

# The Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation

P.O. Box 8952. Moscow, ID 83843

Vol. II No. 2

<http://www.palouseprairie.org/>

June 2007

Copies of past issues of the Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation are available online on the PPF website at <http://www.palouseprairie.org/pppubs.html>

The regular meeting date for the Palouse Prairie Foundation is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month. Check the PPF website for updates and locations.

The mission of the Palouse Prairie Foundation is to promote the preservation and restoration of native Palouse Prairie ecosystems in Latah and Whitman Counties through public awareness, education, literature resource, encouraging responsible local seed production, and acting as a leader or consultant in Palouse Prairie restoration efforts.

The primary source of funding to accomplish our mission is member dues. If you would like to assist us in preserving and restoring the Palouse Prairie by becoming a member or renewing your membership, you may mail a check payable to Palouse Prairie Foundation to:

Palouse Prairie Foundation

P.O. Box 8952

Moscow, ID 83843

Annual memberships are \$20 a year (\$10 for students).

If you have already joined or renewed for 2007, thank you for your support.

To find out more about Palouse Prairie and the Palouse Prairie Foundation, visit our website.

## **Restoration Funding Opportunities**

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has recently announced a new initiative. State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) will provide cost share payments for wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement through the Conservation Reserve Program. State and local government and non-profits may submit proposals to the FSA to address habitat restoration and enhancement. Further information on SAFE is available at [http://www.qu.org/content/news/press\\_room/crp\\_560\\_SAFE.pdf](http://www.qu.org/content/news/press_room/crp_560_SAFE.pdf)

If you don't have access to the internet, contact Dave Skinner for a copy of this document.

## **Bringing the Palouse Grassland to your Yard**

By Jacie Jensen

Our farm includes more than 100 acres of native Palouse grasses and wildflowers on Paradise Ridge. This native grassland habitat is exceedingly rare today, highly diverse, and breathtakingly beautiful in the profusion of wildflowers that abound on the site.

My husband Wayne and I hope to both preserve this remnant of the Palouse prairie and to provide gardeners and landscapers with the plants and seeds they need to bring this prairie plant community to their own yards. In 2004, we began gathering native seed for commercial seed and plant production. And now, for the first time, we are able to offer Palouse Prairie in a Flat.

Palouse Prairie in a Flat is a selection of 18 individually-potted native grasses and wildflowers which flourished throughout our region, from the Rathdrum Prairie near Coeur d'Alene to the Camas Prairie near Grangeville. Planted together, they will create a native grassland habitat of about 25 square feet.

The 18 plants, each in 4-inch square pots, include 6 species of native wildflowers (prairie smoke, blanketflower, western aster, slender cinquefoil, tall cinquefoil, and goldenrod) and 3 species of native grasses (Idaho fescue, blue wild rye, and blue bunch wheatgrass). All are perennials and prefer sunny locations. After becoming established with light watering the first summer, the plants will require no irrigation. Planting instructions and a suggested design layout are included with each Palouse Prairie in a Flat.

Our goal is to bring a part of our shared heritage to the gardeners and landscapers of this region. Anyone interested in no-irrigation, low-maintenance xeriscape planting or in the beauty of our native grasses and wildflowers will enjoy Palouse Prairie in a Flat.

The 18-plant Palouse Prairie in a Flat, which is available from May 1 through June 15 for \$54, can be purchased at four nurseries in this region. Those nurseries are:

\*Prairie Bloom Nursery, 5602 State Route 270, Pullman, (509) 332-4425

\*Fiddlers Ridge Garden, 1420 S. Blaine, Moscow, (208) 875-1003

\*Westwood Gardens Nursery, 15825 N. Westwood Dr., Rathdrum,  
(208) 687-5952

\*Blue Moon Garden & Nursery, 1732 S. Inland Empire Way, Spokane,  
(509) 747-4255

More information about Palouse Prairie in a Flat, including profiles of all the plant species, planting instructions, design layout, and on-line purchase, is available at [www.maryjanesfarm.org](http://www.maryjanesfarm.org). For other questions, email [prairiescapes@starband.net](mailto:prairiescapes@starband.net).

**Recent publications regarding Palouse Prairie:**

Thompson, Jessica Lee. 2006. Biological diversity of macromoths (insecta: Lepidoptera) in a native Palouse Prairie remnant site. Thesis (M.S. in entomology). Washington State University.

*Wyethia amplexicaulis*, **Mule's ear**, is native to moist open places in the shrub-steppe and meadow-steppe, extending into open forests east of the Cascade Mountains of British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon and east to Montana and Colorado. The genus was named for its first collector, Captain Nathaniel Wyeth, an early western North American explorer. The specific name means "stem clasping", referring to the upper leaves.



Mule's ears is a perennial forb growing from a taproot. The leaves are bright green, glabrous, and somewhat reduced but common on the stems, compared to arrowleaf balsamroot with its gray-green, densely woolly leaves which are mostly basal. The flowers are bright yellow with a large terminal flower and often several smaller ones borne in the leaf axils of each stem.

Native Americans had some medicinal uses for the plants and the roots were sometimes used as food. Wildlife occasionally graze the young leaves, but it is not used extensively. American goldfinches will eat the seeds. Because livestock do not use *W. amplexicaulis* and it increases with grazing, eradication was at one time considered desirable on rangeland.

Seed requires cold, moist stratification to germinate. There are two protocols available in the Native Plants Network.

[http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/network/view.asp?protocol\\_id=2914](http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/network/view.asp?protocol_id=2914)

[http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/network/view.asp?protocol\\_id=1701](http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/network/view.asp?protocol_id=1701)

Some sources for more information on *Wyethia amplexicaulis*:

Plant Profile from PLANTS Database

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=WYAM>

Species page from the University of Washington Herbarium (WTU)

<http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection.php?Genus=Wyethia&Species=amplexicaulis>

"Native American Ethnobotany" from the University of Michigan-Dearborn

<http://herb.umd.umich.edu/>

### **Palouse Prairie Foundation Display**

If you would like to have the Palouse Prairie display at a gathering or meeting, please contact us. The display consists of a free standing 4 panel poster explaining Palouse Prairie, and a myriad of printed information regarding the prairie. A smaller version of the poster is also available for more limited spaces. You can view the poster on the PPF website at <http://www.palouseprairie.org/display/>

If you have ideas, suggestions, or contributions for the newsletter, please send them to Dave Skinner at abbie1 at pullman.com (you will need to replace "at" with the symbol "@" in the address line of your email program) or call him at 334-7009. Look for the next newsletter in September.