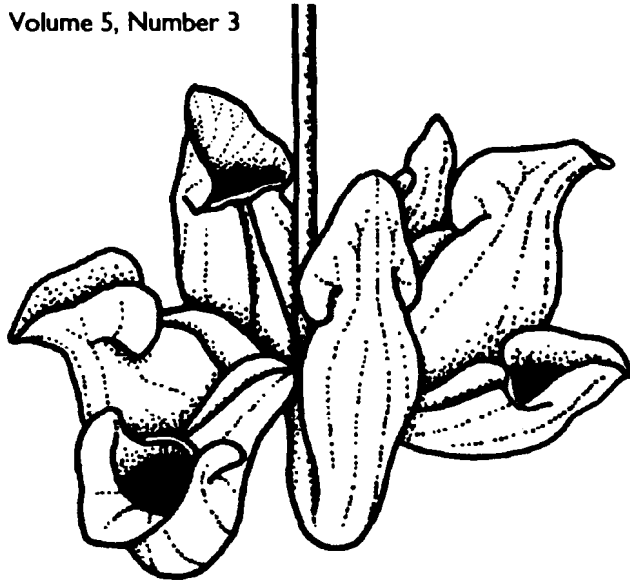




# SARRACENIA

Newsletter of the Canadian Wildflower Society  
Volume 5, Number 3

Newfoundland Chapter  
Summer 1995



## Summer Schedule

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### July 16: Gallows Cove to Torbay Beach

led by Dr. Howard Clase &/or Dr. Gordon Ringius

Meet at 2 P.M. at the Torbay Post Office, then carpool to the beginning of the trail. This will be the first of three walks along the coastal trail between Gallows Cove and Torbay. Participants will record the flowering species as they change over the remaining of the summer.

### August 13: Gallows Cove Trip # 2

### September 17: Gallow's Cove Trip # 3

### July 20-25: Annual Field Trip: ne Nfld.

led by Sue Meades & Todd Boland

This 5-day field trip will take the participants from Terra-Nova National Park to Cape Freels and Twillingate, then end in Tilt Cove to see the only North American population of *Dactylorhiza majalis* ssp. *praetermissa*.

### August 7: Whitbourne Area

guest leader: John Maunder, Newfoundland Museum.

John will lead us to the area around Sir Robert Bond's old estate, Markland, in Whitbourne, where several interesting horticultural introductions still persist. Date to be arranged. Call Luise for information.

### September 4: Labour Day Barbeque

at Sue & Bill Meades' place

Our annual end-of-the-season, pot-luck barbecue will be held at Sue & Bill's home in Flatrock again. If their house is sold before that date, the barbecue will be held at Luise Hermanutz & Dave Innes's home in Portugal Cove. Phone numbers (for directions) on page 2.

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### September 9-10: Southern Avalon: Salmonier Line & Trepassey

led by Sue & Bill Meades

This 2-day trip will include an overnight at Trepassey, following explorations along the Salmonier River, Peter's River, and the blanket bogs of the southern Avalon. We will probably encounter many caribou along the highway just west or north of Cape Race turnoff. Contact Jane Smith or Alice Close to sign up.

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CENTRE FOR NFLD. STUDIES

JUL 12 1995

MEMBER OF THE  
OF NEWFOUNDLAND

## Dues - General Announcements

Our fiscal year runs from June to May. Dues (**\$10.00**) are payable in June. If not received by October, newletters will be discontinued. A renewal form can be found on page 13. Dues for new members and 1995 renewals are accepted at any time by our treasurer, Alice Close, at 20 Laughlin Cr., St. John's, Nf., A1A 2G2.

Information about summer field trips can be obtained from the trip leaders. Field trips will go ahead, rain or shine, unless there is a severe storm. Call the trip leader if you are unsure of the weather situation.

The **1995-96 Executive** & numbers to call for information about future meetings, newsletters, or field trips are as follows:

Sue Meades, president & editor .....	335-2669
Gordon Ringius, secretary .....	579-6613
Alice Close, treasurer .....	579-1474
Todd Boland. ....	753-6027
Howard Clase .....	753-6415
Robin Day .....	579-9144
Luise Hermanutz .....	895-6851
Mary Woodruff, <i>Sarracenia</i> staff .....	738-3001

Any member who would like to write an article for the newsletter or submit a black and white graphic (preferably pen and ink), please contact Sue or Mary. Articles should be submitted on 3 1/4" computer disk (if possible) in Word Perfect 5 or 6, IBM (PC) compatible; b&w illustrations should be no larger than 4 X 6 inches. Articles and artwork published in the newsletter may not be reproduced without the authors' or artists' written consent.

Correspondence can be sent to Sue at 633 Pouch Cove Hwy, Flatrock, Nf., A1K 1C8 or Alice Close (address above).

## 1995 Field Trip: Northeast NF

This year's field trip will take place July 20-25, 1995. This 5-day trip will focus on the northeast portion of our province, with stops at Terra Nova NP, Cape Freels, Twillingate, and Tilt Cove. We plan to schedule the trip so that we arrive at peak flowering time for the Tilt Cove *Dactylorhiza*.

### Terra-Nova NP: Clode Sound Motel

*Thursday and Friday nights, July 20-21*

Meet Thursday, 6 p.m. for dinner (optional) at the motel. Call Alice to inform her if you plan to arrive in time for dinner. On Friday we will hike the Sandy Pond & Newman Sound Trails.

### Twillingate: various bed & breakfasts

*Saturday & Sunday nights, July 22-23*

On Saturday morning we will start the drive to Twillingate with a stop at Cape Freels to explore this northernmost portion of the hyper-oceanic barrens. Sunday will be spent exploring the Twillingate area.

### Tilt Cove: Bella Vista Inn, Baie Verte

*Monday night, July 24*

Monday will be spent driving from Twillingate to Baie Verte. If not enough time remains in the day to travel to Tilt Cove on Monday afternoon, we will proceed there on Tuesday morning. The trip ends after our visit to Tilt Cove. Participants should make their own arrangements for Tuesday night, July 25.

Remember - group leaders do not charge for their services, and transportation, lodging, meals, and insurance are the responsibility of participants. Since Sue will be out in the field until the 20th, please call Jane Smith (754-0949) or Alice Close if you have questions. We have over 20 participants signed up for the trip and it promises to be as interesting as last year's Northern Peninsula trek.

## Roadside Botanical Aliens

by Henry Mann

Early this September, during a week of glorious fall weather, I had the chance to catch the gulf ferry and motor on to Wolfville, Nova Scotia. During the drive through Cape Breton, I noted the roadsides were ablaze with the common fall wildflowers, including goldenrods, pearly everlasting, asters, hawkweeds, fall dandelion, and others, just as they are here on the Island, but the differences also caught my eye. Everywhere in waste places and in an almost continuous strip on both sides of the highway bloomed **Queen Anne's lace** or **wild carrot** (*Daucus carota*), which in my experience is extremely uncommon and virtually absent from most of our Island. I also noted that a number of other common Nova Scotia roadside species, such as **rabbit's-foot clover** (*Trifolium arvense*) and **common ragweed** (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*) were not present in much of Newfoundland. I wondered why this was so.

Is there something about Newfoundland that would tend to exclude or stifle the spread of these species? Perhaps our climate is harsher, the growing season shorter than that required to produce a good crop of seeds, or perhaps the soils are not as suitable or suitable areas are small, scattered, and separated by vast expanses of barrens and bogs. Or maybe the

seeds of these and other potential invaders just haven't arrived in suitable numbers or to suitable locations to begin centres of dispersal. Probably all of these and others account for some of the floral differences between us and Cape Breton. But these differences may be only transient, as in all likelihood, invading species are already marching up the TCH from Port aux Basques and the Codroy Valley to eventually spread across the Island as some have already done in recent times. Others are popping up here and there introduced in soils, with imported seeds, or spread through hydro-seeding and other such practices. Some no doubt have arrived in loads of trucked hay and others may have aviated here on or in waterfowl and other birds. Some may just have blown in on the winds. Traditionally, many of our early introduced weeds arrived at ports in ship's ballast or as hitch-hikers in the belongings of immigrants. This is still evidenced in the present day distributions of such species as **coltsfoot** (*Tussilago farfara*) and **knotty figwort** (*Scrophularia nodosa*).

There is little doubt that the kinds and numbers of "weedy" species will increase on the island in future years. Many of these will remain as colonizers of disturbed areas, waste places, and roadsides. Some may become

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**Note:** The species maps referred to as R&L, are those found in the recently published *Atlas of Vascular Plants of the Island of Newfoundland and the Islands of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon* (1992), by Ernest Rouleau and Gisele Lamoureux. It should be remembered that the dots on the maps only indicate where species have been collected; they do not indicate how common these species are in the areas where they are known to occur. Also, most of the weedy species are probably considerably

under-represented on these maps, as are for instance, purple loosestrife, **birdsfoot trefoil**, and **white sweet clover**. Collectors often tend to overlook weedy species and tend to overemphasize rarer, native species. The herbarium of the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College (SWGFC) contains sheets of all of the mentioned species from at least some of the locations recorded here, as well as many other introduced and indigenous species.

agricultural weeds and some, like **purple loosestrife** (*Lythrum salicaria*), have the potential to become weeds of natural areas, though probably only a few species will be hardy enough to compete with the natural vegetation, except perhaps in some of the richer, warmer valleys. Should we welcome these invaders? In some cases, probably "yes", in others probably not, but in any event, there seems little we can do about their coming. At the moment, we really don't know "who" is coming, when they will arrive, or whether they will be "good" or "bad" for us, because there is no one that has the time or the resources to monitor these ongoing, longterm changes in our vegetation. In the following pages, I will record some anecdotal observations about selected species, made during the past 19 years as a resident of the Humber Valley, in western Newfoundland.



**butter and eggs**  
*Linaria vulgaris*

### **Purple Loosestrife** (*Lythrum salicaria*)

This species has been recorded locally in wetlands across the Island more or less around centres on or near the TCH and also in the Bonne Bay area. Presumably wild populations are escapes from gardens and nurseries, where its cultivars have been promoted as showy and hardy perennials. It is not yet a wetland problem as elsewhere in North America, but warrants careful monitoring, especially in some of the river valleys. Purple loosestrife is probably more common than we are aware of at present, as more reports have come in from across the Island since my article in the Osprey 22(2) 1991. I am continuing to map this species on the Island and would appreciate receiving reports of its occurrence.

### **Butter and Eggs, Yellow Toadflax** (*Linaria vulgaris*)

This species seems to be becoming more common along roadsides and waste places in the Humber Valley and probably across the Island. It prefers dry, well drained sites and is mainly restricted to open, artificial habitats on dry soils, in much the same environment as can be found field horsetail and coltsfoot. In some agricultural areas of North America, it is a serious weed because of its rapid spread both by roots and by seeds.

### **Knotty Figwort** (*Scrophularia nodosa*)

This species appears to be restricted to two centres on the island, one around the Humber Valley/Bonne Bay region of the west and the other on the northeast Avalon. It does not seem to be dispersing much from these centres, where it was presumably introduced sometime prior to this century. Whether it is indigenous to Newfoundland, as Fernald claims, or introduced from Europe, as Rouleau and Scoggan suggest, is not clear. It is possibly one of those species that came early in the ballast of

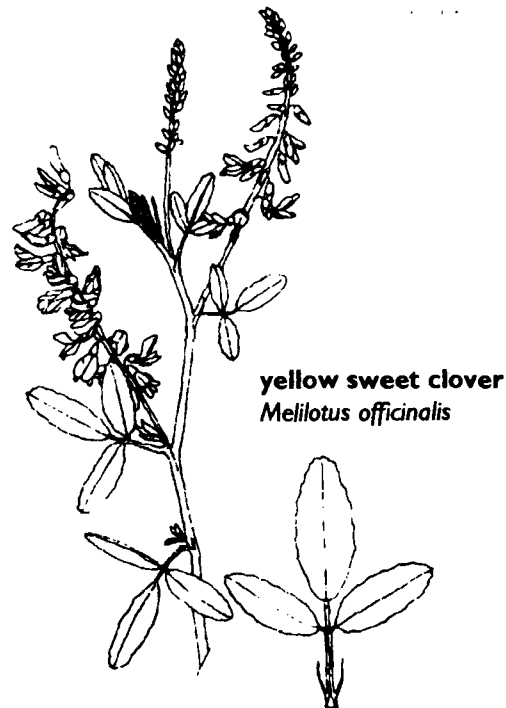
ships. On the west coast, it can be found on road and railway embankments and waste places, but also found amongst the native vegetation in undisturbed open, rocky or gravel limestone woods. It would be of interest to know if it occurs elsewhere on the Island besides the two above mentioned areas.

### **Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)**

Although the map in R&L shows only three locations in western Newfoundland, it can now be seen commonly along the TCH across the Island, especially in more recently constructed areas where presumably seeds are part of the hydro-seeding mixture. *Lotus* is more tolerant than many other legumes to droughty, water-logged, saline, acidic, and calcareous soils and because of this wide environmental survival capability, is a favorite for ditches, embankments, and rights-of-way. It is also one of the most common seed impurities of white clover and low grade grass seed. For all of its vigor, the plant does not tolerate shading very well. Another legume that may show up in hydro-seeded areas is the **crown vetch** (*Coronilla varia*). At present, the only Newfoundland specimen of this species known to me is in the I.J. Green collection (SWGK) from a roadside embankment on the arterial route around Corner Brook, collected in 1983.

### **White Sweet Clover (*Melilotus alba*)**

The map in R&L shows only a few scattered locations on the west coast and some in the St. John's area. When I came to the Humber Valley in 1975, it was uncommon along the TCH, but has become very common since, in places almost growing in continuous road-shoulder strips and now moving northward and eastward along the highways. It appears to be very vigorous in Newfoundland and will probably spread throughout in well drained disturbed mineral sites.



### **Yellow Sweet Clover (*Melilotus officinalis*)**

Yellow sweet clover appears to be uncommon. I have only seen it in scattered roadside locations in the Corner Brook area and the Humber Valley. R&L also records it from the Codroy Valley. This is an excellent honey and forage plant, often planted in agricultural areas, but is not as aggressive and hardy as its more robust white-flowering cousin. These two clovers are often used to improve soil structure and fertility. In some parts of Canada and the US, yellow sweet clover is considered a weed. It tends to grow in well drained mineral soils of waste areas and roadsides with a preference for limestone areas. Neither it nor white sweet clover are likely to invade wet, acidic, or wooded habitats of native vegetation.

### **Yellow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*)**

A number of roadside and railway embankment populations occur in the Corner Brook-Humber Valley region. The map in R&L only shows four locations, Corner Brook, St. John's, and two in the Hare Bay area of the Northern

Peninsula. This species prefers neutral to basic limestone soils of well drained, open, or lightly shaded waste places and roadsides and will probably become more common in years to come.

### **Rabbit's-foot Clover** (*Trifolium arvense*)

This is a very common plant of gravel road shoulders in Nova Scotia. I have collected it in a parking lot in Corner Brook and from the TCH shoulders in Terra Nova Park. There are no map locations in R&L on the Island, although it is recorded for Saint Pierre. It will almost certainly spread along road shoulders from areas of early introduction, such as the Terra Nova population.

### **Blueweed, Viper's Bugloss** (*Echium vulgare*)

This pretty "wildflower" has distinctive bright-blue trumpet-shaped flowers with long reddish stamens, which are particularly attractive to honey bees. However, "hands-off" is recommended as the sharp, stiff hairs on mature plants can lead to severe skin irritation. The map in R&L shows three records in the Corner Brook to Bonne Bay area. I have seen it in the Codroy Valley, the Humber Valley, and the sandy shores at the east end of Deer Lake. In none of these locations is it widely dispersed or common. It probably will become more dispersed and noticeable along roadsides, embankments, and waste places in the future.

### **Bittersweet, Nightshade** (*Solanum dulcamara*)

Bittersweet, a semi-climbing woody vine, is common in waste places in the Corner Brook and Humber Valley regions. I have seen it growing in a number of natural alluvial thickets and in rocky open woods. Its pretty blue flowers belie the fact that all parts of the plant are poisonous, including the orange to red berries, which may remain on the plants well

into winter. The R&L map shows several collections on the Avalon Peninsula and in the Corner Brook area. How widely it is dispersed and become integrated into the native vegetation beyond the Humber Valley is unknown at present. The **eastern nightshade** (*Solanum ptycanthum*), has also been reported from a few sites in eastern and western Newfoundland and may be a species to look for in the future.

### **Queen Anne's Lace, Wild Carrot** (*Daucus carota*)

Although very common everywhere in the maritimes, it is apparently absent from most of Newfoundland. It has been seen growing in the Codroy Valley and collections have been made from Loch Leven and the Humber Valley, but it only occurs as scattered individuals. No map is available for this species in R&L. There seems to be no obvious obstacle to Wild Carrot becoming much more common along our roads in the future. On the other hand, **wild caraway** (*Carum carvi*), from the same family, is very common in western Newfoundland and almost seems to be filling the places normally occupied by wild carrot.

### **Meadow Goat's-beard** (*Tragopogon pratensis*)

Goat's-beard is known to occur throughout the Humber Valley, below the town of Deer Lake, in waste places and especially on the old railway bed. Agricultural practices and roadbuilding will certainly provide suitable habitat in the foreseeable future. It is not reported elsewhere from the Island and whether it will disperse from this centre of introduction remains to be seen.

### **Coltsfoot** (*Tussilago farfara*)

Coltsfoot is very common on the west coast from disturbed areas along roadsides to alluvial thickets and even noted in disturbances

on the top of the Annieopsquotch Mountains. It appears to be still absent from TCH shoulders through much of the central Island, except a few patches have been noted at Grand Falls. Coltsfoot requires mineral soil for seed establishment and seems to prefer calcareous areas, but has a fairly broad substrate range.

### Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)

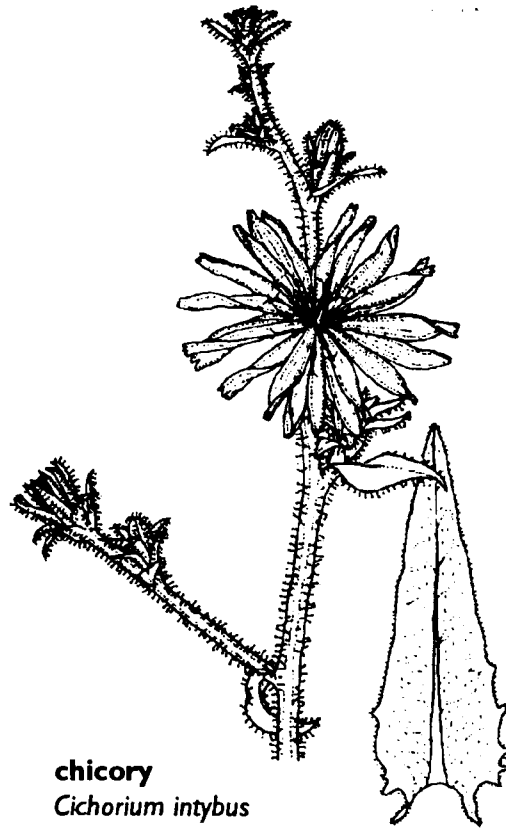
Wild chicory does not seem to be very common on the west coast, although scattered small patches have been seen on road shoulders in the Bay of Islands/Humber Valley/Bonne Bay areas. The map in R&L also shows a collection in central Newfoundland and several from St. John's. It probably has the potential for becoming much more common along roadsides and waste places throughout the Island.

### Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacoris*)

Several populations of this tall, pretty iris occur in the Corner Brook/Bay of Islands area, probably escapes from horticultural plantings. It does not appear to be naturally dispersing in any noticeable way. All known populations occur in wet seepages or wet roadside ditches.

### Smooth brome grass (*Bromus inermis*)

R&L provides only a few map records in central Newfoundland and near St. John's. for this species. It also occurs commonly in the Deer Lake/Cormack/Corner Brook area and is probably more common across the Island than recorded. Smooth brome grass is a commonly grown forage plant in agricultural areas. In well-drained upland sites it has the potential for displacing natural vegetation. A number of grasses have been and are being introduced for agricultural and horticultural purposes and several must certainly be spreading on the Island. Grasses are more difficult to identify and monitor than showy flowering herbs, especially from a distance, but much interesting information could be provided by individuals



chicory  
*Cichorium intybus*

willing to make the effort to learn their recognition and to map their distributions along roadsides on the Island.

### Common Reed, Reed Grass (*Phragmites australis*)

Only one population of this huge cosmopolitan grass is known on the Island - from the Stephenville area - in the brackish coastal location on the former American Harmon Air Force Base. It is a vigorous species that has the potential to spread, however, the short growing season on the Island may not allow it to set sufficient viable seed. Reports indicate that seed viability and seedling establishment is low for this species, even under more favorable growing conditions. Once established though, it can tolerate a broad range of freshwater to highly brackish conditions. There certainly are many aquatic situations on the island where it could flourish, if transferred vegetatively. It has many

reported uses, such as thatching and paper making, as well as providing food and shelter for wildlife. Like cattails, it can also block drainage ditches under certain circumstances.

### Cattail (*Typha latifolia*)

In 1975, *Typha* was relatively uncommon in the Humber Valley, however, since then, it has noticeably spread in wet roadside ditches and has marched eastward along the TCH to the Avalon Peninsula. R&L list it as indigenous to Newfoundland, possibly with scattered populations on the southwest and west southcoasts and north-central areas. It appears that mineral sites opened up by road construction and maintained by high levels of roadsalt runoff may have favoured the spread of this wetland species. It prefers waters high in dissolved nutrients, but apparently can also tolerate acid conditions to some extent, although it does not seem to easily establish itself in acid peatlands. *Typha* can be a serious aquatic weed in water reservoirs, farm ponds, and in irrigation canals and drainage ditches by impeding water flow and increasing siltation. On the positive side, it can be useful as human food, in crafts and cottage industries, for biomass productions, to purify polluted waters, and as wildlife food and shelter. It would be interesting to know if here in Newfoundland it is showing any signs of invading inland natural sites away from coastal brackish influences or disturbance.

**Editor's note:** Although R&L may list this as native, its pattern of distribution certainly is characteristic of an introduced species. On the Avalon, the populations I have seen are all along roadways that receive much roadsalt. One obvious example is the small cattail marsh at the south end of the Golf Course along Logy Bay Road. However, I know of no natural sites in which this species has become established.

Many more common and uncommon roadside "weeds" occur in Newfoundland than these mentioned here. Anyone interested in this aspect of our flora should certainly read Karyn Cooper's article **Alien Anthropophytic Vegetation of the Avalon Peninsula**, in the book published by the Geography Department of MUN (Macpherson and Macpherson, *The Natural Environment of Newfoundland, Past and Present*). Despite two-hundred dollar words like "anthropophytic" (plants spread by man), the article provides a lot of interesting information about this neglected part of our vegetation. My observations are, of course, very limited and others will certainly have additional information about some of these species. Do your observations agree with some of my interpretations? Are these plants common, uncommon, or absent in your area? I encourage others to note some of our introduced weedy species of roadsides and waste places and keep records of their occurrence as they travel the Island. I would like to hear your observations about species that have the potential to spread throughout our province.



**dandelion**  
*Taraxacum officinale*



## The Roadside Exotics of the Avalon

by Todd Boland

The previous article by Henry Mann describes his thoughts and observations about introduced 'weeds' in Newfoundland, the Humber Valley in particular. I have also noticed distinct differences between the common roadside wildflowers of Cape Breton and mainland Nova Scotia compared to those found commonly along Newfoundland roadsides. There are even distinct differences between roadside 'weeds' of western versus eastern Newfoundland.

As Henry noted, weeds have a tendency to be deposited in one area, then radiate outwards into suitable habitats. The **cattail**, *Typha latifolia* is a good example of a plants that began in western Newfoundland and is now spreading eastwards, although it is still relatively uncommon on the Avalon.

Some of Newfoundland's exotics have been with us for so long that they are now ubiquitous, found in disturbed areas throughout the island. These include **dandelion**, **yarrow**, **oxeye daisy**, and **common hawkweed**. Others like the **fall dandelion**, *Leontodon autumnalis*, are so successful that they even inhabit natural areas.

To compliment and expand on Henry's article, I will proceed to describe some of the roadside wildflowers which appear to be more common on the Avalon than elsewhere on the island. Ernest Rouleau and Gisele Lamoureux's *Atlas of Vascular Plants of the Island of Newfoundland and the Islands of St. Pierre-et-Miquelon*, (1992) (hereafter referred to as R&L) record the proceeding species as being mostly restricted to the Avalon Peninsula, St John's in particular. Of course, as Henry noted, these species may exist elsewhere without having been officially recorded as such.

Please note that the following description of introduced roadside wildflowers is far from

exhaustive. Due to space considerations, I will restrict the descriptions to a few of the more interesting or distinct species.

### Wild Chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*)

This umbellifer may not be familiar to people outside of St. John's. Within the city however, it is very common, especially along water courses such as Rennie's River, Waterford River and along the shores of Quidi Vidi. This species is usually erroneously referred to as Queen Anne's lace, but as Henry pointed out, the true Queen Anne's lace is relatively rare in Newfoundland. Three simple features will separate the two species: wild chervil flowers in June and July, has non-bristly seeds and remained as a flat-topped head even when in seed. Queen Anne's lace flowers in late July and August, has bristly seeds and the entire umbel folds in on itself when in seed. R&L only record this species in St. John's, and personally, I have never seen it outside of the city. Even M.L. Fernald (Gray's Manual of Botany) specifically notes se Newfoundland as being one of the few North American sites for this species.

### Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*)

This is another umbellifer which, to my knowledge, is restricted to St. John's. I have not seen it elsewhere on the island, although it may exist in larger centers. R&L does not supply a distribution map of this species. It is certainly not a common roadside wildflower even in the city, but may be encountered locally along roadsides, in lawns and meadows. Plants produce a basal rosette of pinnate leaves and the smooth 30-60 cm flower stems produce small umbels of tiny white flowers. Overall, the plants are more delicate-looking than our more common roadside umbellifers. As there is no

distribution map for the species, it warrants closer observations from around the island. Sue reports it from lawns in Pleasantville, St. John's.

### **Toadflax (*Linaria* spp.)**

There are three species of toadflax in the St. John's area; the **butter and eggs** (*Linaria vulgaris*), the **blue toadflax** (*L. repens*) and the **striped toadflax** (*L. sepium*). The latter is thought to be a hybrid between the first two. R&L records *L. vulgaris* scattered across the island; *L. repens* is recorded from the Avalon, Corner Brook, and Roddickton; *L. sepium* is only recorded from St. John's. Certainly, in St. John's, all three are a conspicuous part of our local roadside flora. All species reproduce vegetatively by underground stolons, as well as by seed. They are difficult to eradicate once present in an area. Despite the ease to which they could potentially spread, they are still not as common elsewhere on the island as they are in St. John's. They do occur in areas outside those recorded by R&L and may now be in the process of rapid expansion.

### **Knotty Figwort, Pigweed** (*Scrophularia nodosa*)

Henry describes this plant as being quite common in the Humber Valley. R&L records this species in the Humber district, Rocky Harbour and the greater St. John's area, but not St. John's itself. I must admit that I have never seen this plant within the city, although I know of a site located in an old gravel pit next to Windsor Lake. While on a birding expedition this past October, I discovered a large population of pigweed on the roadside just south of Renew's. Here, they grew among **mountain alders, fireweed, and rough-stemmed goldenrod**. I cannot guess why they do not occur in the city itself. There are no records from central Newfoundland, so it should be sought in this area.

### **Lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllos*)**

Everyone is familiar with the garden Lupine and obviously, those that grow along roadsides are garden escapes. The typical wild form has blue-purple flowers, while garden cultivars are far less restricted in colour range. Once in the 'wild', these pink, white, yellow, or red colour forms often die-out and self-seed back to the original blue colour. Lupines are relative newcomers to the Newfoundland roadside scene. The earliest naturalized plants probably arose from plants that self-seeded from gardens or cabins near roads. Lupines are very good at colonizing poor, disturbed soils, thanks to nitrogen-fixing bacteria on their roots. Many cabin owners located on the Trans Canada Highway of the Avalon have now hand-scattered lupine seeds along the roadsides, helping the spread of this species. However, lupines are short-lived and if seeds are not regularly scattered, they do have a tendency to die-out. As a result, they may never spread to the extent of other roadside wildflowers.

### **Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)**

Growing up, I always referred to this plant as the 'pea-blower'. The hollow stems were eagerly sought by local children, who would use them for blowing split peas, navy beans or more than likely, small rocks at your enemies (I am suddenly having a flash-back). On the island, R&L only record this plant from Port-aux-Choix, Burgeo and Paradise Sound on the Burin Peninsula. I am surprised that they did not record it from St. John's since they have been here as long as I remember. The plant is the epitome of an obnoxious weed, being very invasive and difficult to eradicate. The stems may reach to 2 m, making them one of our tallest roadside exotics. They are especially common in old abandoned gardens of the Avalon and I suspect they are rapidly spreading elsewhere on the island. There is now a large-

leaved version of this plant, *Polygonum sachalinense*, which is making its presence known around the island, although for the present, they are relatively rare. Generally, I have only seen the latter species growing as a garden plant.

### **Burdock** (*Arctium minus*)

This is another plant from my childhood, usually called 'sticky-buds' by local children. Like the Japanese knotweed, we could be regularly counted on to get into trouble with this plant too. A mother's nightmare was removing the prickly burs from your best sweater or worse still, your hair! (but of course, this NEVER happened to me!). R&L only record this species from a few sites; St. John's, Holyrood, Gooseberry Cove, and Grand Falls. However, this species certainly occurs scattered across the island. Its mode of seed dispersal, sticking to animal fur (and people's clothes) via hooked spines on the phyllaries, should enable this biennial species to spread far and wide, given enough time.

### **Tansy Ragwort, Stinking Willie** (*Senecio jacobaea*)

This biennial ragwort is one of our most robust roadside wildflowers and may exceed one meter in height. The numerous leaves have the typical 'tansy' fragrance and the flat-topped clusters of yellow daisies are produced from August until frost. R&L have isolated records from around the island; St. John's, Holyrood, Roddickton, and Codroy/Port-aux-Basques. My observations show it to be well distributed around the Avalon, but relatively uncommon in central and western Newfoundland. Its niche appears to be filled by **sow thistle** (*Sonchus arvensis*) in western Newfoundland; in central regions, the **common tansy** (*Tanacetum vulgare*) takes its place.

### **Mouse-ear Hawkweed** (*Hieracium pilosella*)

Distinguishing among our 12 species of local hawkweeds can be daunting to the amateur wildflower enthusiasts, however, the mouse-ear hawkweed is easy to identify, since it is the only local species that regularly produces only a single flower per stem. Mouse-ear hawkweed is one of our earliest blooming hawkweeds and is quite common along St. John's roadsides and waste places. It is hard to believe that R&L only records this species from the St. John's vicinity. I have never bothered to notice this species elsewhere because I assumed it was island-wide, but perhaps I am being presumptuous in this conclusion. Certainly, it spreads by both stolons and dandelion-like seed, thus has the potential to spread rapidly to all disturbed habitats.

### **Common Groundsel** (*Senecio vulgaris*) and **Sticky Groundsel** (*Senecio viscosus*)

These two annual species of groundsel are certainly 'city' plants. Very common along roadsides and in gardens in St. John's, they become scarce in areas away from large communities. Rarely does one find them along lonely stretches of road. R&L record common groundsel as island-wide but sticky groundsel is only recorded in Gander and Grand Falls. I have seen the sticky groundsel in St. John's, Bay Roberts, and Clarenville, so presumably, they occur elsewhere. Both of these groundsel produce small yellow daisies from July onwards, until a heavy frost. Both have a somewhat similar appearance, but as the name suggests, the sticky groundsel has distinctly glandular (sticky) leaves while the common groundsel has smooth, fleshy leaves.

### **Coltsfoot** (*Tussilago farfara*)

Coltsfoot is certainly not rare in St. John's, although it is not nearly as common as it is in

Corner Brook. Coltsfoot is a calciphile weed, preferring alkaline (limestone) substrates. This is not a problem in Corner Brook, as the underlying rock is limestone, but St. John's does not have any local limestone deposits. Here, Coltsfoot originally grew near concrete

foundations, where lime leached out of the cement. I say originally, because I have now seen this plant growing in areas where no concrete is evident. However, they are certainly more likely to be found near concrete in one form or another.

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## Notes from the President

by Sue Meades

This newsletter is devoted to discussions of some of our more common roadside weeds. Fernald, in *Gray's Manual of Botany* defines a weed as "a troublesome or aggressive plant which intrudes where not wanted." Using this definition, a weed does not necessarily have to be an introduced species. In fact, some of our most "troublesome plants" are in fact native. **Mountain alder** (*Alnus crispa*) is an aggressive colonizer, which, like the lupine, fixes nitrogen. However, along roadsides, thick patches can obscure grazing moose from a driver's vision and lead to unfortunate accidents. But, for all my swearing on the numerous "ratty alders" in my driveway, they have increased the soil fertility and, particularly in the spring, have a charm of their own. Everything is relative. Another native plant that many people will be pleased to see, as its profuse blooms open this week, is the **sheep laurel** or **lambkill** (*Kalmia angustifolia*). Most of us appreciate the splash of color that this plant adds to the barrens, but to a forester in central Newfoundland, *Kalmia* is an aggressive shrub that can out-compete regenerating spruce on certain sites and needs to be "controlled". The potential for *Kalmia* to dominate a site is no more obvious than on the Avalon, where the presence of numerous sun-bleached starigans show that these barrens were once heavily forested. If you look at what they do best, weeds are very successful colonizers, and as such, are useful in stabilizing soils. We condemn the "weed" because it grows where we do not want it, but maybe it's our percep-

tions that should be altered. Rather than fighting to gain control, perhaps we should focus on how to make these unique plants work to our advantage?

There are over 400 species of introduced flowering plants in Newfoundland, many of which are considered "weeds". In the St. John's and northeast Avalon area, there are two often-confused, crucifers, or mustards, that grab my attention each spring. Judging from the number of times I am asked what "that white or pinkish flower along the road is", I am not alone in my appreciation for these two alien species. One is the **cuckoo flower** or **lady's smock** (*Cardamine pratensis*), which has white to lilac or pinkish



sheep laurel  
*Kalmia angustifolia*



cuckoo flower  
*Cardamine pratensis*



dame's rocket  
*Hesperis matronalis*

blooms and *compound leaves*. This attractive plant is very common in wet roadside ditches and along streams in Torbay, Flatrock, and Pouch Cove. A similar but less common plant, with purple (occasionally white) flowers and *simple, ovate leaves*, is the **dame's rocket** (*Hesperis matronalis*). This species prefers drier

habitats, often occurring at the edge of moist woods and along roadsides. Last July, when we visited some of the roadsides in Petries, near Corner Brook, dame's rocket and **Pennsylvania bittercress** (*Cardamine pennsylvanica*) were found. Again, the *Cardamine* preferred the wetter sites.

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To renew membership, fill in the above form and send it, along with \$10.00, to the Newfoundland Chapter, Canadian Wildflower Society, c/o Alice Close, treasurer; 20 Laughlin Crescent, St. John's, A1A 2G2.