

Foreword

This year's *Oklahoma Native Plant Record* is all about learning from history. Publishing Dr. Marilyn Semtner's 1972 Master's thesis this year offers us an opportunity to gain another perspective on why some introduced species become invasive in natural habitats where others do not. As the Oklahoma Invasive Plant Council, formed in 2008, seeks ways to guide our state agencies to determine best practices for preserving our native plant species, research like this, both old and new, can inform policy decisions.

Mr. Randall Ledford has collected extensive information regarding use of Oklahoma's native plant species by the Pawnee Native Americans. He gives us a preliminary plant list that is sure to become part of an important resource that can be used in Pawnee cultural education and by ethnobotanists. With full respect for the Pawnee culture, his list includes scientific names as well as Pawnee names and descriptions of uses that have been carefully researched and whose content has been approved by the Pawnee elders. We are hoping to build interest and anticipation in this area of social and botanical research overlap. His goal is to collect and organize a larger body of this little known ethnobotany for wider dissemination.

Dr. Gloria Caddell and Ms. Kristi Rice have provided us with the long anticipated flora of Alabaster Caverns State Park. It also compares flora in those Gypsum outcrops with two other previous studies done ten years ago at Selman Living Lab in Woodward County and on a ranch in Major County.

Teaching and inspiring botany students at McLoud High School and at the University of Oklahoma Biological Station, Dr. Bruce Smith has contributed several articles to the *Record* in the past. This year he offers us a comparison study of two oak forests based on data collected by his students. Engaging his students in plant distribution and ecological studies, he strives to fulfill our need to collect and preserve data for the future — a future history, to be used by future scientists.

This year our "Critics' Choice Essay" is from Dr. Wayne Elisens. He tells us how new software and digitization methods are bringing new light to historical collections, virtually. Herbaria are making specimen data and images globally accessible. We will be able to see and learn from historical and current collections from all over the world.

The Oklahoma Native Plant Record will keep passing on the science and building on what we know. We do not want to lose, or fail to learn, what future generations will need to know to keep Oklahoma's native plant species thriving in Oklahoma. As our practice of publishing historical, unpublished work shows, we believe in the importance of historical studies and how they can inform current science policies and future research. Moving into the future, all previous volumes of *The Record* are now available on the internet at <http://ojs.library.okstate.edu/osu/index.php/index>, and it is listed on the Directory of Open Access Journals through <http://www.doaj.org>.

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