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Geranium robertianum & *Rhizocarpon geographicum* at Point Verde, (see p. 54) Judith Blakeley

A Note from the Editor.

It recently came to my attention that so far there have been only three issues in volume 17 (not counting the Christmas special) so this is a quick issue to wrap up the volume, and get out the volume index. I already have some material for Vol 18#1, but would welcome more.

Christmas Competition.

Sadly there were only three entries, all correct apart from one minor typo from: John Maunder, Mike Collins and Stuart Hay. The prize was awarded to Stuart, as the other two already had a copy of the book. I was disappointed not to get more entries; it wasn't that difficult really, some of the names were a bit odd of course, but the context should have helped too.

Upcoming meetings.

Wednesday February 3rd 2010 ,at 7.30 p.m.*

A talk/workshop by **Mike Collins** on "*Identifying plants in winter, and the animals that feed on them*". You are positively encouraged to bring specimens, especially

from the wild.

Associated winter walk. Place time and date TBA, but probably Sunday afternoon, February 7th.

Wednesday March 3rd 2010 ,at 7.30 p.m.*

Todd Boland will give a talk and slideshow on the Orchids and other Wild Flowers of Equador.

*At the Botanical Garden Lecture Room.

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The Northern Peninsula in Spring

by Leila Clase

{This is the very first article published in our Newsletter, in Fall 1990, and contains the solution to the Christmas 2009 competition – the names printed in red type. Since this was written before the publication of "Sue's list" some of the Linnean names have changed, the current ones have been added in curly brackets. Names in bold type (any colour) are those in the 2000 edition of the list.}

The Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Rhododendron Society was hosted by the Botanical Garden at Oxen Pond in early June this year. To provide the registrants with a chance to see Newfoundland native rhododendrons and other ericaceous plants in their native habitat a post-conference tour was organized to the west coast of Newfoundland. I was one of the lucky 23 people to take part in that tour. We saw many beautiful and interesting plants during the trip. The following is a summary of the highlights.

The first thrill came as soon as we had left the Isthmus: graceful trees covered in red haze standing here and there among the mixed forest, still deciduously bare. The bus was abuzz with "What is it? What is it?" as we leafed through our "Glen Ryans" (Trees and Shrubs of Newfoundland) , but of course it was difficult to identify

for sure from a fast moving bus until Dianne McLeod confirmed that it was Red Maple (***Acer rubrum***), one of the two native maples in Newfoundland. This is not the nurseryman's Red Maple, which name refers to the red foliage. ***Acer rubrum*** gets its name from the red female flowers, which cover the tree like a red veil before the green leaves appear. The male flowers, usually on a separate tree, are yellowish.

The same day, still on the bus journey, we got a glimpse of a big patch of Marsh Marigolds (***Caltha palustris***) in boggy ground along the Trans Canada Highway after the Springdale turn-off. Later we were to see them again and again in great profusion in the Gros Morne area where willow bushes grow in roadside ditches and other wet places.

The first of the two whole days at Gros Morne was

devoted to the Western Brook Pond boat trip, which also meant pleasant 3 km hiking and botanizing each day. The plants that stand out from this trip in my memory include Three-leaved False Solomon's seal (*Smilacina trifolia*, {*Maianthemum trifolium*}), Twisted-stalk (*Streptopus amplexifolius*), Alder-leaved Buckthorn (*Rhamnus alnifolia*), and Wild Sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*). The last one of these particularly made an impression in the way its newly emerged, still purple leaves glistened in the afternoon sun. There were also three different kinds of violets and three or four different kinds of currants/gooseberries to be seen. I remember those if only as an opportunity lost to sort out what they were, because of shortage of time, knowledge and technical aids.

The second day in Gros Morne was largely devoted to climbing the mountain. Only about half of our party went right to the top and were justly rewarded with sights of rare alpine plants. I particularly coveted them the sight of Mountain Heath (*Phyllodoce caerulea*), because the chances of seeing it elsewhere are slim. However even those of us who went only to the upper plateau enjoyed our climb tremendously and the sights it afforded us, both plants and scenery. The blueberry flowers in their multiplicity were at their prettiest. Many of the small plants of the boreal forest floor such as Starflower (*Trientalis europaeus*, {*Trientalis borealis*}), Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*), Clintonia (*Clintonia borealis*), and Goldthread (*Coptis groenlandica*, {*Coptis trifolia*}) were just emerging but recognizable in mid-June. Here, too, the spring had been very late. Undoubtedly the star attraction was the Trailing Arbutus (*Epigaea repens*). I remember in the past crawling on all fours trying to catch a glimpse of it at the Oxen Pond peat beds and even then usually missing the best bloom. No such need here. It spread everywhere its fragrant luminous, sometimes pink-tinged flowers and ever-green leaves along the steeply rising slopes.

Solution

Callahan Palestrina = *Caltha pallustris*; Chrysanthemum trifocals = *Maianthemum trifolium*; Streptococcus amplifications = *Streptopus amplexifolius*; Rhombus manifold = *Rhamnus alnifolia*; Amalia syndicalism = *Aralia nudicaulis*; Phylogenetic cerulean = *Phyllodoce caerulea*; Orientalist Boreas = *Trientalis borealis*; Mathematician Canadianism = *Maianthemum canadense*; Clinton arboreal = *Clintonia borealis*; Coptic trifling = *Coptis trifolia*; Epigram repents = *Epigaea repens*; Maidservant stelled = *Maianthemum stellatum*; Suffragan Azores = *Saxifraga azoides*; Suffragist oppositional = *Saxifraga oppositifolia*; Drays integrability = *Dryas integrifolia*; Rhododendron Napoleonic = *Rhododendron lapponicum*; Noiseless procurements = *Loiseleuria procumbens*; Anemone parlormaid = *Anemone parviflora*; Primula Laurent = *Primula laurentiana*; Primula mistakable = *Primula mistassinica*; Staphylococcus Suva-ursi = *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*; Arcturus alpine = *Arctous alpina*; Arctics rubric = *Arctous rubra*

The next day we travelled further north along the coast stopping in selected places to look at the flora. The species that augmented my list on that day were Starry False Solomon's seal (*Smilacina stellata*, {*Maianthemum stellatum*}) by a picnic site at the entrance to the Western Brook Pond trail and such calcium loving plants as *Saxifraga azoides*, *S. oppositifolia* and Mountain Avens (*Dryas integrifolia*). As we travelled further north to Hare Bay and to Boat Harbour, both recognized sites for arctic plant communities, we had many more exciting sightings of rare plant species, above all Lapland Rosebay (*Rhododendron lapponicum*) and Alpine Azalea (*Loiseleuria procumbens*). We also saw a little blue anemone, *Anemone parviflora*, and two native primulas *Primula laurentiana* and *P. mistassinica*, both very delicate and tiny. At Boat Harbour we had the good fortune of spotting all three bearberries close together. There was the evergreen *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, the alpine, *A. alpina* {*Arctous alpina*} and the red-berried *A. rubra* {*Arctous rubra*}, the latter still complete with last year's berries.

On our way west the Rhodora (*Rhododendron canadense*) - to my mind the Newfoundland rhododendron par excellence - was not much in evidence, but a week had done the trick so that on our way back the bright pink and purple patches by the roadside caused our mainland and overseas visitors nearly to miss their flights at Deer Lake as they searched for the best specimen to be photographed. The next plant always seemed more beautiful than the one before.

For the most part I have mentioned only those species which seem "exotic" from the vantage point of St. John's and vicinity, but naturally one could make a plant list as long as one's arm and then multiply it by the seasons. It was an inspiring start for a summer's botanizing, and I hope there will be many more such trips, perhaps under the auspices of the Wildflower Society?

Avalonia Field Trip Memories: Day Two. Monday July 20 2009

By Ed Hayden

(Note: "Avalonia Field Trip Memories: Day One" appeared in Sarracenia 17(3), Fall 2009)

Collins Pond

As I pulled into The Wilds resort on Salmonier Line at 8:30 a.m., the last few sleepy-headed stragglers were moseying towards their cars, and John Maunder was getting a convoy underway for the day's adventure. We drove south on the Salmonier Line and at St. Catherine's turned east on Highway 91 towards Colinet. At our first stop, Collins Pond, opposite the North Harbour Road junction, we wildflower enthusiasts were excited to find hundreds of the seldom-seen Floating Hearts (*Nymphoides cordata*) in bloom, the tiny white flowers, less than a centimetre wide, rising just above the leaf blade on the water (Figure 1).

The enthusiasm of my colleagues was infectious as I sat on a rock at the edge of the pond and watched the morning sun dapple on small, choppy waves. The floating green and red leaves are similar to those of the Yellow Pond Lily (*Nuphar variegata*) except for their small size,

but there the similarity ends. One has to look closely to see that the plants are flowering. With five tiny white petals, the flowers are vastly different from those of either the Yellow Pond Lily or the White Water Lily (*Nymphaea odorata*) with their numerous, much larger, showy petals. Surprisingly, Floating Hearts

it being a common plant of ponds and streams, but I am ashamed to say that I have never noticed it before. However, in that little culvert pool in the morning light, in the calm after yesterday's storm, we stood entranced by the Pondweed, its bright green, cranberry red and light brown elongated leaves waving in the gentle flow of the stream (See Figure 2 as well as additional images of many of our 23 species of *Potamogeton* at John Maunder's Digital Flora website.)

Rushes and sedges were abundant all around us, looking vibrant after a brief morning shower. From this magical little watering hole, where a few fairies must surely linger late of an



Figure 2: *Potamogeton epiphydrus*.

are members of the Buckbean family.

Across the road, a small stream emanating from Collins Pond emptied from a culvert into a shallow aquatic ecosystem about three by six metres, protected by alders and other tall shrubs and shaded from the road by a guardrail. We lingered there below the road on two strips of gravel that spread out from both sides of the culvert, enamored by the vivid colours of the floating leaves of the Ribbonleaf Pondweed (*Potamogeton epiphydrus*) ('epi' – on top of; 'hydrus' – water).

I daresay that I've seen Pondweed numerous times,

evening, we peered through the tall Glyceria Grass (*Glyceria* sp.) and the Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum pubescens*) at a wide, shallow peat pond stretching away below us. We pass by glorious little spots like this all the time and don't give them a second thought. This morning's sun, however, with clouds whisking by overhead, throwing shadows in our paths, and John pointing to this and that, made us pay attention to the vivid colours of grasses in the wind and leaves swaying in the stream. What a cheering up it gave us, this lush, little microcosm at the side of the road across from Collins Pond. I think I shall always be reminded of this sweet culvert spot when I see Pondweed again.



Figure 1

Photo: Gene Herzberg

Cape St. Mary's Seabird Ecological Reserve

Whether the tide is high or low, the drive south along the North Harbour Road is always stunning, and this morning was no exception, with the beach and harbour glistening in the sun on our left and Colinet Island in the distance. The morning sunshine, however, was short-lived. When we turned inland to cross the barrens, we met the fog. By the time we arrived at Cape St. Mary's at 11 a.m., it was so thick that John cautioned us to stay with the group for fear we'd get lost. Nevertheless, we were not dismayed, for the booming of the fog horn and the baaing of sheep was fantastic and eerie as we donned fleeces and jackets and tied our hoods tight as we set out to stroll the high meadow. Cape St. Mary's Seabird Ecological Reserve, like the Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve near Cape Race, is part of the eastern hyper-oceanic barrens – barrens above the ocean – with vegetation primarily determined by thin soil and days like this.

Here we found Beachhead Iris (*Iris setosa*), with its petal-like sepals and true petals reduced to sharply pointed "pips" about a centimetre long. Glen Ryan compares our two native irises, the Blue Flag (*Iris versicolor*) and the Beachhead Iris, in the Winter 2009 issue of *The Osprey*, (Journal of the Natural History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador), accompanied by beautiful illustrations. The Beachhead Iris, Ryan notes, is typically much smaller and is restricted to drier environments with a decidedly coastal influence; thus the common name. The strikingly lovely Alpine Bistort (*Bistorta vivipara* (L.) Delarbre) was plentiful here, with mostly sterile, white flowers atop an elongated

cluster of reddish bulbils tightly arranged along the stalk below. These bulbils eventually drop off and grow directly into new adult plants; hence the name "vivipara," meaning "live birth" (Fig. 3).



Figure 2

"Did someone lose their contacts?" Heather shouted, and we all looked up, taking her seriously, ready to join in the search, until we saw her big smile as she shouted to us that we all looked like a search party, bent over and peering at the ground as we walked slowly along the meadow, looking at Common Eyebright (*Euphrasia nemorosa*). The common name, Eyebright, is from this plant's use by classical herbalists in treating eye infections, including conjunctivitis; *Euphrasia*, from the Greek for cheerfulness, may allude to the same thing, a brightening, a livening up. The bright yellow markings on the lower petal act as a guide to pollinating insects.

Cape St. Mary's has fascinated since I was a child. Having grown up in Petite Forte, on the west side - the Burin Peninsula side - of Placentia Bay, it was exciting on calm, clear, moonless nights in the fall to climb

the grassy knoll at the top of Hayden's Point and peer out through the arm, past the navigation light on Eastern Point and across the Reach, through the narrow opening between Long Island and Marticot Island, trying to locate a blinking light, 72 km across Placentia Bay, on the lighthouse at Cape St. Mary's. It was rare to see it, or perhaps we didn't look often enough, as three conditions had to be just right: no moon, no fog and no waves. In addition to our fascination with this lighthouse so far away, we had heard plenty of stories about Golden Bay at Cape St. Mary's as the rich fishing ground for sailing schooners from Placentia Bay, including my father's. We were familiar with the images from tales told by the former crews of the great hauls of fish, the races home across the bay and the excited children running to the wharves to meet them and claim bragging rights. There were the stories of disaster, too, of spars and jaws broken in the "August Gales," and, sadly, of the drowning of my great-grandfather James Hayden at Golden Bay at the age of 41.

Strolling along the hyper-oceanic barren in the fog, we paid little heed to what looked like Yellow or Hop Clover until John cried "Aha! Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*), a cousin of Alfalfa." I'd never heard of such a plant, but, indeed, upon closer look, with all of us bent over again, some kneeling down with pocket lenses out, John pointed out the distinguishing feature: a tiny indentation and sharp point at the tip of each leaflet. In *Wild Flowers of Newfoundland*, Bill and June Titford point out a characteristic of Black Medick that might be responsible for the "black" part of its common name -- "a clump of curved, black seeds which may be mistaken as an infestation of small grubs."

This is the bliss of botanizing, ruminating, paying attention to *minutiae* on a summer holiday at the lighthouse, no meetings to attend, no phones ringing, no emails dinging, no reports to draft, no work of any kind to do but stroll along a meadow and be philosophically introspective, if you lean that way, with John noting a plant here and there that might catch your fancy – the sheep baaing, the fog horn booming and Heather making fun of us looking like a crowd that has lost its contacts.

I have on occasion walked at Cape St. Mary's with friends who were not 'into plants' and saw little to occupy my attention beyond the amazing excitement of Bird Rock, but on this day, with John drawing us ever forward, we were like children, enthralled by the extraordinary joy of seeing the beauty in the detail. We came upon a stunning mass of tiny yellow-green balls growing out of mounds of Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*) (which reserve manager Tony Power noted had been in bloom three weeks earlier). "Sweet Redeemer, John, what is that?" someone asked.

"Ah!" said John, "Moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*), a fern in the Adder's Tongue family. The little balls are the sporangia, where the reproductive spores are formed." Some people think that the masses of little balls look like bunches of grapes – hence the alternative name "grape-fern." The "moon" business apparently stems from the fact that the pinnae (or leaflets) of this little fern are more-or-less "half-moon"-shaped.

This is how extraordinary joy rises in our hearts: we lean in for a close-up view of a plant we've passed by dozens of times before without paying the slightest heed. We are awed by its beauty and then, as if that weren't enough, someone says, in language we understand, here's what it's doing in the universe – those little green balls, those "grapes" on the Moonwort, they hold the reproductive spores. This is how a lovely morning can transform into sheer delight, trekking around a meadow in the fog, bundled up in drawstring hoods, and having the mystery of Moonwort revealed, and you want to lie down on the meadow

and stretch out and say, "I'm not going on; this is all I can hold today. I'm going to stay here forever."

Compare the clusters of sporangia of the Grape Fern (*Botrychium lunaria*) (Fig 4a) with the "sori", or clusters of sporangia, on the underside of the Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) (Fig 4b).

The moment ends, the crowd strolls on, you walk quickly to catch up. "*The faithful lean steadily into the wind*" Thinking of this phrase from Diane Shoemperlen in *Forms of Devotion*, at Cape St. Mary's, I was awed at the return of another childhood memory of a lighthouse: Mr. Frank Leonard, an old man who lived in The Bottom, standing in his white punt bucking out through the arm, past the lighthouse and into the wind, leaning forward to keep himself steady. This is the image I carried as we followed John across the meadow by the lighthouse, confident in the future.

Cape St. Mary's also evoked memories of *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf's novel set on a Scottish island, overlooked by a distant lighthouse, where Mrs. Ramsay and her eccentric husband and their English family and guests are enjoying the summer. The novel begins with the excitement of a boy about to go on an adventure:

"Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow," said Mrs. Ramsay. "you'll have to be up with the lark," she added.

To her son these words conveyed an extraordinary joy, as if it were settled the expedition were bound to take place, and the wonder to which he had looked forward, for years and years it seemed, was, after a night's darkness and a day's sail, within touch.



Figure 3a



Figure 4b

About fifty feet from a white utility shed by the parking lot, we found a bird's nest on the ground, not fallen from a tree or post but built there, in perfectly good order, lodged among Alpine Bistort, and in it several live chicks. We walked by so close that we could see the yellow on the insides of their mouths. John cautioned us not to linger, and, wanting to be good and decent naturalists, we left, though we longed to stay and watch. Presently, the mother, a Horned Lark, returned, walking towards the nest but giving us a wide berth, obviously threatened by this crowd of gawking wildflower enthusiasts. We glanced behind and the photographers were delighted to see and record mother and chicks reunite. "Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow," I remembered Mrs. Ramsay saying to her son, "but you'll have to be up with the lark."



Photo: Judith Blakely

Towards the lighthouse, we found the Scirpus Sedge (*Carex scirpoidea*), which John said "stands out like a sore thumb," as is obvious in the photograph in Figure 5.

Many varieties of plants at Cape St. Mary's grow low on the ground to accommodate the climate of the hyper-oceanic barrens: clumps of Diapensia (*Diapensia lapponica*); a miniature Bearberry; Dwarf Willow (*Salix uva-ursi*) with catkins, the whole plant fully grown at just a few centimetres tall, forming colonies by layering of prostrate branches; a

dwarf birch (*Betula pumila*), its leaves more oval and bigger than Newfoundland Dwarf Birch (*Betula michauxii*); and a tiny Northern Green Orchid (*Platanthera aquilonis*), about seven or eight centimetres high, which Andrus Voitk lists as one of our most abundant and widespread orchids, though often inconspicuous because of its yellow-green colouring.



Figure 5

John pointed out the Small Purple Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera psycodes*), with just one flower open to allow us a glimpse of the lip fringe; Wood Rush (*Luzula multiflora*), with spiky clusters of brownish flowers enclosed in shiny bractlets; and Deer Grass (*Trichophorum cespitosum*), a main component of Newfoundland bogs. Deer Grass is actually not a grass at all, as it belongs to the Sedge family (*Cyperaceae*) of grass-like herbs usually growing in wet places. Yellow Bog Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) was here too. As the name implies, it produces seeds that rattle in the capsule when you brush up against them as you pass. Yellow Bog Rattle is now circum-

boreal having been introduced into North America from Eurasia. It is a semi-parasitic plant, which obtains at least part of its nutrients via the roots of other plants.

We identified a variety of ferns, too, on the way to Bird Rock, two of which I can now identify proudly on my own – Cinnamon Fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), with a long cinnamon-coloured stick growing out of its centre, and Long Beech Fern (*Phegopteris connectilis*), with the two bottom pinnae pointing distinctively backwards in a "V", as you can see in the photograph in Figure 6.



Figure 6

As well, we saw Wood Fern (*Dryopteris* spp.), Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), and Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), which, as the name suggests, shrivels and dies on the first cold day of autumn. John pointed out *Cerastium fontanum* and offered the observation that I was happy to take: "a lot of the chickweeds look very much alike, and many amateur naturalists think it's too much trouble to try to tell them apart!"

Finally, we found Toad Rush (*Juncus bufonius*), which John says gets no respect, (referring, I think, to the fact that it is small and inconspicuous and often gets trodden underfoot); Bluntleaf Sandwort (*Moehringia lateriflora*), like Chickweed but without a split in the

petal; Marsh Pea (*Lathyrus palustris*), a relative of the Beach Pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*); Marsh Blue Violet (*Viola cucullata*), Norwegian Cinquefoil (*Potentilla norvegica*); Heal-all (*Prunella vulgaris*), which is especially common on meadows where sheep and cattle graze, its lavender flowers protruding from a short spike, like a spruce cone, at the top of the stalk; Pink Crowberry (*Empetrum eamesii*), not nearly as common as Black Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*); and Pulvinate Pussytoes (*Antennaria rosea subsp. pulvinata*), with wooly stems and terminal clusters of fuzzy white flower heads resembling cats' paws, thus the common name.

At Bird Rock, a short walk from the interpretation centre while sidestepping sheep patties, the fog was still thick, but we could see the top section of the rock, covered with Gannets, including young ones. Oddly, adults were still billing, which I associate with courting, but with babies to look after, surely courting was not on their minds?

Gooseberry Cove

Tony Power, the Cape St. Mary's reserve manager, told us that the wind was veering westward and so in about an hour the fog should clear. Sure enough, a bit longer than an hour later, at 2:30 p.m., as we were leaving Cape St. Mary's, the fog lifted, making the drive north along the Cape Shore towards Placentia delightful. We drove slowly through the beautiful community of St. Brides, with gently sloping sheep meadows on the right and fishing boats in the harbour, and, further on, through Cuslett, home of the well-known Newfoundland singer and songwriter Eddie Coffey, and then on through Angels Cove and Patrick's Cove. The high ground between

communities afforded panoramic views towards the Placentia Bay islands.

At the bottom of a steep hill, we turned left onto a dirt lane that took us out to beautiful Gooseberry Cove, where there was no longer a need for sweaters, caps and jackets. What a joy to get out of the car and feel the sun on our faces again. A warm westerly breeze drove fair-sized waves up onto a quarter-mile of sandy beach. We tasted the hot munchie Sea Rocket (*Cakile edentula*), which can be added to salads, and admired the False Arnica (*Senecio pseudoarnica* – see p.56) with its large yellow flowers that make the plant look exotic, growing here in the salty sand of a Newfoundland beach. Also growing here were spreading clumps of Oyster Leaf (*Mertensia maritima*), also called Sea Lungwort, with its leaves whitened by wax exuded by the leaf; Seabeach Sandwort (*Honckenya peploides*); Lady's Thumb (*Persicaria* spp.); Bittersweet Nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*) and "the Evil Sow Thistle" (*Sonchus asper*), as John called it. What we did not find, however, were Gooseberries; I have yet to find Gooseberries growing wild anywhere, despite the many places with Gooseberry in their name.

Point Verde

Further north, at the brackish lagoon called Barachois Pond (pronounced bar-ah-shwa, or, sometimes, bar-ah-shway or bar-ah-sway) at Point Verde, I was happy to recognize the pale, greenish-brown, elongated leaves of Pondweed (*Potamogeton* sp.), which we had seen earlier that morning at the magical culvert stop across from Collins Pond. Typically, I am lucky to get a glimmer of recognition on my own after about a dozen times a

plant has been pointed out to me, so I was quite proud to say to John, "Potamogeton," and for him to casually reply, as if it were the most normal thing in the world, "Yep, Pondweed" and walk on by. I'll remember this moment, I thought, and chalk it up as one giant leap for Ed.

On the long cobble beach bar of the barachois, we found Water-Milfoil (*Myriophyllum* sp.); Marsh Skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), with its square stems, diagnostic of the mint family; Queen of the Meadow (*Filipendula ulmaria*); Beach Pea and Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) ("What's that doing out here on a cobble beach?" John asked). We saw Meadowrue (*Thalictrum pubescens*) ("Why not?" I heard John mutter); Lady's Thumb (*Persicaria maculosa*), with the characteristic dark green splotch in the centre of the leaf that looks like a thumb print; Strand Wheat (*Leymus mollis*); Sea Rocket (*Cakile edentula*), with a vase-like constriction in fruit where it breaks off; the delicate green Map Lichen (*Rhizocarpon geographicum*) all over the beach rocks, and Dock (*Rumex* spp.).

A tiny Least Sandpiper flitted about on a small, sandy island close to the shore in the lagoon, and a flock of terns were clearly annoyed and flew threateningly overhead. The most stunning beauty on the barachois, however, was Robert's Geranium or Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) {cover picture} growing among an expanse of stranded beach rocks covered with map lichen, near the foundations of houses that were there long ago, but still subtly evident.

On the evening drive home to St. John's, I thought of how deprived one is to live on the Avalon Peninsula and

not to know such stunningly beautiful places as Barachois Pond, right on our doorstep. I've been to Placentia dozens of times to visit relatives and have taken Sunday drives to Cape St. Mary's. But I had never gone out to Point Verde and never heard of this beautiful lagoon, never walked this gorgeous old barachois where you can look across Placentia Harbour at Castle Hill and recall the hostilities between the French and the English and the early livyers eking out a living from the land and sea. I imagined them on the beach, bending over to pick up yaffles of salt cod after a day of good drying, with strong sun and a good breeze, like today. Despite their continual hard work and poverty, would it be too pastoral, too idyllic, I wondered to imagine that some of them noticed the beauty of Herb Robert, Sea

Rocket and Pondweed as the sun went down on afternoons such as this.

"How was your day?" Mary shouted from the kitchen as I came in the front door, dropping my backpack on the porch floor.

"Just as spectacular as yesterday," I said. "We dawdled by a lovely pond in the morning, had lunch on the barrens at Cape St. Mary's in thick fog, slapped on sunscreen and stripped down to our T-shirts on a big sandy beach at Gooseberry Cove and ended up on a barachois covered with map lichen outside a lagoon at Point Verde, across Placentia Harbour. Pure bliss! I'm absolutely exhausted. I hope we have nothing on for tonight."

"Sweet Mother of God, you're not going to beat yourself out traipsing

around all day again tomorrow, are you?" Mary asked. "You're not a young man anymore, you know."

"No, my dear, I do feel it in the bones, but do you remember old Mr. Frank Leonard in the white punt going out through the arm? Well, the faithful lean steadily into the wind, and at 8:30 a.m. I'm going to meet the wildflower crowd at the Klondyke Hotel in Bay Roberts. John says that we've got a pine plantation to visit on the Tilton Barrens. I knew about a chocolate factory and a rubber boot factory out around there, but a pine plantation? Go figure! I don't think I'll have any trouble sleeping tonight."

Note: I am grateful to John Maunder for his kindness in reviewing an earlier draft of this article and making helpful suggestions. All errors and omissions are mine. E.H.

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2009 Photo-competition: Second Place winners.



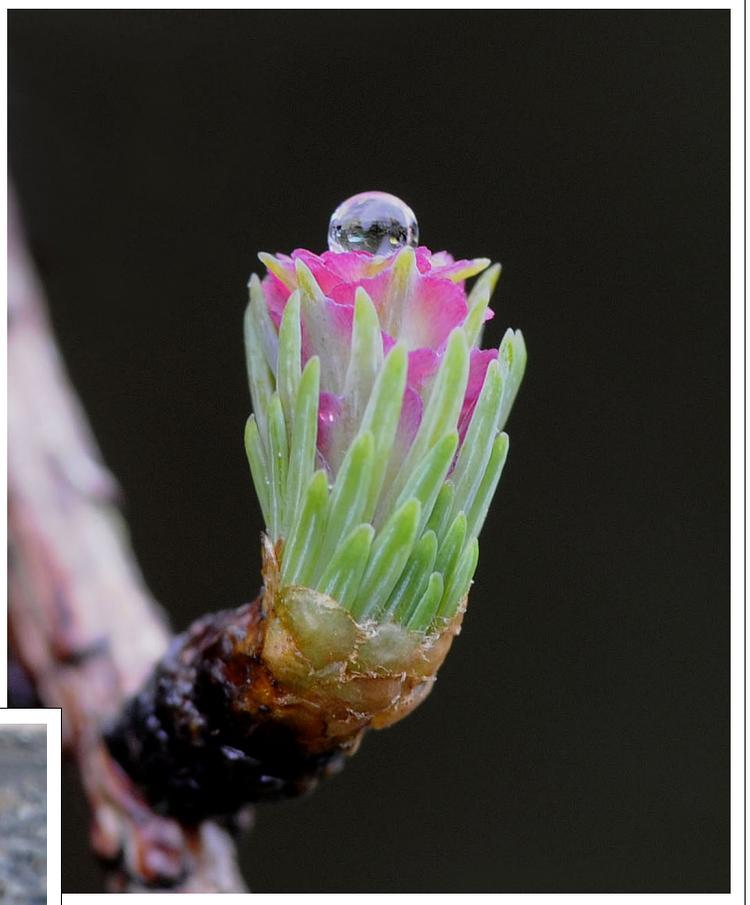
Plant portraits, other. Mary Bridson
Crackerberries (*Cornus canadensis*)



Artistic Abstract. Heather Saunders
Pitcherplant (*Sarracenia purpurea*)



Plant-animal interactions: Heather Saunders,
Lacewing on Round-leaved Sundew
(*Drosera rotundifolia*).



Closeups: Judith Blakeley,
Female flower of Common Larch (*Larix laricina*).



Plant portraits, flowers: Karen Herzberg,
False Arnica
(*Senecio pseudoarnica*).

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(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. <http://www.digitalnaturalhistory.com/meades.htm>)