

Bulletin of the

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY of OREGON

To increase the knowledge of members and public in identification
and conservation of the native plants of the Pacific Northwest

Volume 18 No. 9

November 1985

ISSN 0884-5999

CHAPTER NEWS

Blue Mountain

--- For information about November activities, call Chapter President Bruce Barnes, 276-5547.

Corvallis

11 Nov., Mon. Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Cordley Hall Rm. 2113. HELL'S CANYON: CURRENT PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED LEGISLATION. Presentation by Nancy Peterson, ONRC, and slide show on roadless areas in this 660,000 acres National Recreation Area.

Emerald

11 Nov., Mon. Meeting, 8:00 p.m. Amazon Park Community Center, north craft building. Speaker will be Miles Hemstrom, Plant Ecologist for the Willamette National Forest.

High Desert

--- For information about November activities, call Chapter President Stu Garrett, 389-6981.

Mid Columbia

6 Nov., Wed. Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Mosier School.

North Coast

--- For information about November activities, call Ingeborg Day, 368-5629.

Portland

12 Nov., Tues. Meeting, 7:00 p.m. First Methodist Church, 1838 SW Jefferson. FALL COLORS OF THE NORTH CASCADES, a multimedia slide program presented by Betty Ferguson.

Siskiyou

10 Nov., Thurs. Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Science Building Rm. 171, SOSOC Campus, Ashland. Ed Smith will present a slide show and lecture on PHARMACOLOGICAL PROPERTIES OF NATIVE PLANTS. Ed and his wife Sara own and operate the Herb-Pharm in the Applegate Valley, where they grow herbs and prepare ointments, salves and tinctures for worldwide distribution.

Willamette Valley

18 Nov., Mon. Meeting, 7:30 p.m. First United Methodist Church, corner of State & Church Sts., Salem. (Use Church St. entrance). Topic: PLANTS KNOWN TO OUR EARLY SETTLERS, presented by Wilber Bluhm, member of the Willamette Valley Chapter.

Wm. Cusick

--- For information about November activities, call Andrew Kratz, 963-9358.

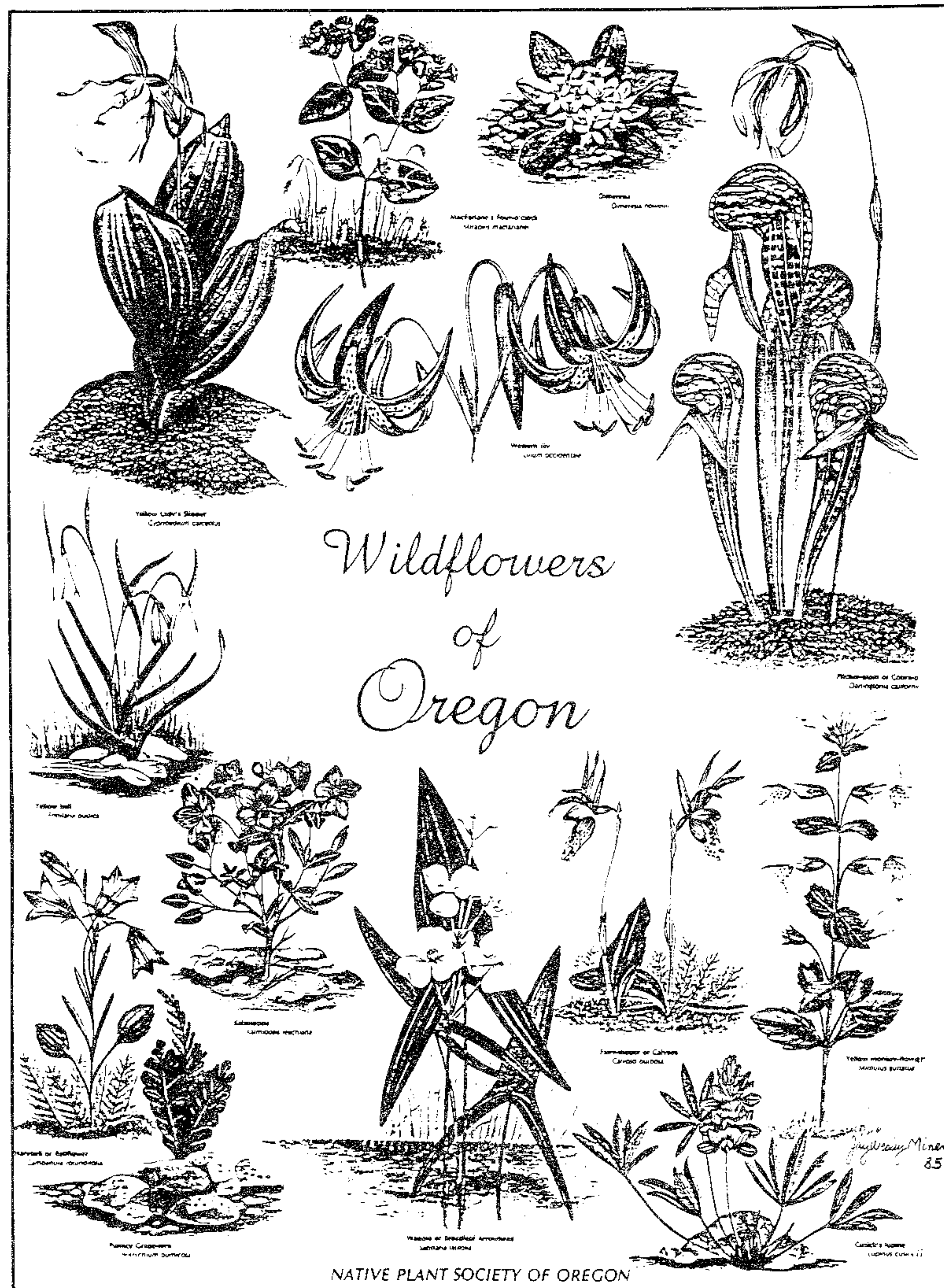
NPSO WILDFLOWER POSTER AVAILABLE

The Native Plant Society of Oregon has just produced a full-color poster featuring stunning paintings of thirteen Oregon wildflowers. Included among the brightly-colored original paintings by Oregon artist Jay Wesley Miner are: cobra lily (*Darlingtonia californica*), yellow lady's slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*), Kalmiopsis (*Kalmiopsis leachiana*), plus nine other beautiful and colorful species. Many of the flowers illustrated are on the Oregon Rare & Endangered plant list. This beautiful poster will brighten up a home, office, or classroom, and will help increase appreciation for Oregon's natural heritage.

The large (18" X 24") poster is on heavy paper and is printed in full color. Information about each species illustrated is included. Coast of each poster is \$4.95. Posters are mailed rolled in a mailing tube. To order a single poster, send a check for \$4.95 along with your name and address to:

NPSO Wildflower Poster
2370 Douglas Drive
Eugene, OR 97405

Checks should be made out to the Native Plant Society of Oregon. NPSO Chapters may purchase posters at a reduced price for resale to their members at Chapter meetings. Inquiries are invited from dealers and businesses; discounts are available when posters are purchased in lots of ten or more.



NPSO BULLETIN NOW OFFICIAL

Some of you may have noticed the addition of an ISSN number to the masthead in the October issue. International Standard Serial Numbering (ISSN) is a way of uniquely identifying a title regardless of language or country in which published. The National Serials Data Program (NSDP) within the Library of Congress is the U.S. Center of International Serials Data System (ISDS), which coordinates the two-level network with an International Center in Paris. The ISSN serves for efficient information exchange and accurate citation.

PECK'S MANUAL FOR SALE

Carolyn Wright has a copy of the 1961 edition of Peck's Manual of the Higher Plants of Oregon for sale. This copy is in good condition and is not too marked up except in the family key. She will consider all offers. Write to Carolyn at Rt. 1 Box 55, Dufur, OR 97021.

PORTLAND CHAPTER NOTICE

Members who are interested in showing some of their choice slides at the December meeting should contact Mary Mason, 227-4639, by the end of November.

MAZAMA BANQUET - NOV 16

The Mazamas 92nd annual banquet will be held Saturday, November 16, at the Red Lion Inn at Jantzen Beach. The featured speaker is Bob Wilson who will help capture the spirit of the July 1985 Mazama 'Hidden Peak' expedition. Hidden Peak is the 11th highest mountain in the world (26,470 feet) and located on the Pakistani-Chinese border. Social hour starts at 6 p.m., the banquet is at 7 p.m. and the program at 9 p.m.. The entire evening and dinner is \$15.25 or program only \$4.00. For tickets contact the Mazamas, 909 NW 19th Ave., Portland 97209, 227-2345.

This column is the first of a series which will appear in the NPSO Bulletin on a regular, if not monthly, timetable.

The "Loose Leaves" tag for this column was plucked from thin air last week, while driving home after a lovely golden day spent in the Columbia Gorge with Lois Kemp, Barbara Fox, and Sue Yamamoto. Lois has been working under contract to the Army Corps of Engineers, inventorying native plants in the Bonneville area and looking for threatened and endangered plants which would be affected by construction of the new Bonneville lock; and she discovered a population of Barrett's penstemon (*Penstemon barrettiae*) on a rock face which will be blasted to smithereens to make way for the channel. Since Barrett's penstemon is only a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act rather than being actually listed and having the full protection of the Act, there's no chance of rerouting the lock, but we hope to persuade the Corps to re-establish the population somewhere nearby. The Bonneville plants are the westernmost population of *Penstemon barrettiae* known, and seem to require a southern aspect there.

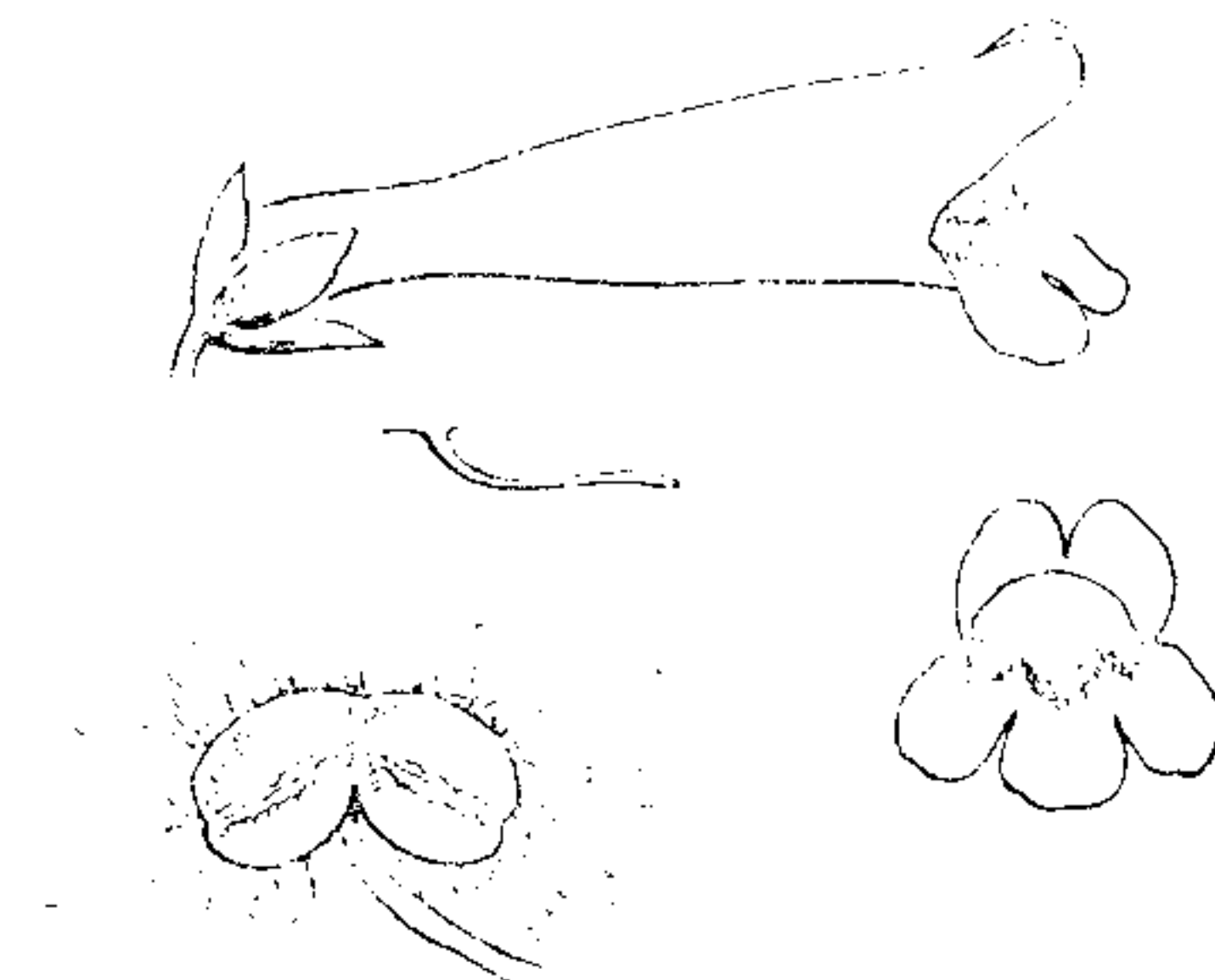
Probably many *Penstemon barrettiae* populations have been lost historically to road construction. The rock face at Bonneville is adjacent to the Union Pacific railroad tracks. The absence of live penstemon from the lower half of the cliff (dead plants are present) has led Lois to speculate that Barrett's penstemon is very sensitive to herbicide used for brush control along the tracks.

Another, though probably less serious, threat to Barrett's penstemon is its collection by gardeners. It is stunningly beautiful in flower, with a profusion of bright tubular flowers set against a foil of leathery, glaucous, ovate leaves. Even when not blooming the plant is handsome, forming mats several feet across. Novice gardeners may try to transplant whole plants. Barrett's penstemon grows easily from cuttings and seed, collection of which need not harm the parent plant; though last year one seed collector of my acquaintance boasted that his crew had collected every fruiting capsule within reach.

But I think *Penstemon barrettiae* will survive these insults as long as it still has cliffs to grow on in the Gorge, of proper aspect and inaccessible to us; which leads me to this observation: NPSO's conservation efforts must emphasize habitat conservation if we are to be effective. Herbicides, grazing abuse, trampling by hikers, and competitive exotic plants are all dangerous to native plants, of course, but we can neutralize these threats more easily than we can reconstruct a bog, or a moss-covered bald, or a basalt cliff.

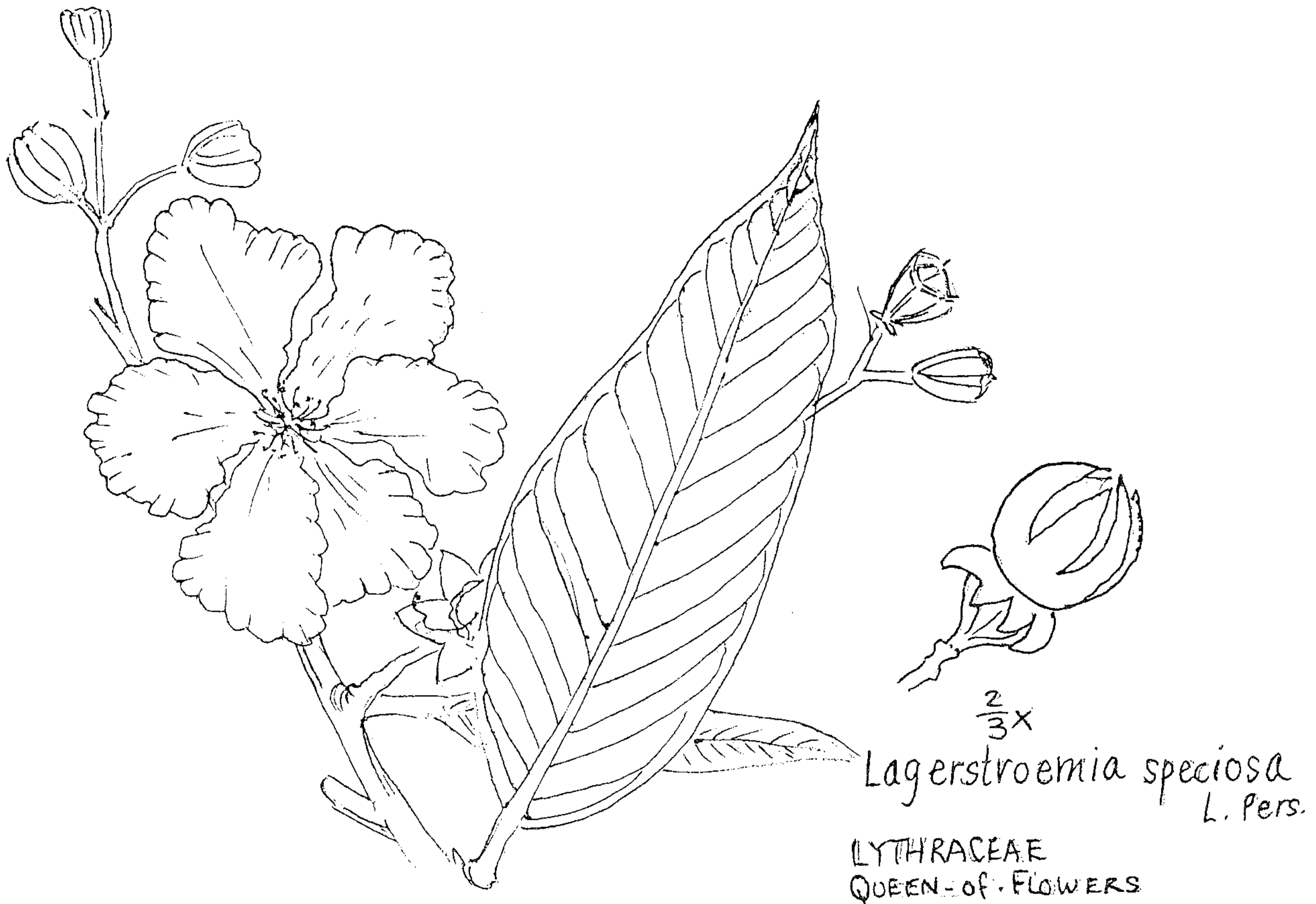
Julie

Julie Kierstead
State Conservation Chair



Barrett's penstemon (*Penstemon barrettiae*)
Illustration from Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 4; Hitchcock et al., Univ. of Washington Press, Seattle

BY CHARLENE HOLZWARTH



This exotic tree is planted for (1) the large loosely branched terminal clusters 6-18 inches long bearing many beautiful lavender flowers 2-2½" across with 6 rounded crinkled and wavy-margined spreading petals; (2) the gray brown rounded seed capsules ¾-1¼" in diameter, splitting into 6 parts and shedding many brown winged seeds ½ - ¾" long; and (3) the large elliptic leaves abruptly short-pointed at apex and short-pointed at base, opposite or alternate, appearing to be in 2 rows on long-spreading twigs.

Flower arrangement; panicles have stout, finely hairy branches, with individual flower stalks ¼-½" long. Flowers have light green, cup-shaped, 12 ridged base ⅜" high and nearly ½"

broad, minutely hairy, bearing 6 light green, pointed, thickened, finely hairy sepals 5/16" long and widely spreading, 6 stalked nearly round petals 1¼" long and numerous purplish stamens about ¾" long. The pistil consist of a 6-celled ovary 3/16" in diameter, a slender purplish style about 1" long, becoming curved, and small rounded green stigma. Flowering from May through October, the fruit maturing from rainy to dry seasons.

Charlene, a Portland Chapter member, is presently with the Peace Corps in the African Nation, Sierra Leone.

"AN OLD FRIEND AMONG THE FIGWORTS: VERBASCUM THAPSUS"

BY DAN GUTHRIE

Common mulleins (Verbascum thapsus) are encroaching on the asphalt road outside Paulina. Their velvety leaves sprawl in all direction, bigger than a pig's ears, and their spikes stand five feet, six feet tall. A few yellow flowers still brighten the spikes, but most mulleins bear pods plump with seeds by September.

And such seeds! Not that their appearance warrants a second look, since they're no bigger than a drop of grasshopper spittle and about the same color. It's their staying power that deserves renown.

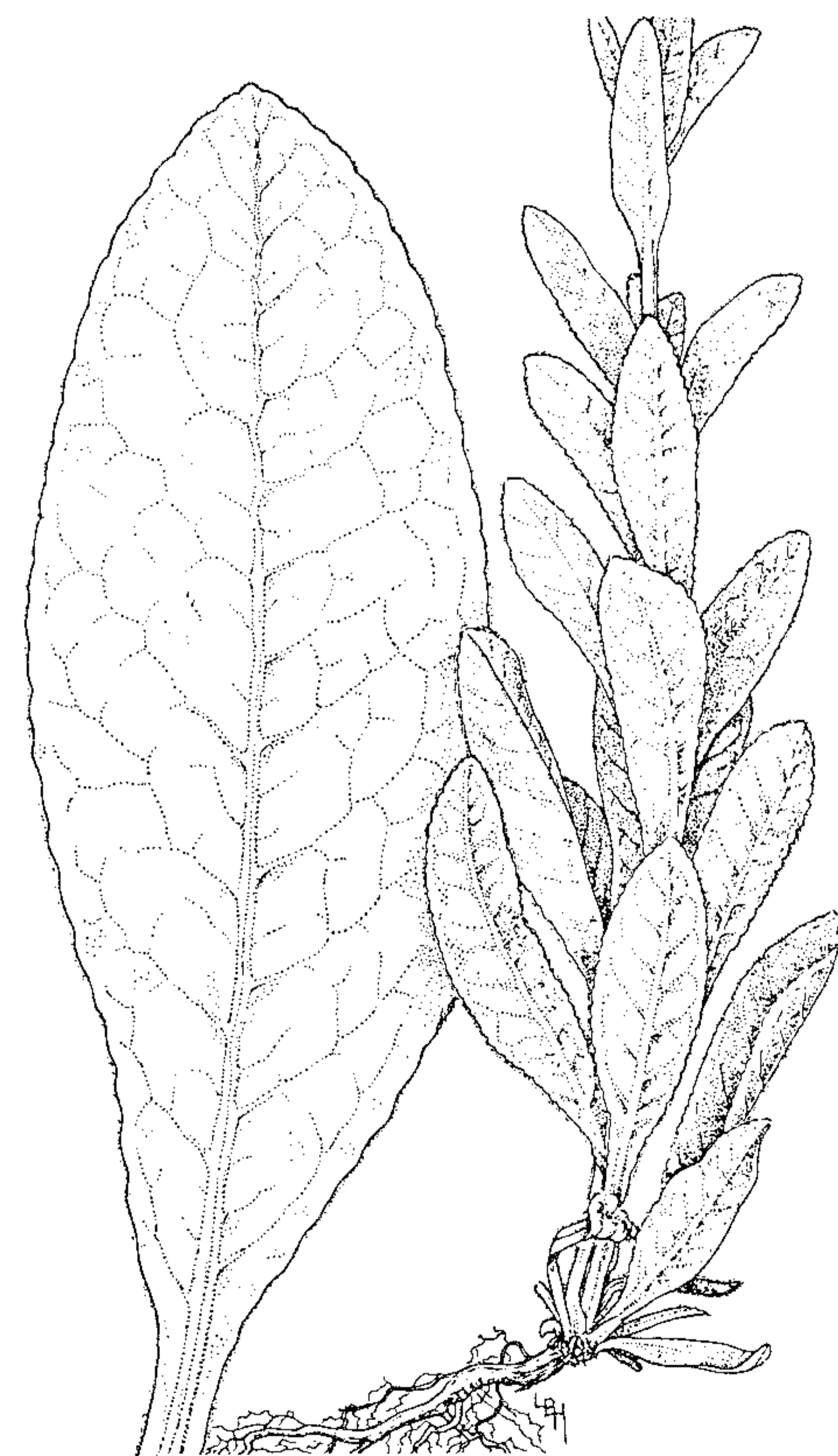
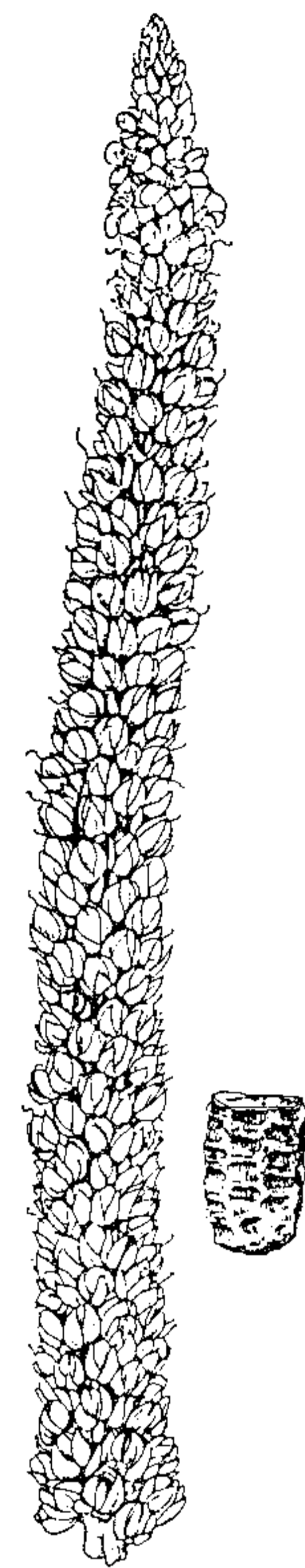
In 1879 a professor at Michigan Agricultural College, W.J. Beal, buried 20 bottles of sand, each containing the seeds of 20 kinds of weeds. Beal and his predecessors dug up one jar every decade to test for survival. The results: Pigweed, ragweed and peppergrass made it to 40 years before pooping out. Mustard and knotweed were still sprouting, barely, at age 50. Catchfly lasted into its 60s. At 70 years, dock and evening primrose remained viable. But the sole survivor in the 90-year bottle was a species of mullein.

The seeds have other merits, too. Poachers of yore claimed they intoxicated fish, and the English herbalist Nicholas Culpepper wrote in 1653 that "seed, bruised and boiled in wine and laid on any member that has been out of joint or newly set, takes away all swelling or pain."

Still, the reputation of mullein has ridden historically on its leaves and flowers, not on its seeds. Colonists so valued medicinal properties of the foliage that they introduced this Eurasian plant to North America, where it thrives now from shore to shore on roadsides, sandy riverbanks, railroad right-of-ways and overgrazed pastures.

Some of the thirty-odd common names for mullein bespeak its uses. As Quaker rouge, for example, girls rubbed its leaves against their cheeks to induce a glow. Mullein is a biennial that develops a rosette of densely woolly leaves the first year, followed by the stalk and spike of flowers in the second season. It's the youngest leaves that make the best rubefacient.

As bullocks lungwort, mullein had a veterinary application. John Gerard wrote in his herbal of 1633 that: "The country people, especially the husbandmen in Kent, do give their cattle the leaves to drink against the coughs of the lungs, whereupon they call it Bullocks lungwort." This principle seems to have been rediscovered by American Indians. The Kootenays of British Columbia forced horses with colds to inhale the smoke of burning leaves and thereby clear their nostrils.



Verbascum thapsus

Drawing by L.B. Hamilton, from Parker, K.F., An Illustrated Guide to Arizona Weeds.

Torch-wort is a name dating back to a time when mullein plants dipped in tallow were used as flambeaus. A superstition among the English held that torch-worts provided the lighting for witches' sabbaths. This seems peculiar since elsewhere in Europe the plant enjoyed repute as a safeguard against evil. Even in India mullein helped stave off evil spirits, and Odysseus carried a spray of it as protection against the spells of Circe (the early-day feminist who reduced men to pigs).

Mullein itself comes from the Latin mollis, meaning to soften. When the plant's leaves are crushed, they release a gum and volatile oils thought to act as emollients that soften skin and soothe afflictions.

Common mullein also has been used as:

- A hair tinter. Roman women extracted a yellow dye from the flowers by pouring boiling water over them, then applied the wash to their coiffures.

- A cough syrup. When tuberculosis ran unchecked across damp continents, an infusion of mullein leaves, milk and honey was taken for symptomatic relief. Confederate soldiers gave body to this medicine by adding cherry bark.

- A sedative. Tea made from steeped leaves and flowers was taken by Europeans to induce sleep; and Navajo Indians smoked a mixture of tobacco and mullein leaves to correct a tendency to employ bad language, according to Euell Gibbons, who once lived among Navajos.

- A hemostatic. A compress of mullein leaves has astringent properties of some value in treating hemorrhage.

- A preservative. The Roman naturalist Pliny wrote that figs wrapped in mullein leaves would not putrefy.

- An innersole liner. The woolly leaves measure up to 12 inches in length and are thicker than socks, thus they've found applications not only in the footwear but in the textile department, which leads to such other names for mullein as beggar's blanket and flannel plant.

In spite of its many virtues, however, mullein remains a weed. On that point the books on flora agree.

It has almost all the makings of a superstar weed, too. Livestock won't eat it, luckily for them since the felt-like leaves might engender hairballs. The long-lived seeds persist for generations in soil or sand, awaiting their golden opportunity. And the plant thumbs its nose at agricultural poisons. The 1985 edition of "The Pacific Northwest Weed Control Handbook" rates 2,4-D, MCPA and Diuron as poor against mullein, while Paraquat and Roundup do no better than fair.

But mullein falters in its bid to join the abominable ranks of goatgrass, skeletonweed, knapweed and tansy because of one failing: it is susceptible to cultivation.

And for that we may give thanks. It would be unfortunate if this friendly member of the figwort family, which has found its way into teapots and medicine chests for centuries, were now to become still another in the growing list of our green enemies.

T-SHIRTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Treat yourself or a friend to a NPSO T-Shirt. Proceeds from these sales are used for the NPSO Rare and Endangered Plant Fund. Please note: long sleeved shirts in grey (M,L,XL), white (all sizes), or lavender (all sizes) have Julie Kierstead's Opuntia polyacantha design. Short sleeved shirts available: Delphinium leucophaeum (turquoise - M,L,XL) and Lomatium cookii (yellow - M,L,XL) by Gaylee Goodrich; Darlingtonia californica (lavender - all sizes) by Linda Vorobik; and Opuntia polyacantha (grey - S,L,XL). There are still a few white with green NPSO emblem (L) at \$6.75.

All shirts are preshrunk 100% cotton, men's sizes S, M, L, XL, except as noted. Short sleeve shirts are \$7 each; long sleeved \$10. Please include \$1 postage and indicate size, color, plus second choice if acceptable. Make checks payable to Emerald Chapter NPSO. Order from:

Evelyn Everett
4135 Alder St.
Eugene, OR 97405; 345-1746

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BULLETIN

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 The NPSO Bulletin is published monthly. Copy is due
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 editor. News, articles, photos, drawings, & non-
 copyrighted material are welcomed.

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Bulletin is not typeset; therefore typed, camera-ready copy is much appreciated. But no submission will be rejected because it is not typed. Please proofread & check facts.

DEADLINE: 10th of each month
 FORMAT: Copy should be typed in 4 1/2 inch wide columns, of any length. Author's name & chapter affiliation (or other organization) are typed at the end of the article. There is no standard paragraph treatment; one of these is suggested:

- * for long articles, double space between paragraphs, but do not indent the first word of the paragraph
 - * for short articles or short paragraphs, when double spacing looks odd, indent the first word of the paragraph instead
- Type your own headline, centered, all caps. In case of special formats, e.g. plant keys, you are free to choose the layout.

CREDITS: For each submission, provide

- * title
- * author--specify whether byline is desired for news items
- * instructions as to whether item is to be used in entirety or excerpted at editor's discretion
- * source & date if item is not original

ILLUSTRATIONS: black & white prints, ink drawings, woodcuts, halftones, et al. We welcome small doodles as well as larger efforts. Please give source & date, if not original.

SCIENTIFIC NAMES should follow Hitchcock & Cronquist's Flora of the Pacific Northwest where possible. Use of both scientific & common names is encouraged. Genus & species names are underlined or italicized.

RETURN OF ORIGINALS: Manuscripts & illustrations will not be returned unless it is requested.

The Bulletin is published as a service to NPSO members & the public. Your suggestions & comments are always welcome.

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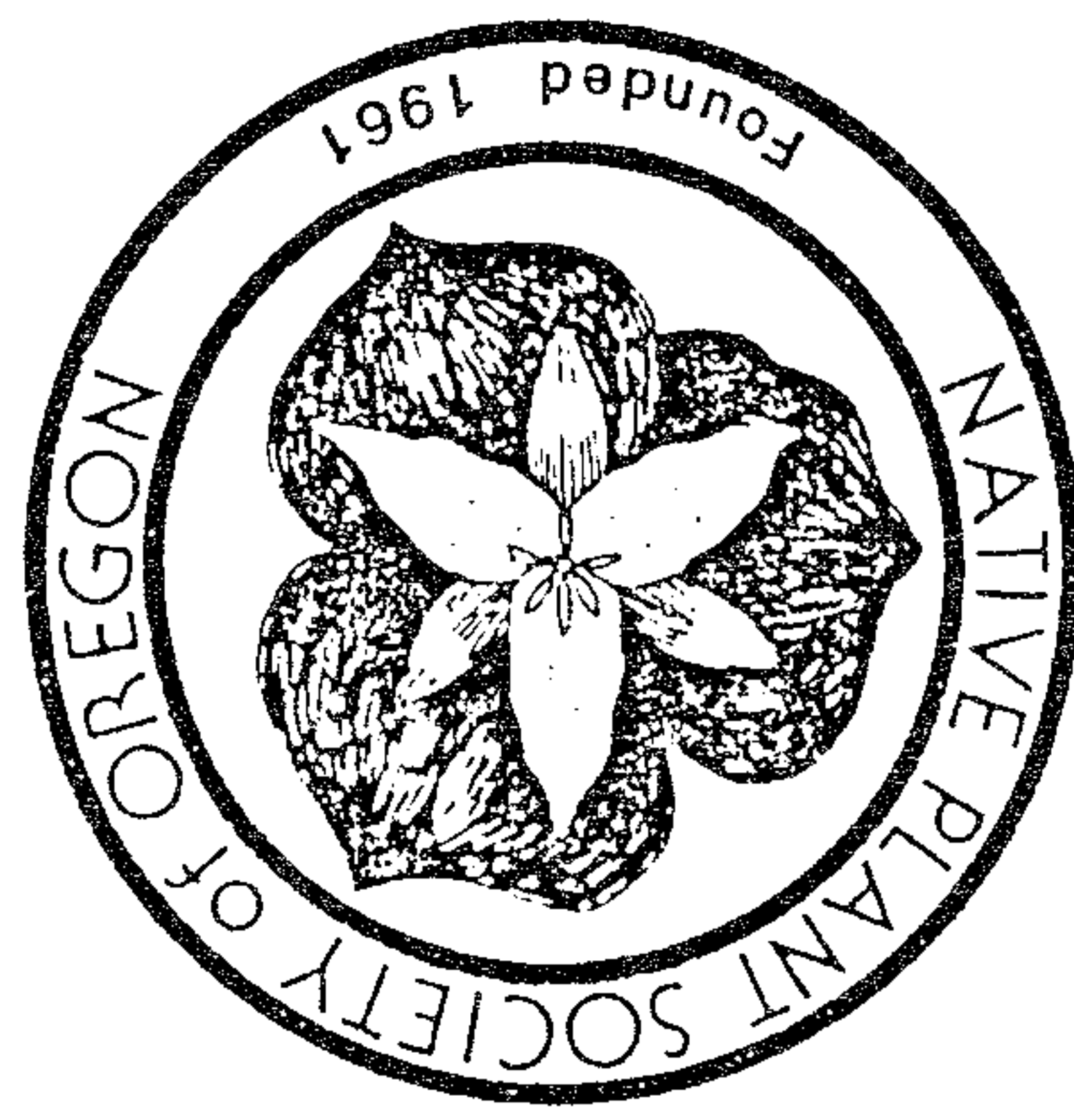
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