



# *The Acorn*

*Serving the South Sound Chapter of the  
Washington Native Plant Society*

*Summer 2016*

## **Release of the Field Guide to the *Vascular Plants of the South Sound Prairies* Edited by Frederica Bowcutt and Sarah Hamman**

The Evergreen Natural History Museum is pleased to announce the book launch for the field guide entitled *Vascular Plants of the South Sound Prairies*. In addition to educating the public about these floristically unique ecosystems in the Puget Sound region, the field guide will aid ongoing ecological restoration efforts. This field guide also demonstrates the capacity of college students to make significant contributions to their community through citizen science. Over forty students from The Evergreen State College contributed to the project, as well as scientists from Evergreen, Centralia College, and the Center for Natural Lands Management.

Through a collaborative, community-based effort that began in 2003, we have produced an illustrated guide to nearly 150 vascular plants coupled with text on the natural and cultural history of the glacial outwash prairies and their associated oak woodlands from Tacoma to Rochester, Washington. It includes descriptions of climate, geology, vegetation, sensitive species and restoration ecology, plus a list of the voucher specimens that are maintained at the Evergreen Herbarium.

Given the growing interest in south Puget Sound prairie-oak ecosystems, this field guide fills a need among scientists, policymakers and the educated public. Floristic research on the prairies has been conducted and numerous checklists of vascular plants have been generated. However, much of this work has not been paired with voucher specimens, deposited in a herbarium, that are available for



*Aquilegia*



*Vicia villosa*



*Prunella vulgaris*

collective study. Also, much of the information is unpublished and difficult to access. None of the lists are illustrated. In addition, the illustrated field guides for the area, such as Pojar and MacKinnon's *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast*, focus primarily on plants of the coniferous forests. To identify prairie plants currently, the technical dichotomous keys in Hitchcock and Cronquist's *Flora of the Pacific Northwest* are the most commonly used resource. This regional flora is not easily used by beginners, nor does it generally allow for quick identification even among those familiar with using it. In addition, the nomenclature and classification are no longer in use. To address the limitations of current guides, we have produced an easy-to-use field guide to these threatened ecosystems to assist with important restoration and conservation work.

The book launch event is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27, 2016, at 7 pm in The Evergreen College's Recital Hall and is cosponsored by the Center for Natural Lands Management and the South Sound Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS) as a part of the statewide celebration of Native Plant Appreciation Week. The event will include a public lecture on the plant life of our local prairies. The book, which costs \$10, can be purchased at the event or from [tescbookstore.com](http://tescbookstore.com)

*Article submitted by Dr. Frederica Bowcutt  
Illustrations to the left taken from the new book.*

*Enjoy an image of the cover of *Vascular Plants of the South Sound Prairies* on the mailing panel of this newsletter.*

## Other S. Sound Chapter Activities

### Grants Report

Under the leadership of John Neorr, our grants have continued to use our plant sale money to give back to the community.

We granted \$500 each to Boze Elementary first-graders and to Thurston Conservation District (TCD) for pollinator gardens. We have thus far distributed \$250 to each of them and will be distributing the rest upon completion of their projects. We have also granted \$450 to the Coastal Interpretive Center (CIC) for the creation of demonstration gardens on CIC grounds in Ocean Shores. Accordingly, we have spent or committed \$1450 of our \$2500 annual budget and have \$1050 remaining that we can award.

The grants awarded thus far this year are largely focused on education. The TCD project is located at their headquarters and is intended to be a demonstration garden – serving to educate their constituents about the importance and benefits of native plants. The Boze pollinator garden is the initial piece of a larger program to encompass a multi-disciplined, school-wide “project-based learning” program. What this means is that the little ol’ pollinator garden is only the beginning of project-based learning within Boze. As a baseline, the butterfly garden will be built on for the next five years, expanding both physically and educationally, so that it will serve a broader spectrum of the student population, in multiple disciplines, in ways that are driven by both instructor and student input. This concept is all part of project-based learning. The CIC gardens will be adjacent to the Interpretive Center and will be part of their educational programs about coastal native plants.

We can be proud of what we can do. Your support makes all the difference!

*Be sure to see the photo on the mailing panel.*



TCD pollinator garden

### Washington State Fair, September 2-25

The Washington State Fair in Puyallup will add Labor Day weekend to its annual run starting in 2016, opening on Friday, Sept. 2 and closing Sunday, Sept. 25. In addition, the September 2016 Fair will be closed on all Tuesdays. We will be looking for volunteers to staff the WNPS booth shifts at the fair. Watch the monthly updates for details.

### Prairie Appreciation Day, May 14, 2016

Appreciation Day takes place from 10-3, at Glacial Heritage and Mima Mounds. For more information, go to <http://prairieappreciationday.org/>.

### Plant Sale

#### Spring Native Plant Sale Saturday, April 23, 2016, 9-3. Capital Museum Coach House, 211 21st Ave SW, Olympia

Mark your calendars. With the coming of spring flowers, the thoughts of gardeners turn to planting, and we will have a large selection of native plants for your yard and garden. Volunteers have already potted bulbs and other plants to be ready. This year we will have a number of prairie plants for your sunny garden. We need volunteers on Friday, April 22, for set up and on Saturday, April 23, for the sale. Watch the website for a list of plants that we will have for sale.



For more information, contact Bill Brookreson at 253-292-8570, [b.brookreson@comcast.net](mailto:b.brookreson@comcast.net), or Bonnie Blessing-Earle at [bonnie.blessing@gmail.com](mailto:bonnie.blessing@gmail.com). To volunteer you may contact Cyndy Dillon at [cpdillongh@comcast.net](mailto:cpdillongh@comcast.net).

### Hikes and Field Trips

Chapter members continue to work on arranging hikes and other native plant walks. These will be announced on the website and in the monthly updates. If you have a favorite hike you would like to share and lead, please contact Cyndy Dillon at [cpdillongh@comcast.net](mailto:cpdillongh@comcast.net).



### **Native Plant Appreciation Week, April 24-30, 2016**

Since 2004, the Washington Native Plant Society has secured a proclamation from the state's governor and led a celebration of Washington's native plants through Native Plant Appreciation Week. For the South Sound Chapter, we will kick off the week a day early with our Spring Native Plant Sale. On Wednesday, April 27, we will co-sponsor the roll out of Vascular Plants of the South Sound Prairies with Evergreen College. On Friday, we will deliver a talk on Native Plant Gardening to the EnviroHouse in Tacoma. Other events will be scheduled, so watch our website!

Native Plant Appreciation Week is really a celebration! This week is a celebration of the amazing diversity of Washington's over 3000 native plant species that inhabit deserts, rain forests, high alpine environments, river valleys and even backyard landscapes. Native plant ecosystems are critical to sustaining our native wildlife and the quality of Washington's environment. NPAW is primarily an opportunity to celebrate our native floral abundance, our amazing bio-diversity and all the good work being done to protect and preserve it.

There will be a number of organized activities but don't feel limited by that. Take the opportunity that NPAW provides to spend a few hours enjoying our wonderful flora in whatever way is meaningful to you, whether it be attending a formal program or just taking a quiet walk in a natural area or park. We have a lot to be thankful for and a great responsibility to preserve and protect it. That really touches the core of what the Washington Native Plant Society is about.

### **Botany Washington, May 13-15, 2016,**

Botany Washington will be centered in Port Townsend, Fort Worden State Park. This year there will be four areas of study: a taxonomy study of particular plant families, keying with Hitchcock, Wildflowers of the Puget Trough and Habitat Restoration; as well as two evening programs. Registration opened February 1, and will close April 15. For more details, visit <http://tinyurl.com/83fu7de>.

### **Native Plant Study Weekend, June 17-19, 2016**

Native Plant Study Weekend will be held in Leavenworth and will be co-sponsored by the Wenatchee Valley and Central Washington chapters. The theme is the Wenatchee Mountains, which they are considering as the mountain areas between Cle Elum and Leavenworth, on both sides of Highway 97 (Blewett Pass). This includes well-known areas such as Tronson Ridge and Esmeralda Basin, and is a rich home to diverse plant communities and to a number of endemic species.

Study weekend headquarters is the Wenatchee River Institute, located near downtown Leavenworth at 347 Division Street. This site will host registration, a reception and a program Friday evening; and two photography workshops; and will be the meeting point for trips each day. On Friday evening the speaker will be Dr. Richard Olmsted with "All in the Family, or How Modern Phylogenetics has Changed the Families We Know and Love." Saturday evening will feature, "Chasing Biscuitroots," presented by Jack Nisbet. As always, there will be a great selection of hikes and workshops for Saturday and Sunday.

**Note:** Participants will be on their own for lodging, so you can choose accommodations that suit your style and budget. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/hawvdg6>. Registration ends on May 15. Register early to get the hike you want!

## Workshops/Conferences

### **Know Your Grasses: Identification and Appreciation of Grass**

June 22-24, 2016, Wed. and Thurs., 9 am-5 pm\*; Fri. 9 am-1 pm (\*extended evening hours on Thurs. for those interested in more practice with keying). Room 244, Hitchcock Hall, University of Washington, Seattle.

"Knowing Your Grasses" is critical to many fields of science and practice, including wetland identification and delineation, ecosystem restoration, erosion control, and interpretation of natural history. The Washington Native Plant Society and the University of Washington Herbarium at the Burke Museum are proudly partnering to offer this grass identification workshop led by Clay Antieau.

The workshop consists of an intensive, hands-on approach that blends one and a half days of classroom work with one day of field study using a combination of lectures, guided examination of live and pressed plant specimens (with and without stereomicroscopes), and use of technical identification keys. Participants learn the grass language and distinguishing features of the grass family, its major taxonomic subdivisions, and many grass genera and species. The workshop also connects you with useful on-line tools such as identification keys and photo resources.

Other than a high degree of interest in grasses, there are no prerequisites. Prior experience in plant taxonomy or botany is not a requirement. Cost: \$350; \$315 for WNPS and Burke Museum members. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/lyrhzrv>.

### **Aquatic Plants Workshop, August 23-24**

The Washington Native Plant Society and the University of Washington Herbarium at the Burke Museum are partnering to offer this aquatic plant identification workshop led by Peter Zika. Cost: \$350; \$315 for WNPS and Burke Museum members. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/jrmsx2>

## Chapter Meetings

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Because plant lovers like to botanize while the days are long chapter meetings are not scheduled during summer months (June-August). The fall meetings will be announced in our next addition of the *Acorn* newsletter, arriving in September. Meetings are normally scheduled from October through May, on the second Monday of each month in Olympia, and on the second Wednesday in Tacoma. Starting at 7 pm, each meeting consists of a quick review of local items and announcements, and a presentation lasting approximately an hour. Programs are geared for all levels of botanical knowledge. Unless otherwise noted, all Tacoma meetings are at Tacoma Nature Center, 1919 South Tyler Street, Tacoma. All Olympia meetings are at Capitol Museum Coach House, 211 21st Avenue SW, Olympia, although the future here is tied to the state budget. Meetings are free and open to the public. Please contact John Noerr ([presentations@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:presentations@southsoundchapterwnps.org)) if you have a suggestion for a future presentation. We hope to see you (and your guests) at future gatherings! Have a good summer botanizing. We have a special kickoff meeting planned for September. Watch monthly updates and the newsletter for details.

## Conservation Issues

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### Native Plants Contribute to Wildlife Species Recovery Objectives By Bonnie Blessing-Earle

One of the many missions of the native plant society is to promote the appreciation of native plants.

A number of wildlife species, including the Streaked Horned Lark, Mazama Pocket Gopher, Taylor Checkerspot and Oregon spotted frog, are listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Factors contributing to their decline include the degradation of wetland and prairie habitat. However, some of these organisms do not appear to require habitats dominated by native plants.

The pocket gopher, lark and frog inhabit grasslands, lawns, prairies and wetlands often dominated by introduced lawn or pasture grasses. What role would native plants play in recovery of two of these species, the Mazama pocket gopher and Oregon spotted frog?

While pocket gophers do not *require* prairie vegetation, according to the draft recovery plan, most gopher populations are found in areas with prairie soils that retain some remnant pocket of prairie vegetation. According to the draft recovery plan, before non-native species arrived with the settlers, our local Mazama pocket gophers likely consumed lupine, monkey flower, aspen, bracken fern, wild onion, camas and blue-eyed Mary.

Similarly, the Oregon spotted frog does not appear to require native wetland plants. Reed canarygrass is the dominant plant in their wetlands in Thurston County. However, I have observed *Juncus supiniformis*, *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*, *Chara vulgaris*, *Pinus contorta* and bog buckbean, all uncommon wetland plants, in the wetland margins, all of which hint of a unique human pre-settlement vegetation community.

The native vegetation composition of spotted frog wetlands before invasion of reed canarygrass is largely unknown, so most recovery efforts currently rely on mowing or grazing canarygrass in a wetland. As a native plant advocate, I have been exploring the use of native plants for frog habitat enhancement. A native

plant, *Juncus supiniformis*, has not only provided breeding habitat for a native frog, but has also reduced the level of effort to control canarygrass in a small portion of the wetland.



The long-term recovery goal of both of these species is to secure and maintain self-sustaining populations across their ranges. Many of these species occur on private land, but most state and federal funding is currently focused on recovery on public lands. What role does the WNPS play? The draft state recovery plans for these two species suggest a role.

The state draft recovery plan prioritizes investing in the pocket gopher diet and vegetation structure important to gopher productivity, learning methods to restore native vegetation and exploring incentive or outreach programs for habitat-related recovery activities on both public and private lands.

The state draft recovery plan for the Oregon spotted frog suggests that plants with appropriate structure (height) that doesn't shade the eggs are important for this species. Not all native rushes and sedges form suitable habitat. So, the plan prioritizes maintaining early seral succession vegetation structure at breeding sites. Practically this means determining how to keep the invasive vegetation structure short with grazing or mowing. Determining the level of livestock grazing is a priority. However, livestock grazing is not always welcome with shellfish beds, drinking water or salmon downstream. Mowing is not always possible with machines. Herbicide may render a wetland too deep. Maintaining small inholdings of a suitable native plant may contribute to recovery.

Like the wildlife that appreciate native plants on all lands (public and private lands), I believe the native plant society should appreciate native plants on all lands. Appreciation of native plants can be enhanced if we promote the use of natives on public and private lands for species recovery.



### A Year of Challenges and Opportunities By Bill Brookreson

This year promises to be both interesting and challenging. John Neorr has done his usual outstanding job of arranging interesting and informative speakers. Having Andy MacKinnon giving his talk on Mycoheterotrophs (the symbiotic relationship between certain kinds of plants and fungi) and John Soennichsen speaking about Washington's Channeled Scablands, both in April, is quite a coup by John and one of the things made possible by your support of our plant sales.

Over the past year, through the efforts of John Neorr and Dr. Frederica Bowcutt, we have developed a new relationship with The Evergreen State College. Andy MacKinnon spoke there on Alpine Plants last September and will deliver his April talk there. Not only is the venue more spacious but it helps us to connect with students. We will continue that relationship as we cosponsor the roll out of Vascular Plants of the South Sound Prairies.

Perhaps our most challenging opportunity involves the Native Plant Stewardship Program. Since its inception in 1996, the Native Plant Stewardship Program has involved ten all-day sessions and a number of weekend field trips. The classes were limited to King, Snohomish and Pierce counties. That structure limited who could become Native Plant Stewards. Thanks to a bequest to WNPS we have been working to develop an alternative program with fewer and evening sessions. The South Sound Chapter is running one of the pilot programs to try out the new structure; and, if it goes well, to open Native Plant Stewardship training to much more of the state. Jim Evans has been contracted to develop the program which will

start in April. Our hope is that it will give people new tools and motivation to become stewards for native plants and ecosystems in their communities.

We have lot of programs for a chapter of our size – native plant walks, two plant sales, a number of presentations to community groups and other organizations, a grant program, maintenance of the native plant garden at the Capital Museum and restoration projects. They are all made possible by our volunteers and especially Cyndy Dillon, our volunteer coordinator, John Neorr and Jane Ostericher who developed the use of social media, and Lee Fellenberg who handles all the website and

electronic (and paper) distribution. Our challenge is not to wear out all our great volunteers.

Our grant program has touched young people. We have supported getting students out to South Sound prairies, providing books and setting up a pollinator garden. As the Native Plant Stewardship Program develops, we hope to have more educational materials and training available.

More than anything else, we need to continue to have fun and enjoy our wonderful flora. I get reminded of that every day when I walk out into our yard and the flowers remind me it's spring. Take some walks or just quiet time sitting and enjoying all that beauty.



#### Central Puget Sound Chapter Native Plant Sale Sat., April 30, 2016 @ Bellevue Botanical Garden

WNPS Members hours 9 - 10 am, public hours 10 am - 4 pm. There will be a large supply of hardy, native plants, with certain species in limited quantities. A list of plants will be available at [wnps.org](http://wnps.org). In addition to the sale, there will be an environmental fair with education booths and activities. For questions, please contact CPS Plant Sale Chair at [GraceStiller.WNPS@gmail.com](mailto:GraceStiller.WNPS@gmail.com). For driving directions to Bellevue Botanical Garden: <http://www.bellevuebotanical.org/location.html>.

#### Master Gardeners of Pierce County, 2016 Plant Sale Saturday April 23, 9 am – 4 pm and Sunday, April 24, 9 am – 3 pm WSU Puyallup Research Center 2606 W Pioneer, Puyallup

The sale will feature fruits and vegetables; native plants; perennials and annuals; trees and shrubs; over forty tomato varieties; hardy fuchsias; select plant and artisan vendors; and a garden book sale. Proceeds support the WSU Pierce County Master Gardener Program.

#### Tacoma Nature Center Native Plant Sale Saturday, May 7, 9 am – 4 pm

Landscape your yard with plants that are native to our area. Planting natives ensures the conservation of our precious water resources and provides habitat for local birds, mammals and insects. A list of plants will be posted on the website by 1:00pm on Friday, May 6. [www.tacomannaturecenter.org](http://www.tacomannaturecenter.org). Come early for the best selection.

## Natural Plant Resources

### *The bee-friendly Garden* by Kate Frey and Gretchen LeBuhn

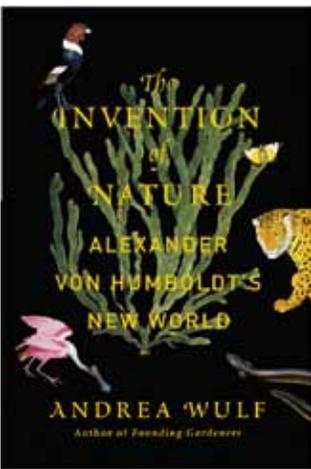
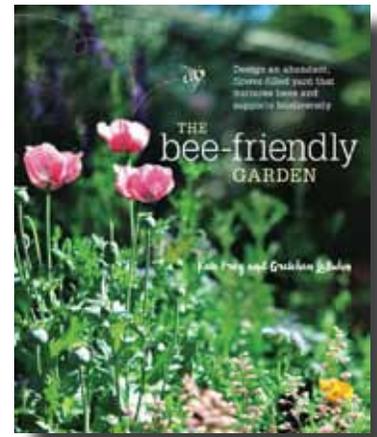
Ten Speed Press; Berkeley, CA, 2016. \$19.99

At the risk of overstressing pollinators, I have included a review of this delightful little book. Bees are critical not only for our native plants but also for our food supply. About 30% of our food crops rely on pollination by bees to produce their fruits and seeds and about 70% of our foods benefit from pollination. That includes all our Washington fruit crops.

The book provides a wealth of information for the gardener concerned about bee pollinators. That is especially important today when honey bees are threatened by pests and colony collapse. The book discusses native as well as European honey bees.

The introduction, *The Benefits of a bee-friendly Garden*, provides an insight into why we should care. The authors speak to both the environmental and the aesthetic benefits of a bee-friendly garden. Bee gardens “are designed to have a large variety of flowers blooming at one time over a long season.” They speak also to the benefits of native plants fostering not only varieties of bees but also other beneficial insects.

The basic information is presented in six chapters: Our Friends the Bees, Plants for Your Bee-Friendly Garden, Bee-Friendly Plants for Your Edible Garden, Bee Garden Basics, Designing your Bee Garden, and Beyond Your Backyard- Becoming a Bee Activist. Each chapter is very nicely illustrated. One thing I particularly appreciated was the plant lists by region. The Pacific Northwest (Pages 197-201) was extensive and does indicate which plants are native.



### *The Invention of Nature: Alexander Von Humboldt's New World*

by Marcia Wulf. Alfred A. Knopf; New York, 2015. \$30.00

In the 19th Century, Alexander Von Humboldt was one of the most read writers of his time. Since then, he has sunk into obscurity for most of us. We may have read Thoreau, Goethe, Darwin, Thomas Jefferson or even George Perkins Marsh without realizing who influenced them profoundly. Von Humboldt was a man ahead of his times. As early as 1803, Humboldt recognized and wrote about the impact of man on climate and the environment. He was a man modern environmentalists would recognize as one of their own.

Wulf quotes Humboldt on page 57. “When forests are destroyed, as they are everywhere in America by the European planters, with an imprudent precipitation, the springs are entirely dried up, or become less abundant. The beds of the rivers, remaining dry during part of the year, are converted into torrents, whenever great rains fall on the heights. The sward and the moss disappearing with the brush-wood from the sides of the mountains, the waters falling in rain are no longer impeded in their course; and instead

of slowly augmenting the level of the rivers by progressive filtrations: they furrow during heavy showers the sides of the hills, bear down the loosened soil, and form those sudden inundations, that devastate the country.” He was a man of other firsts. He described the vegetation zones in terms never before considered and still used today. He was, in short, the most famous scientist of his age as well as an intrepid explorer.

The book is beautifully written by Andrea Wulf. The bibliography and notes are impressive and very useful if you want to follow up on any part of the book. It is, in short, a marvelous read.

## Volunteer Opportunities

One of the goals of the South Sound Chapter of WNPS is to provide a wide variety of opportunities for people to volunteer in activities that they enjoy, and which can serve the community as well as the society. Most of those opportunities will be found in the monthly updates and on the website. Ongoing activities include:

- **Tacoma Nature Center** where Cyndy Dillon leads work parties on the first and third Fridays of the month. For details contact Cyndy at [cpdillongh@comcast.net](mailto:cpdillongh@comcast.net).
- **Capital Museum Native Plant Garden** where Bill Brookreson leads work parties on third Thursdays.
- **South Sound Prairie Restoration.** Center for Natural Lands Management at Glacial Heritage Preserve continue to help enhance the South Puget Sound Prairies. Work parties are every Tuesday from 9 am to 3 pm and the second Saturday. Contact [ssvolunteers@cnlm.org](mailto:ssvolunteers@cnlm.org) for more information, or call (360) 570-0762.

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**Conservation Committee Chair - Vacant**

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I'd like to join or renew my membership in the  
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| Member Category and Dues |             |
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| Okanogan (Winthrop)                           | Wenatchee Valley                        |
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Dues as selected above: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Additional Chapters X \$7 each: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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**TOTAL ENCLOSED:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to WNPS and mail to:

Washington Native Plant Society  
 6310 NE 74th St., Ste 215E, Seattle, WA 98115  
 Phone: 206-527-3210 Email: [info@wnps.org](mailto:info@wnps.org)  
 or go to [www.wnps.org/membership](http://www.wnps.org/membership) to pay on-line

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**Tacoma WA 98407-2119**



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*The mission of the Washington Native Plant Society is to promote the appreciation and conservation of Washington's native plants and their habitats through study, education, and advocacy.*



**Boze first-graders upon receipt of wagons that will  
serve as containers for their mobile pollinator garden**

