

The Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation

P.O. Box 8952. Moscow, ID 83843

Vol. I No. 4

<http://www.palouseprairie.org/>

December, 2006

The **January meeting** of PPF is at 7 pm on January 11th and will be a presentation. It will be held in the Edith Hecht Reading Room at Neill Public Library, 210 N. Grand Ave, Pullman WA. Access the parking lot from Olsen Street. Enter through the door on the east side of the building, near the parking lot. The February meeting will be a business meeting at a location to be determined. Watch the PPF website for details and possible changes.

Copies of past issues of the Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation are available online on the PPF website at <http://www.palouseprairie.org/pppubs.html>

Overwintering plants

For one reason or another many of us find that we have Palouse native plants in containers that we need to hold over until spring. While our native plants are generally quite hardy and able to withstand the wide fluctuations of a Palouse winter, containerized material is especially vulnerable to extreme cold because the roots are more exposed. *Asclepias speciosa* and the members of the lily family seem to be especially susceptible. Protecting the roots from cold is important to survival.

If you have only a few pots, the best method is to dig a shallow trench and put the pots in the trench with about 1 inch of the container lip above the surface. Mulch the plants with a thin layer of straw or bark, or a thicker layer of leaves. Large numbers of pots or plants in containers can be overwintered above ground by piling a thick layer of mulch around the sides and over the top. Herbaceous material can be completely covered. For woody material, leave the stems protruding if possible. Pull the mulch back from the plants as the weather begins to warm in March.

Snow can be used to supplement the insulation but should not be depended upon as the sole insulation source. The styrofoam sheet insulation sold at lumberyards can be fashioned into a protective layer over the plants, but a good anchorage system is required to keep the material in place during windstorms. It is best to leave a little air space between the top of the containers and the styrofoam. In an emergency, plants can be moved to an unheated garage or shed, but such structures usually provide only 5 to 10° F of protection. Don't neglect to water plants overwintered under cover. Plants overwintered under mulch outdoors usually receive plenty of moisture from rain and snow but may need some water in March when they begin to break winter dormancy.

Restoration Funding Opportunities

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is soliciting proposals for restoration or recovery projects to be funded during fiscal year 2007. The area covered by these programs includes eastern Washington and the 6 northernmost Idaho counties. Projects may consist of restoration, recovery, assessment, or research.

Further information can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/easternwashington/>

Scroll down to the yellow box entitled "Hot Topics" and follow the links. Those of you without Internet access may obtain more information by calling Suzanne Audet at (509) 893-8002 or Greg Van Stralen at (509) 665-3508, extension 20.

The USFWS also is seeking proposals for conservation projects to benefit imperiled species on private lands through its Private Stewardship Grants Program. More information is available at

<http://www.fws.gov/news/newsreleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=86AC167C-EA0A-94CA-31010E79542E7268> or by calling Valerie Fellows at (202) 208-3008.

Palouse Prairie Foundation Display

If you would like to have the Palouse Prairie display at a gathering or meeting, please contact us. The display consists of a free standing 4 panel poster explaining Palouse Prairie, and a myriad of printed information regarding the prairie. A smaller version of the poster is also available for more limited spaces. You can view the poster on the PPF website at <http://www.palouseprairie.org/display/>

Salvaged Seed Still Available

Some seed is still available of *Heracleum lanatum* (cow parsnip) and *Lomatium dissectum* (fern-leaf lomatium) to members who have a place to plant it out. The Pullman PMC also has some seed of *Penstemon deustus* (hotrock penstemon) available for the same purpose. All three species require stratification and should be fall sown. Contact Dave Skinner if you are interested.

Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*.

Achillea millefolium is a circumboreal species widespread in Europe and North America. It has a broad ecological amplitude and is widely adapted to sites with full sun, ranging from coastal lowlands to subalpine areas. It is a polyploid complex with extensive variability and many varieties and/or subspecies have been proposed at one time or another. The common western native phase, sometimes called ssp. or var. *lanulosa*, is a tetraploid. Other native subspecies or varieties of more restricted geographical occurrence may be hexaploids, as is the European *A. millefolium* var. *millefolium*. The western native form has leaves



which are highly dissected, with the leaf segments more numerous and in multiple planes, so that the leaf appears thick. They are also more pubescent, therefore appearing grey-green rather than green. *Achillea millefolium* var. *lanulosa* and *Achillea lanulosa* are synonymous.

The plants reproduce both sexually by seed and vegetatively by rhizomes. Seed may also be produced apomictically. Seeds are small but germinate readily and may be planted either in the fall or spring. Individual plants are relatively short-lived. They reproduce readily by seed and to a lesser extent by rhizomes but are not as aggressive as some of the introduced horticultural yarrows.

Yarrow is one of the oldest and most widely known herbal medicines. The generic name honors Achilles, who reportedly used yarrow to treat soldiers wounded in the Battle of Troy. Native peoples used the plants to treat many ailments. It has little forage value for wildlife or livestock and may be toxic in large quantities.

Some sources for more information:

Plant Guide from PLANTS Database

http://plants.nrcs.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_acmi2.pdf

Species page from the University of Washington Herbarium (WTU)

<http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection.php?Genus=Achillea&Species=millefolium>

“Native American Ethnobotany” from the University of Michigan-Dearborn

<http://herb.umd.umich.edu/>

If you have ideas, suggestions, or contributions for the newsletter, please send them to Dave Skinner at <abbie1 at pullman.com> (you will need to replace “at” with the symbol “@” in the address line of your email program) or call him at 334-7009. Look for the next newsletter in March.