the Hunter Library (the one in the Arts & Culture Centre) I noticed that the banks between the parking lots had not been mowed and they were covered with wild flowers. There were at least 2 dozen species along this bank alone – but, sadly, almost no pollinating insects – I

noticed one bee! I commented on this on the “Wildflowers of Newfoundland” Facebook site, and maybe the powers that be had noticed, as sides of this bank were not mowed for a few more weeks although the top and all the other banks were soon shorn. The decline in pollinating insects has been particularly rapid during the past few years. and there is now an active campaign to try to reverse this. Maybe we should lobby to leave banks like this unmowed for much longer and even distribute a few bee hives around. A couple of mows a year should be enough. In this case the responsible authority would be the Pippy Park Commission.

A few days ago I came across a new site for the wall loving Ivy-leaved Toadflax, *Cymbalaria muralis*, growing in the mortar alongside the steps up from “The Sprout Cafe” on Duckworth St. - still in full flower in early November. It used to grow further along Duckworth near “Fred’s”, but seems to have died out there. John Maunder has also seen it in Terra Nova National Park. It’s probably a garden escape, but it seems well established in this new location.

*Cymbalaria muralis* on Duckworth 2018:11:08

## Uncommon Wildflowers of Newfoundland 19: Colourless Variants of Normally Coloured Wildflowers.

By Henry Mann, Phyllis Mann, Andrus Voitk and Maria Voitk

... Continued from Vol 22 #4, p 43.

Some species appear white, but upon close examination still exhibit a tiny amount of pigment and are therefore hypochromic. Included here are Marsh Cinquefoil (*Comarum palustre*) (Figure 13) and Hooker's Iris (*Iris hookeri*) (Figure 14) Some like Trailing Arbutus

(*Epigaea repens*) range from deep to very pale pink throughout their populations, but truly pure white albinos also seem to occur (compare Figures 15a & 15b). Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*) (Figure 16), is also hypochromic.



Figure 13: *Comarum palustre*, hypochromic form.



Figure 14: *Iris hookeri*: hypochromic form.

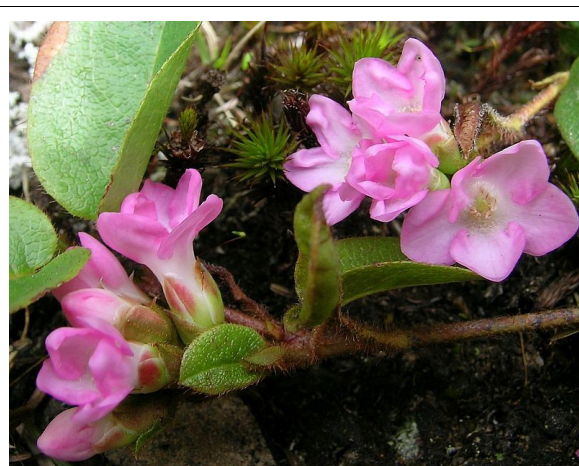


Figure 15a: *Epigaea repens*, pink form.

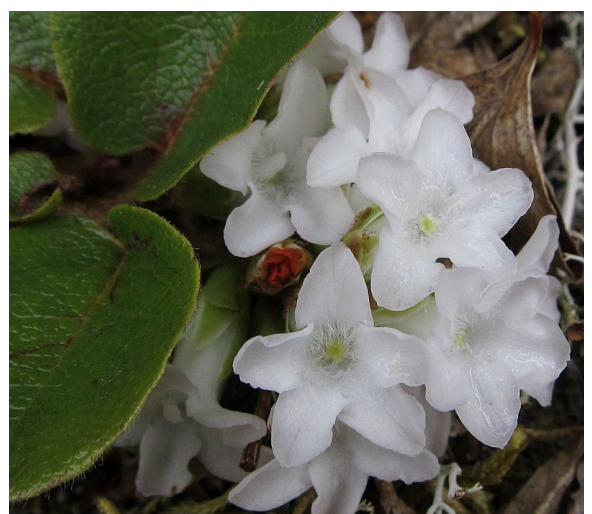


Figure 15b: *Epigaea repens*, albino form.



Figure 16: *Linnaea borealis*, hypochromic form.



Figure 17: *Ranunculus acris*, white mutant.

Common Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) is the only white form of a normally yellow flower we could find in our photo collections (Figure 17). White mutants of yellow flowers are less common than white forms of blue, purple and pink flowers. The reasons mainly lie in the biochemistry of plant pigments, their functions and their locations within plant cells, topics well beyond the scope of a natural history article of this type. Such do occasionally occur (e.g. Shrubby Cinquefoil, *Dasiphora fruticosa*, Marsh Marigold, *Caltha palustris*, etc.).

And just to turn the theme of this article “on its head”, we provide an example of Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) whose showy flower petals are normally white, but sometimes pink and even deeper “red” forms can be encountered (Figure 18). All three forms pictured here were growing in a coastal meadow on the Port au Port Peninsula.

Thanks to Urve Voitk for use of the *Myosotis sylvatica* photo in part 1 of this article..

Happy Botanizing!



Figure 18: *Achillea millefolium*: normal white petals, pink petals, and “red” form.

## Uncommon Wildflowers of Newfoundland 20: Yellow Vetchling/Meadow Pea (*Lathyrus pratensis* L.)

By Henry Mann

The vetchlings (*Lathyrus* spp.) are legumes having their terminal leaflet modified into a tendril. Like the true vetches (*Vicia* spp.) they are weak stemmed and attach themselves to each other or to nearby vegetation via their tendrils to maintain an upright stature. The two genera are very similar in appearance, chiefly distinguished in the botanical manuals by the orientation of hairiness on the pistil styles. Yellow Vetchling is a slender perennial 50 cm or so in height spreading by seed and underground rhizomes (Figure 1). The compound leaves consist of only two narrowly ovate leaflets and a terminal tendril. Stipules at the petiole base are conspicuously large with pointed tips and two basal points (Figure 2). The inflorescence consists of a cluster of 4-10 individual flowers with yellow corollas borne on a long stalk from a leaf axil. Fruits are typical pea-type pods (Figure 3).



Figure 2: *Lathyrus pratensis*, stipules.



Figure 3: *Lathyrus pratensis*, seed pods



Figure 1: *Lathyrus pratensis*, whole plant.

Yellow Vetchling is of Eurasian origin, now spread across much of Canada and the northern USA, mostly in the northeast. In his "Gray's Manual" Fernald states, "Naturalized from Europe, possibly native in W. Nfld." It does occur in Iceland and Greenland, so could potentially be one of the "amphi-Atlantic" species, although to my knowledge it has not been reported from Labrador (yet?).

In my 46 years of Newfoundland rambles I have only encountered this species three times, once in Tilt Cove on the Baie Verte Peninsula and at two locations in the Humber Valley. All three sites were grassy roadsides or



Figure 5: *Lotus corniculata*, leaves.



Figure 6: *Lotus corniculata*, flowers.

meadows probably having seen some disturbance in the past (see cover). To my knowledge there are only four other sites reported in the literature. It is easy to overlook this species when not in bloom. At a distance its inflorescences resemble those of Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), an introduced species that is becoming common along roadsides and meadows, whose dispersal has accelerated recently due to construction and hydro-seeding. Trefoil has compound leaves of normally 5 leaflets and no tendrils (Figure 5). Individual flowers of the tight cluster all arise from a central point (Figure 6), whereas in Yellow Vetchling they are attached singly, but still in a relatively tight cluster (Figure 7). To the discerning eye there is also a subtle colour difference; corollas of Trefoil are a deeper "golden" yellow, at least to my eyes.



Figure 7: *Lathyrus pratensis*, flowers.

Two other *Lathyrus* species occur in Insular Newfoundland and in Labrador, Beach Pea (*L. japonicus*) and Marsh Vetchling (*L. palustris*), both having flowers that are pink/purple. When not in bloom, leaves also distinguish the three. Beach Pea (Figure 8) has compound leaves of 2-5 pairs of broadly elliptical leaflets and Marsh Vetchling (Figure 9) has 2-4 pairs of elliptical leaflets. Yellow Vetchling only has one pair of narrowly elliptical leaflets (Figure 10). Our common Cow Vetch (*Vicia cracca*) has 8-12 pairs of leaflets.



Figure 8: *Lathyrus japonica*.



Figure 9: *Lathyrus palustris*.



Figure 10: *Lathyrus pratensis*, leaves.

Yellow Vetchling can produce thick meadow vegetation heartily re-growing each season for many years and has been used as a forage plant for livestock in Europe. Like many legumes it enriches the soil with nitrogen and is useful for erosion control. Little value has been reported for medicinal purposes, except in Spain its seeds have been used as a resolvent to reduce swelling and inflammation. It is also said to repel mice, although the context around this claim is not clear.

Happy Botanizing!

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