

Illinois Native Plant Society Northeast Chapter

EDITOR: LINDA M. MACKECHNIE

MAY 2016

A few words from the president

Hi Northeast Chapter!

Spring greetings from Urbana. I just noticed that one of my favorite spring wildflowers, wild blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), is blooming in the backyard of my apartment down here. As I sat down to write this note I was wondering if it's likely to be flowering yet in the Chicago area, so I opened my copy of *Plants of the Chicago Region* (POCR) to check the historic, observed flowering window for that species in the area. April 13 was the earliest date that it was found to be flowering (by the authors) with a midpoint bloom date around May 13. My fingers are crossed for it to be blooming up there by this Saturday when I'll be heading up to Elburn for our native plant walk at Johnson's Mound FP. This native species is abundant at Johnson's Mound and commonly found in woodlands throughout the region. While I know that it's widespread from having seen it in the field, information about its geographic distribution can also be found in POCR.



Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) photo by Andy Olnas

I'm plugging POCR because a big part of our mission at INPS is to share information about native plants. In the Chicago region, this book is widely considered the most comprehensive reference for local plants. Each species entry provides information about its nativity, habitats where it's found, and it even provides lists of other species that are commonly found in those same

communities. I've found that those associate species lists are a great resource for folks that are interested in broadening their familiarity with our common species. For example: if you can identify wild blue phlox and find it growing in a woodland habitat, there are 23 species listed in POCR that are commonly found in that same plant community type and it's likely that some of those species are present near your phlox population; if you encounter a plant nearby that you aren't familiar with, that list of associate species might include it.

From there, you can search for images of each species on the list that are unfamiliar and you may end up finding your unknown species. A couple reputable websites that have photos of plant species are the [USDA Plants Database](#) and the new [Illinois Plants](#) site hosted by the Illinois Natural History Survey- clicking those links will take you to the websites.

While that method is one way to learn plant species on your own, it's nice to be able to learn them in the field with other people. Our Chapter field trips are great opportunities to learn plants in a casual setting with people who range in experience from total beginners to folks that identify plants professionally. The next such field trip is scheduled for May 14 at Lake in the Hills Fen in McHenry County where volunteer Barbara Wilson will lead us on a tour of the site- we'll send out final trip details as they become available.

From June 3-5 we'll be down in Jackson County, IL for our INPS Annual Gathering and I hope you can join us there, too! The Southern Chapter is hosting the event and has a great agenda planned including field trips, a sedge identification workshop, guest speaker, tasty meals, and plenty of socializing. For anyone who hasn't been to Southern Illinois, it is almost like a different world down there with interesting topography and even more interesting plant communities. I'm sure the weekend will be worth the drive down from Northeast Illinois if you can make it. Registration is open and can be found along with information about the event at this link: [INPS Annual Gathering](#). I hope to see you there!

- Andy

[Editor's note: sadly, our Johnson's Mound field trip had to be postponed due to weather]

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Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) photo by Andy Olnas

Survey Says Update

Thanks to all of you who completed our survey (and to Christina Pierce for putting it together and compiling the results)! The questionnaire went out to over 200 NE Chapter members via email, netting us 65 responses. A few additional responses came via our newsletter and Facebook posts.

Most of the respondents were from Cook County, but DuPage, Lake, Kane, DeKalb, and McHenry were also represented. The executive group need a bit of time to digest and discuss the responses but it is clear many of **you would like more field trips and presentations**. We would too! And you can help us do that by volunteering to help organize or lead such events. Not sure how? Give us a shout ([email](#)) and we will help get the ball rolling.

Since I am the current editor, I'd like to say thanks for the positive comments. In response to some of your suggestions, I'll tackle feature articles that fall under my area of expertise (like the one immediately following this section) and ask any of you to let me know (via [email](#)) if you would be willing to write a short feature.

- Linda

Special Feature

Stop changing the names!

By Linda M. MacKechnie

Whether you are just starting to explore the local flora or are a seasoned expert, some of you may wonder why scientific plant names change. The short answer is "it's complicated". The longer answer is also "it's complicated". There will be a number of digressions and side notes in the text below. Skim forward now if you find these tedious.

Before we ask why names change, we should review the basic structure of a plant name. There are common (or vernacular) names and scientific names. Common names are easy to remember but are shunned by the scientific community because the same common name may be applied to:

1) Many species in the same genus. In Illinois, Yellow Wood Sorrel is used for *Oxalis dillenii* and *Oxalis stricta*.

2) Several species in different genera or families. Most bittersweet are members of the genus *Celastrus*, but false bittersweet is a *Solanum*.

3) A totally different genus! The common garden geranium belongs to the genus *Pelargonium* and bacopa is a member of the genus *Sutera*.

The scientific name is, theoretically, more precise, and (no pun intended) specific. We can thank Linnaeus (Carl von Linné) for the two-word form we currently use, composed of a genus name and a specific epithet, followed by the author. The name is not complete without the authority. Why? People disagree. If you wander through technical publications or the internet you may come across the same plant scientific name with different associated authorities! Usually this is because the authors disagree on what group of plants the name in question actually applies to. You might also see *auct. non.* (short for *auctorum nonnullorum*, which means "of some authors") or *sensu* (meaning "in the sense of"). These are used to indicate the incorrect usage of a name, usually one that has been misapplied. For instance, let's

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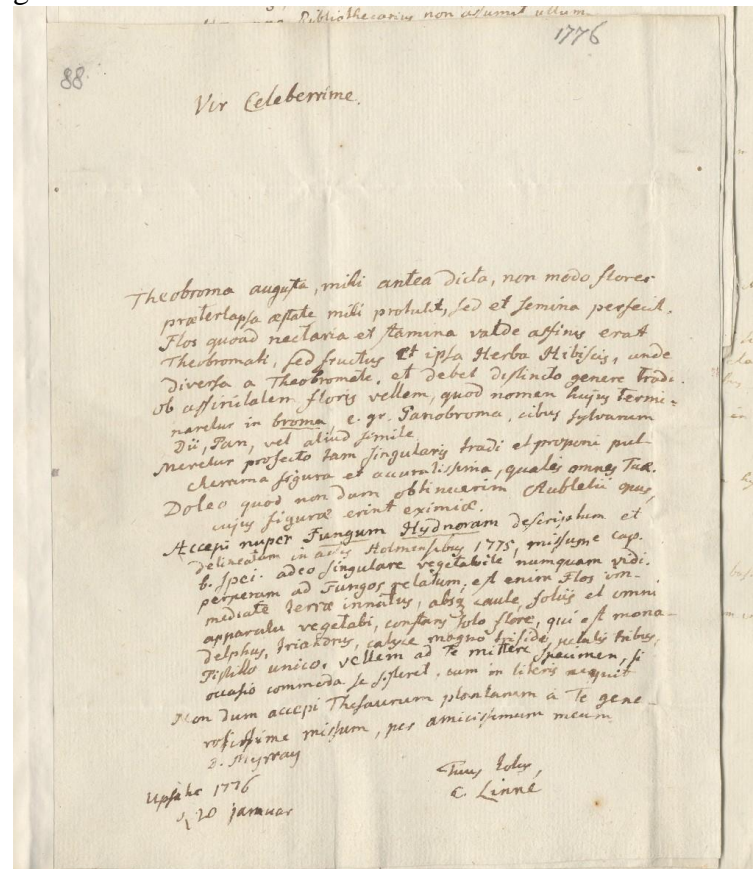
look at the plant *Potamogeton illinoensis* Morong. *Potamogeton lucens* auct. non Linnaeus is a synonym, but only when you see *Potamogeton lucens* WITHOUT the name Linnaeus associated¹. Confusing isn't it? Thankfully plant names are type-based. Each scientific name is tied to a museum specimen (in rare cases an illustration or photo) in an herbarium. When in doubt, you can look at the type specimen and know what the author was talking about!

Why are the scientific names in Latin? Before Linnaeus, the scientific name was a string of descriptors, in Latin. Yes, Latin (albeit with some Greek and other bits thrown in)! The explanation given to me as a student was two-fold. In the mid-1700s, Latin was a common second language for scholars around the world. For this reason, most international correspondence was conducted in Latin. The second important point is that people haven't been routinely speaking Latin for over 500 years, thus the language is relatively stable. If you want to describe something and not have the meaning change from region to region, and over time, Latin was a great solution. The image to the right is of a letter from Linnaeus to baron von Jacquin. In it he describes a plant that was called *Theobroma augusta*.

To understand why names change (other than disagreements about what a species is or isn't) you need to consider the stakeholders. Why do we need scientific names and who uses them? Scholarly communication is the reason for the Latin language base, but as noted above, museum specimens exist and need to be stored. If you only need to organize, store, and retrieve specimens (or information) the names can be static. This generally works for museum technicians, field biologists, and many other "users" of plant names. But the inclusion of a genus in the name indicates structure, hierarchy. Hierarchy allows classification, and if you are interested in understanding evolutionary processes, having organisms grouped by their inferred evolutionary relationships, through nomenclature and physical storage, makes learning much easier. So you would probably want all the fern specimens grouped together in the taxonomic key, and in the herbarium!

Continuing with the ferns as an example, in the mid-1980s the family Polypodiaceae had twenty genera in the

local flora. Today there are only two. Most of those genera were moved into different/new families. So the



L5180. Carl Linnaeus to Nicolaus Joseph n.s. (<http://linnaeus.c18.net/Letter/L5180>)

classification of ferns has changed a lot in the last 30-40 years. Some of the changes were triggered by better understanding of fundamental biology (chromosome counts, spore structure, etc.) and some is due to personal preference (shocking, I know). The decision to split up a group or change the rank at which something is recognized can sometimes be arbitrary, but this is rarely the cause of the name changes you have come to despise.

The biggest contribution to the rapid rise in changing plant names is due to a wealth of new (often molecular) information and better computation tools (software and hardware). Better and more data, plus better tools allow us to make better inferences, especially among species in difficult groups. Let's take a look at goldenrods. The genus *Solidago* includes the bulk of the species (still), but several [*S. graminifolia* (L.) Salisb., *S. gymnospermoides* (Greene) Fern., and *S. tenuifolia*

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Pursh] are now included in the genus *Euthamia* because a variety of data (DNA, morphology, etc.) show that they are not actually very closely related to *Solidago*!

Oligoneuron species however are just specialized *Solidagos*! The University of Waterloo has a short discussion that you can reach via this [link](#).

Names change to better reflect our inference of the evolutionary history of the plants. Keeping them in the wrong genus (or family, or order) would be positively misleading. Thankfully specific epithets generally don't change, and if they do, it is because the name is already in use for another species. If you want to read more on the rules for naming plants, check out the most recent International Code of Botanical Nomenclature [here](#).

¹http://newyork.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=2496&syn_name=Potamogeton+angustifolius

Native Plant Excursions

Visit our FaceBook page for more info!

RECENT

NE-INPS Chapter Winter Tree ID

Andy Olnas, our chapter president led a winter tree hike around the Sagawau Environmental Learning Center on March 26. The weather was fine and 12-15 of us took advantage of his expertise. Danny Lopez, our social media guru, posted dozens of photos on our Facebook page, a few of which I am sharing here (along with a few of my own). This hike was all about the trees (and shrubs) and how to identify them without the benefit of leaves and flowers/fruits. Andy brought a white erase board and provided tips (with illustration) along the way. If you are looking for a handy reference, you might want to pick up a copy of *Fruit Key & Twig Key to Trees & Shrubs* (by William M. Harlow) or *Winter Tree Finder* (by May Theilgaard Watts and Tom Watts).

What to look for:

Trunk – color (Redbud=lower bark is flaky and reddish), buttresses (American Elm), texture including blockiness and flaking (Kentucky Coffee Tree has large, moderately

thin flaking bark; Paper Birch has very thin, peeling bark), lenticels (Cherry species), smell (Sassafras is very distinctive)

Twigs – color, texture, buds (including color and number of scales), leaf scars (location, vascular traces), pith chambers. Are the leaf scars opposite each other? Alternating along the stem? Whorled?



Andy teaching the group (photo by Danny Lopez)

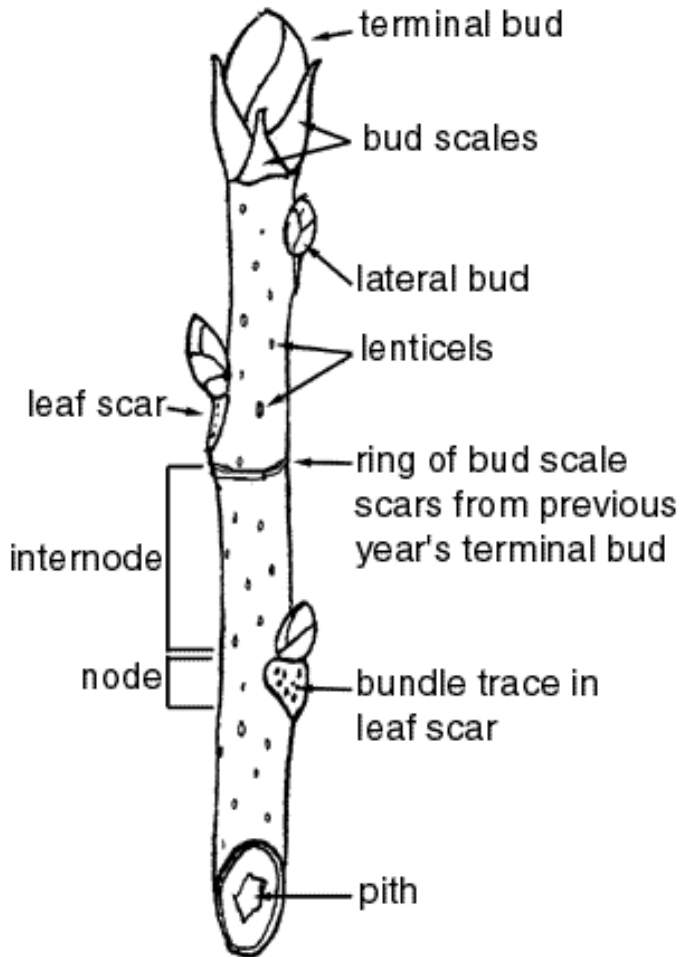


Ash ID tips on the white board (photo by Danny Lopez)

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Parts of a twig (<http://www.clemson.edu/extension>)



Sycamore (photos: Linda MacKechnie)



Black Walnut twig with chambered pith (photo: Linda MacKechnie)



Black Walnut twig with monkey-faced (or E.T.?) leaf scars (photo by Danny Lopez)

I was going to put together a guide with photos from our trip, but the Champaign County Forest Preserves have a great one with color photos available for download [here](#).

Reminder: the plant list from this field trip was posted in our April newsletter.

Remember to look up! The trunk bark texture can be very different from the upper branches. Examples: Sycamore and Sugar Maple.

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Marsh Marigold (photo by Danny Lopez)



Sharp-lobed Hepatica (photo by Danny Lopez)



The hairy roots of Poison Ivy (photo by Danny Lopez)

UPCOMING

NE-INPS Chapter Field Trip!

Lake in the Hills Fen

Saturday, May 14 at 12:30 pm.

Contact: Daniel Lopez (dannnydedieu@gmail.com, 708-691-8403)

Please join us at Lake in the Hills for a guided tour led by Barbara Wilson. This area includes a diversity of habitats including the namesake calcareous fen, dry gravelly (limestone) hilltop prairie communities and a sedge meadow. The dry prairies are dominated by native grasses but also host a number of rare wildflowers such as prairie smoke and leadplant. Many unusual plants are also found in the fen including the false asphodel. Our timing should be perfect to see Shooting Stars, False Solomon's Seal, and Fringed Puccoons in bloom. For more site information, check out the [Illinois DNR page](#) or The Lake In The Hills Fen [homepage](#).

We will meet in the parking lot at Barbara Key Park off Pyott Road.

Cook County

There are dozens of opportunities to get outside this month! We can't list them all, but for some ideas, you can do Canyon Tours at Sagawau every Saturday. There are special spring wildflower hikes at Sagawau (5/7) and a large number of Mother's Day Walks or Hikes (5/8):

- Sand Ridge, South Holland
- Trailside Museum, River Forest
- River Trail, Northbrook
- Flower Walk at Crabtree Nature Center, Barrington Hills

Mid-month you can attend a Garfield Park Tree ID Walk (5/13) or head over to Black Partridge Forest Preserve for a Flower Hike (5/14). Check out the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's [web page](#) for complete FP listings.

DuPage County

Participate in one of the many [Forest Fitness](#) Walks taking place (Hidden Lake 5/2, Meacham Grove 5/9), join a wildflower hike at Waterfall Glen (5/18), or search our Edible Plants at Danada (5/29). Visit the [DuPage](#)

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[County Forest Preserve](#) web site for locations and schedule details. [DuPage County Wild Ones](#) chapter is hosting a Lyman Woods spring wildflower walk on 5/7.

Kane County

Wildflowers by Evening at Dick Young FP in Batavia (5/12). Download the latest [Tree Line Newsletter](#) for more information.

Lake County

Ongoing programs include Walk with a naturalist (Rollins Savanna, 5/7; \$1-2 fee) and Forest Fitness (various locations, Saturdays). Visit the [Lake County Forest Preserve](#) web site for locations and schedule details.

McHenry County

Mother's Day Wildflower walk on 5/8. Special access has been granted to visit a private nature preserve for a **Wild Orchid Walk** near Woodstock (5/20; \$2 non-resident fee). Download the latest issue of [Landscapes](#), the Conservation District magazine for more information.

DuPage County

Interested in invasive plants? Sign up for the all day workshop [Species on the Move: Updates on Invasive Threats to Urban and Natural Areas](#) (Morton Arboretum, May 12). You can hone your spring botany skills in the [Advanced Spring Local Flora](#) class offered through The Morton Arboretum (5/7; registration required)

Kane County

You can learn about **Big Trees of Kane County** (5/14). Naturalists Valerie Blaine and Josh Libman will teach how to get involved in citizen science and documenting the largest native trees in the county (Creek Bend Nature Center, St. Charles, \$10 fee). Download the latest issue of [Treeline](#) for more information.

[Northern Kane County Wild Ones](#) chapter is holding their annual **Native Plant Sale** at the Hawthorn Hill Nature Center on 5/7.

Lake County

Barb Wilson will host a [Botany for Beginners](#) class at Barbara Key Park (/7) and [Basics of Identifying Sedges](#) a bit later in the month (5/21). Registration is requested. There are two programs of interest through the DNR at Volo Bog: Identifying Species & Analyzing Vegetational Communities to Measure Our Restoration Progress (May 21, registration required) or Surveying Shrubs: Native and Invasive Shrubs in our Landscape (May 22). Note – these events are not currently listed on the DNR web page! Phone 815-344-1294 or email dnr.volobog@illinois.gov

McHenry County

Learn about edibles (native and non-natives) at the **Wild Edibles in Your Backyard** presentation at Praireview Education Center on 5/12 (\$2-5 fee).

Webinar or Online

There are two interesting webinars available through the US Fish & Wildlife Service:

[An Adaptive Approach to Managing Prairies](#) (May 19) and [Evaluating Urban Forest and Marsh Condition in New York City](#) (June 9)

Other Regional Plant Events

UPCOMING

Cook County

Loads of plant and nature events going on this month. There is a [Nature Block Party: A Celebration of Biodiversity](#) (Eggers Grove 5/14), a screening of the documentary film [Shifting Sands](#) at The Field Museum (May 7). You can learn from a master gardener on [Protecting Pollinators](#) at the River Trail Nature Center in Northbrook (May 21; registration preferred) or find out more on [Mycorrhizal Fungi](#) at the Little Red Schoolhouse in Willow Springs (5/28; registration required). Don't forget, the [West Cook County chapter of Wild Ones](#) is holding their Annual Native Plant Sale May 15! A special exhibit opens at Peggy Notebaert entitled [The Birth of Chocolate](#) on May 7.

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Further Afield

Illinois Invasive Species Symposium

Thursday May 26, 9:30 am–4 pm

Champaign, IL

No updates are yet available on the [DNR web page](#).

Follow the link above to stay current.

INPS Annual Gathering

June 3–5, 2016.

Carbondale, IL

This year the annual gathering is being hosted by the Southern Chapter of INPS!

24th North American Prairie Conference

From Cemetery Prairies to National Tallgrass Prairies.

July 17–20, 2016.

Illinois State University, Normal, IL

Four days and over 70 presentations covering many aspects of prairie ecology, restoration, management, and more. Registration required. Early registration deadline is July 1, 2016.

For more information, follow this [link](#).

You may also want to check out [The Outside Calendar](#).

Native Plant Sales

The gardening season is just getting going. Check out one or more of these plant sales that are offering up native plants! They are listed in chronological order.

5/6-7 [DuPage Forest Preserve](#), at Mayslake. Pre-orders accepted until April 20.

5/6-8 [Citizens for Conservation](#), Barrington

5/7 [Go Green Wilmette](#), West Park, Glencoe. Pre-order through 4/9.

5/7 [Northern Kane County Wild Ones](#) at Hawthorn Hill Nature Center.

5/7-8 [Lake County FP](#), Independence Grove-North Bay Pavilion, Libertyville

5/14 [Glenview Park District](#), The Grove, Glenview (pre-order by May 1; pre-order form pdf page 8 has the natives listed)

5/14 [Lake Forest Open Lands](#), Melody Farm Nature Preserve, Lake Forest

5/14 [West Cook County chapter of Wild Ones](#) is taking [pre-orders](#) until April 15!

5/20 [The Land Conservancy](#), Woodstock (pre-order by May 13)

9/18 [Conserve Lake County](#), Almond Marsh, Grayslake (trees & shrubs, orders due 4/25)

Volunteer Opportunities

Check out the various Forest Preserve web pages for listings in each county.

Cook County

Forest Preserve District of Cook County [web page](#).

Restoration Workdays at the Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center (no registration required) or River Trail Nature Center (call 847-824-8360 to register). There is also the annual Chicago River System Clean-up Day, Kickapoo Woods, Riverdale (5/14) and a couple of workdays through The Field Museum at Beaubien Woods and Eggers Grove (calendar [here](#)).

DuPage County

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County [web page](#).

Restoration Workdays at various Prairies and Woods, and at the Native Plant Nursery. Register at 630-933-7681 at least five business days prior.

Lake County

There are numerous opportunities to assist in

Restoration Workdays at the Native Seed Nursery or in a variety of communities. Contact the Restoration workday coordinator [Tom Smith](#) to participate. Desk: 847-968-3329, Cell: 847-276-5379.

Visit the Lake County Forest Preserve [web page](#) for more information.

[The Habitat Project](#) and [Habitat 2030](#) [ongoing]

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Events At A Glance:

May 8-9	Numerous Mother's Day events
May 14	NE-INPS Field Trip to Lake in the Hills Fen!
May 26	IL Invasive Species Symposium
June 3-5	INPS Annual Gathering
July 17-20	24 th NA Prairie Conference

Please check on our NE-INPS or Facebook pages for late additions to the calendar of events.

Got some great ideas for places to go or plants to see?
Want to hear talks on specific topics?

Send us an email message: northeast-inps@gmail.com or
write me directly at lindamprince@gmail.com



Bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*) (photo by Andy Olnas)

If you received this as a complimentary copy, you may wish to join the Illinois Native Plant Society. Send your name, address, and phone number with a check made out to INPS for

- \$15 *Student*
- \$25 *Individual*
- \$20 *Institutional (nonvoting)*
- \$35 *Family*
- \$50 *Supporting*
- \$100 *Patron*
- \$125 *Business*
- \$500 *Life**

**Additional Life membership categories provide even greater support for our organization.*

To join, visit www.ill-inps.org. Please indicate that your chapter is Northeast
OR

*Mail to: Illinois Native Plant Society,
Membership, P.O. Box 271, Carbondale, IL
62903-0271*

Like us on FaceBook in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)!

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Newsletter Editor: Linda MacKechnie