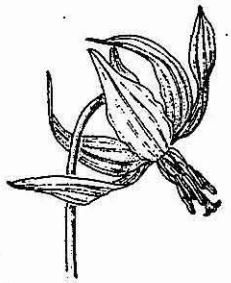

OREGON FLORA NEWSLETTER

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Charlene Simpson: Lane County Checklist Coordinator

Charlene Simpson wears many hats: mother and grandmother, university administrator, student financial aid counselor, community committee person, and avid lay botanist. Her botanical interest dates back to childhood Camp Fire Girl projects and a Dad whose motto was always, " I brake for wildflowers."

Born in Colorado, Charlene has lived in Oregon since the age of two. "I know this dates me, but when I moved to Oregon, Eugene's population was only 12,000 and what is now the south half of town was farmland." She points out that this predated the local flood control projects. "You don't know what a wetland really looks like in Eugene, unless you lived here then," she says. Charlene received her baccalaureate degree in home economics from OSU, and her Master's degree in interdisciplinary studies / juvenile corrections from the University of Oregon. She says now, however, that if she had it to do over, her degrees would be in botany.

Charlene got her first SLR camera in 1975 and purchased a macro lens a year later. From the first, her favorite photographic subjects were wildflowers. She

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Charlene Simpson at the top of Cone Peak.

Notes on some interesting Oregon groundsels

by Kenton L. Chambers

Having recently completed a treatment of *Senecio* (groundsel, ragwort, butterweed) for the Oregon Vascular Plant Checklist, I wish to share some observations on this variable and taxonomically complex genus as represented in Oregon. Although some of the species are distinct and easily recognizable, others are parts of very wide-ranging North American species-complexes in which key characteristics blend and recombine in patterns that make precise species definitions impossible.

One cannot blame the taxonomists who have wrestled with these complexes—notably Arthur Cronquist and Theodore M. Barkley—for the fact that various species of *Senecio* intergrade with each other. Puzzling morphological patterns result from the peculiar mix of evolutionary processes occurring within the genus. However, there has been very little biosystematic research done to clarify these processes, hence our taxonomic knowledge of the genus is sadly inadequate.

Taken alphabetically, here are some of the more interesting *Senecio* species that I verified for Oregon's flora: *Senecio aronicoides* DC. (rayless groundsel), a California species closely related to our common *S. integerrimus* Nutt. (tall western groundsel), has been found at a few sites in the Siskiyou Mountains of southwestern Oregon. A good example was collected in 1968 by Rosamond Hess at 3,000 feet elevation east of Wedderburn, Curry County. The heads in this species are smaller than in *S. integerrimus* and usually lack ray-flowers; the leaves and stem are cobwebby-hairy.

Senecio canus Hook. (woolly groundsel) is the common finely- and densely-hairy native perennial groundsel of the sagebrush regions and mountains of central and eastern Oregon. Its leaves may be entire or irregularly lobed. There is a form of *S. canus* that is common on serpentine soils of southwestern Oregon, where plants intermediate between it and *Senecio macounii* Greene (Puget butterweed) may also be found.

The latter species ranges northward, west of the Cascades, as a rare component of the native prairie

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took an adult education class in botany at Lane Community College followed by a summer session with Sandy Tepfer at the University of Oregon. She bought Gilkey and Dennis' *Handbook of Northwest Plants*, and Hitchcock's *Flora of the Pacific Northwest* and then, as she says, she was hooked.

In 1979 Charlene joined eight others to found the Emerald Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon (NPSO). David Wagner was the new chapter's first president and Charlene was its second. She has served the chapter in various other capacities, including secretary, rare and endangered plant chair, and field trip chair. Her current project is coordination of the Lane County Checklist Project, an effort to list every Lane County vascular plant with site-specific information.

Charlene uses her large and comprehensive botanical slide collection as a resource for illustrated programs. She has used this medium to educate NPSO members about Lane County's rare and endangered plants. Emerald Chapter's newly adopted listing format assigns species of concern to three lists designated red, yellow, and grey, according to severity of threat. The list is updated every two years, and Charlene enjoys her central role in the biennial reviews.

It was through her work on the Lane County Checklist that she was asked to participate as a project leader with the Oregon Atlas Project. Lane County's project, and the earlier Douglas County Floral Survey (see OFN Vol. 1 No. 2) list species with specific locations within their respective geographic boundaries. Both projects have been valuable resources for the Oregon Vascular Plant Atlas Project.

With two more years to go before retirement from the University of Oregon, Charlene fantasizes about botanical adventures to come and resolution of the inherent competition between professional life and avocation. She says, "I dream of the luxury of mid-week field trips, and maybe a van equipped with library and laptop computer, as well as more trips to the fabulous Siskiyous with friend Veva Stansell."

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habitats harboring such relict species as *Erigeron decumbens, Lupinus sulfureus* ssp. *kincaidii,* and *Aster curtus.*

Several old herbarium records exist of typical *S. canus* from coastal Clatsop and Tillamook counties, widely disjunct from its main range and in a cool, moist climatic zone quite atypical for the species. These populations, if rediscovered, would be an inviting subject for ecological and genetic studies.

Senecio ertterae T. M. Barkley (Ertter's senecio) is a highly localized endemic species of Harney County, found only on clay soils derived from ancient volcanic ash flows. It was discovered and described less than 20 years ago and is remarkably distinct from all other Northwest members of the genus.

Senecio flettii Wiegand (Flett's groundsel) occurs principally in the Olympic Mountains and Cascade Range of Washington. It was discovered in the high North Coast Range of Clatsop, Tillamook, and Washington Counties in the early 1970s, growing with other species having a northern floristic relationship, such as *Synthyris schizantha, Cladothamnus pyroliflorus, Prenanthes alata,* and *Lewisia columbiana* var. *rupicola.*

Senecio sphaerocephalus Greene (mountain marsh butterweed) is known in Oregon only from bogs in the limestone region of Hurricane Creek, Wallowa Mountains. Its range extends east through central Idaho to Montana and Wyoming. The erroneous report of this species from Lake Labish near Salem, Oregon, is based on Cronquist's misidentification of a Thomas Howell collection of *Senecio hydrophiloides* Rydb.

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Illustrations of *Erythronium oregonum* on the cover by Linda Ann Vorobik.

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Senecio triangularis Hook. (arrowleaf groundsel) is a familiar and widespread species, but less well known is its var. *angustifolius* G. N. Jones (bog groundsel), which occurs exclusively in coastal peat bogs. Instead of the usual broadly triangular leaves of var. *triangularis*, the bog form has numerous narrowly lanceolate leaves, gradually decreasing in size up the stem (see illustration below). Human modification of its unique habitat, through agriculture and urban growth in the coastal regions of the Northwest, may already have made *S. triangularis* var. *angustifolius* a rarity in the native flora.

Senecio triangularis var. *angustifolius*. Illustration by Alexander Mikulin, a visiting Russian lichenologist and Assistant Professor (courtesy) in the OSU Dept. of Botany & Plant Pathology. Bars = 1 cm.

Project News

by Scott Sundberg

Spring and Summer are seasons for being outdoors, and a number of enthusiastic participants in the **Atlas** project have been making species lists in interesting places. Lists have been submitted by several people, and we know of many more to come. We are currently working on agreements with the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service to share plant locality data. Toward the end of Spring term at OSU, significant progress was made on the software development for the electronic Atlas.

Over 23 percent of **Checklist** treatments have been submitted. We now have 4370 accepted taxa and 1733 synonyms in the Checklist database. A large number of revisions to the overall list have recently been made, including the addition of hundreds of synonyms.

Thanks!

Thanks to Emerald Chapter and Corvallis Chapter members of the Native Plant Society of Oregon for grants awarded in April and May! Contributions, including repeat donations, are also a vital part of our funding. We thank the following people for recently donating to the Flora project:

To be added to our mailing list (if not already on it):

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Phone and/or e-mail _____

Would you like to make a donation?

Tax-deductable donations can be made to the Oregon Flora Project by sending a check made out to the Oregon State University Foundation to Scott Sundberg at the address on page 12. Please note on the check that it is for the Oregon Flora Project. Your donations mostly go toward newsletter expenses and student wages.

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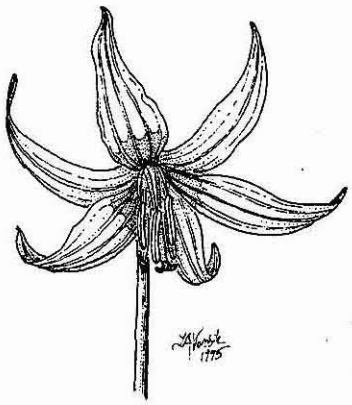
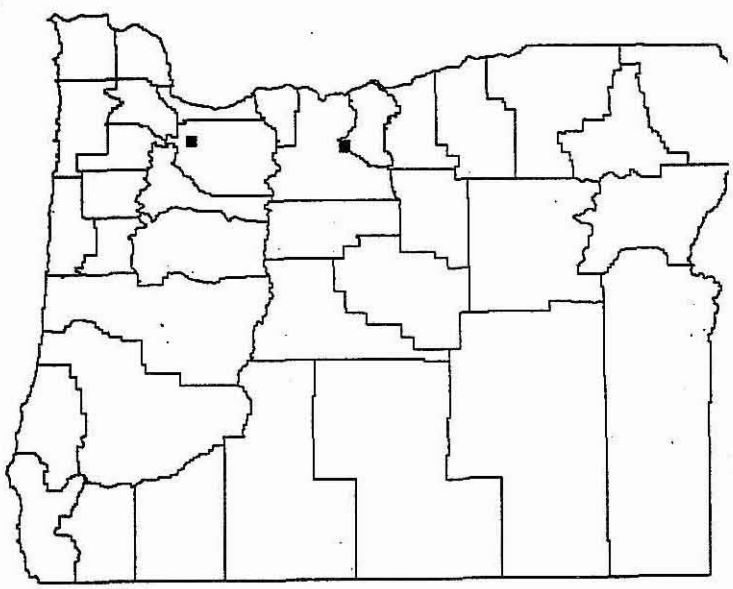


Did you know?

• The Oregon endangered species *Ivesia rhypara* (grimy ivesia), has a species name which is a double pun. Named in 1972 by Barbara Ertter and James Reveal, the Greek word "rhyparos," meaning "dirty" or "grimy" was used to describe the dusty appearance of the plant, as well as to honor its co-discoverer, James W. Grimes, now at the New York Botanical Garden.

• Some plants produce both showy flowers and inconspicuous ones that are small, closed, and self-pollinated. The term for the latter type is "cleistogamous," meaning "hidden sex." Examples of Oregon plants with both cleistogamous and showy, cross-pollinated (chasmogamous) flowers are: *Collomia grandiflora* (large-flowered collomia), *Viola* spp. (violets) and *Mimulus douglasii* (Douglas' monkeyflower).

Do you have any botanical trivia you'd like to share with our readers? If you do, please send us your contributions.



Known Oregon distribution of purple starthistle (*Centaurea calcitrapa*, Asteraceae).
This is a noxious weed that can crowd out native plants. If you see any populations, please contact the Oregon Department of Agriculture at (503) 986-4621 [see *OFN* Vol. 2 No. 2; source of data: ODA].