



Native Plant Study Group

Naked Broomrape (*O. uniflora*), California Broomrape (*Orobanche californica* ssp. *californica*), and Vancouver Groundcone or Poque (*Boschniakia hookeri*)

Parasite is a term that does not usually conjure visions any of us wish to explore, however, in the world of botany, the association can produce images of beauty and curiosity.

Vancouvergroundconeformsanassociationwithourubiquitous salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) and perhaps some other ericaceous species. It's amazing that we aren't knee deep in groundcone plants, according to Plants of Coastal BC, a single plant can

produce more than 300,000 seeds. Groundcones are well camouflaged and difficult to spot, they look like an upright fir cone, with a yellow to brown to purplish colouration and tiny flowers leaning out from the "scales" or leaves. The fleshy tuber-like underground stem was harvested by First Nations people for food and as a good luck charm.



As some of the more showy springtime flowers fade away and you ponder how quickly a season passes by, look closely in the woods and hillsides for a glimpse of our more unique and remarkable plants.

"The curious common name of broomrape is derived from "rapum genistae," referring to a robust, parasitic species that grows on the roots of broom (*Cytisus* sp). Perhaps the original people who

began using this name thought the parasite resembled an old word vegetable called rape (possibly *Brassica napus*). It is doubtful that the common name has anything to do with the verb rape" (from waynesword.palomar.edu/wayne.htm).



Naked broomrape is a delightful tiny plant that has a freeloading relationship with stonecrop, springgold and various other plants in our area. The combination of the bright yellow, flat-topped flowers of the stonecrop, intermingled with intense purple, single, upright blooms of the broomrape will captivate even the most confirmed annual gardener. Occasionally the vibrant pink hues of sea blush will be at hand to further enchant the viewer.

There is a much more subtle relationship between California broomrape and gumweed. In this instance the broomrape sets itself a short distance away from the gumweed plant and produces its plum coloured, clustered flowers long before the gumweed throws up its golden disks. It is commonly found on sandy beaches and you can look for it right now at Esquimalt Lagoon along the inner side of the road. It is also less frequently found on moss balds and there are about a dozen plants on Camas Hill.



NEWS

Native Plant Study Group

RITHET'S BOG RESTORATION

NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

(Sub-group of the Victoria Horticultural Society)

The NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP is a non-political group dedicated to learning about B.C. native plants, as wild populations and in garden settings, and to supporting conservation of native plants and their habitats. The group is guided by a volunteer steering committee. Members are encouraged to volunteer for this committee. Participation in outside events, by the group, or by individual members using the NPSG name, is dependant on approval of the steering committee or, where indicated, by the at-large membership. Activities requiring funding must receive approval by the general membership.

Rithet's Bog is considered a raised dome bog and is the last of 7 bogs that once existed in the Victoria area explained Sharon Hartwell, passionate and erudite defender of the bog. Sharon likened Rithet's Bog to a jelly donut, with the rocky uplands as the outside of the donut and the bog area as the jelly. Delesalle (1998) in *Understanding Wetlands*, further describes bogs as "acidic and nutrient poor wetlands which receive the majority of their water supply through precipitation. They experience little or no flushing from surface or groundwater, resulting in very low nutrient inflow. A domed bog forms when peat accumulates higher than the surrounding land, drawing the water table upward".

Many changes have occurred since European contact, the bog was ditched in the 1880's and again in the 1920's and 50's, initiating many changes in plant composition and water flow. Pines in particular, appreciated the drier conditions and dramatically increased from 10-15% cover to approximately 90% cover today.

After World War Two, the perimeter shrublands were cleared, removing most of the Labrador tea (should that now read Newfoundland and Labrador tea?). The conversion to farmland, townhomes, residential, businesses and roadways has further disrupted the hydrology of the bog.

In the 1960's Rithet's Bog was recognized as valuable natural green space and it was donated by the Guinness family to the District of Saanich and designated

a Conservation Area. Farming stopped and willows appeared, causing the water table to drop and a precipitous loss of sphagnum moss, kalmia and sundew. Today only a few very small patches of sphagnum still occur.

Karen Golinsky and Nancy Turner prepared an inventory of the bog and compared it to other similar bogs. They found the water levels to be highly fluctuating whereas in other bogs the water level would not drop below 50 cm from the surface, in Rithet's the water could drop 90-95 cm below the surface.

With assistance from Duck's Unlimited and \$25,000 from Saanich as well as partnerships with DFO, HCTF and BC Hydro, restoration based on Karen's plan was begun, to keep water levels no lower than 50 cm. below the surface.

A baseline bird survey was conducted which found 122 species using the bog, including some duck species, which allowed continued support from Duck's Unlimited. Flora and fauna surveys found several rare species, including Vancouver Island beggarticks (*Bidens* (continued from page 1)

amplissima) and Van. Island ringlets

SCHEDULE OF SPEAKERS
September 15 2005

See you in the fall!

7:00 pm Room D116
MacLaurin Building, UVic.



WHAT'S UP

Native Plant Study Group

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fri May 20
Birding Mount Newton with Cheryl Mackie at 7:00 am.

Sat May 21
• Birding Swan Lake with Chris Saunders at 8:00 am.
• Ha-bat-itat at Francis/King Regional Park (Saanich) at 1:00 pm

Sun May 22
• Uplands Park Exploration with Matt Fairbairns at 10:00 am.
• Natural History near Francis King Park w Barry and Jeremy Gattens at 7am.

Mon May 23
• Natural History Cycling Tour of the Galloping Goose Trail with Rick Schortinghuis at 8:00 am.
• Birding by Ear at Mill Hill Regional Park (Langford) at 8:00 am

Fri May 27
Birding the Colquitz River Trail with Rick Schortinghuis at 7:00 am.

Sat May 28
• Green Spaces Project Guided Hike on Threatened Federal Lands in Colwood with Norm Mogenson at 10:00 am.
• Seashore Snoop at Island View Beach Regional Park (Central Saanich) at 1:00 pm

Sun May 29
Victoria Natural History Society 2nd Annual Picnic to include Birding with Gordon Hart and Marie O'Shaughnessy at 7:00 am, Botany with Joy Finlay and Agnes Lynn at 10:00 am, Picnic at 12:00 noon, Insects with James Miskelly at 12:30 pm and Intertidal Exploration with Phil Lambert and CRD Naturalists at 1:30 pm at Tower Point, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park.

Sun May 29
Life on the Rocks at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park (Metchosin) from 1:30 till 3:30 pm

Sat Jun 4
• Birding Elk and Beaver Lake with Tom Gillespie at 7:00 am.
• Geology Field Trip w Nick Massey and Vic Levsen at Finlayson Point at 8:30 am.
• Day trip to Lohbrunner Rock Garden at UBC Botanical Gardens.
• Spittlebugs and Lady Bugs at Devonian Regional Park (Metchosin) at 1:00 pm



Golden Paintbrush

Sun Jun 5
• Hummingbird Banding Demo w Cam Finlay at Goldstream Nature House at 8 am
• Eagle Heights with Hans Roemer. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 am
• Ugh, A Slug! at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (Saanich) at 1:00 pm

Sat Jun 11
Seashore Snoop at Albert Head Lagoon Regional Park (Metchosin) at 1:00 pm

Sat Jun 11 & Sun Jun 12
Two day trip to Mt Townsend in WA to see rhododendron macrophyllum and other plants (strenuous). More details will be posted later, trip dependent on availability of leaders (only one of either Mt Townsend trip or Jordan Ridge trip will take place).

Sun Jun 12
Mystery Creature at Matheson Lake Regional Park (Central Saanich) at 1:00 pm

Sat Jun 18
• Butterflies in Duncan w Derrick Marvin. Meet at Helmcken Park & Ride at 8 am.
• Day trip to Jordan Ridge Meadows. More details will be posted later, trip dependent on availability of leaders (only one of either Mt Townsend trip or Jordan Ridge trip will take place).
• Hike from Park to Park at Francis/King Regional Park from 10:00 am till 2:00 pm

Sun Jun 19
Sun Day Sunday at Gonzales Hill Regional Park drop in from 12:00 till 2:00 pm

Sat Jun 25
• Urban Trees, Native and Exotic, in Victoria with John Heningman starting at Ross Bay Cemetery at 10:00 am.
• Seals! Seals! at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park drop in from 11:00 am till 2:00 pm

Sun Jun 26
Slippery Slopes on Rocky Shores at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park from 12:30 - 2:30 pm

Sat Jul 2 or Sun Jul 3
Day trip to San Juan Ridge sub-alpine area. Trip dependent on availability of leaders.

Sat Jul 30 to Mon Aug 1
Two or three day combined trip to Mt Arrowsmith (sub-alpine & alpine, strenuous) and Paradise Meadows (subalpine, easy). More details will be posted later.

Contact www.cadborbaytoday.com for details as they become available.

(*Coenonympha californica* ssp. *insulana*), a butterfly that is dependant on moist meadows for winter habitat. Dipwells were installed to measure water levels, and water quality was assessed for pH, turbidity and dissolved oxygen content. The size, health and vigour of the remaining sphagnum patches is monitored and some hardhack is removed, to reduce competition to the moss. Willows, which were occluding the ground layer, were cut down and reused in restoration projects along Colquitz Creek and a large weir was installed to regulate water levels. Following Adolf Ceska's advice, a perimeter ditch was installed to reduce pollution from runoff.

NPSG members watched an excellent video on the installation of the weir and willow removal. To date the weir has been successful in regulating water flow to the desired levels and there is some hope that the sphagnum patches are becoming stronger and growing in size. The willows and hardhack need continual removal and the pines are slowly dying off due to the higher water levels. If you would like to volunteer to help restore Rithet's Bog, please contact Sharon Hartwell.

HELP WANTED

A virtual exhibit titled The Healing Power of Plants is being developed by The Coalition of Canadian Health Care Museums and Archives for the Virtual Museum of Canada and help is needed to find interesting presentations on medicinal plants across Canada.

As part of this exhibit, they want to include information about and links to some of the sites across Canada that present information about medicinal plants. These could include museum exhibits; interpreted gardens, parks, or nature trails; or sites that feature regular public programming on the topic. They are particularly interested in finding sites that offer a unique perspective, such as the use of plants by a particular cultural group, or the effect of gathering plants for medicine on the environment.

Their only restrictions are that the feature needs to be in place for the long term, since the virtual exhibit will be up for at least

NATIVE PLANT PROPAGATION WORKSHOP

Pacific Centre is hosting a workshop on native plant propagation on Saturday May 28th from 10 am till noon. Topics will include: collection, ethics, salvage, greenhouse conditions and propagation. Location is 3221 Heatherbell, near the Esquimalt Lagoon in Colwood.

Contact Karen Lehmann at 478-7862 or kallehmann@shaw.ca to register or for more information.



Deltoid Balsamroot

5 years [no temporary exhibits, please!] and that it needs to be substantial and informative enough that a visitor who seeks it out isn't disappointed [more than a couple of herbal tonic bottles in the corner of a case!]

So, if your site, or a site in your vicinity, or even a site that you vaguely recall from your holiday three years ago, offers the public information about medicinal use of plants, they'd like to hear from you.

Please send a brief description and a contact email address or phone number, if possible. They will then contact the site for more information and determine if it's possible for them to include it. It's a great opportunity to get a little free promotion!

Kathryn Pankowski, Interpretive Planner
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613-547-3199



MAY 2005



NOTES

Native Plant Study Group