

COMPOSITION OF PRAIRIE STANDS IN SOUTHERN MICHIGAN AND ADJOINING AREAS



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Abstract. Prairie plants, 204 species in all, were tabulated for 26 prairie study stands mostly located in southern Michigan.

INTRODUCTION

A number of prairie stands of various types and sizes are scattered through southern Michigan. Although none of these are extensive, quite a few possess considerable diversity. I visited 26 of these sites at different periods of the growing season during the years 1972-81 to observe the composition of the areas (Fig. 1, Table 1). A number of these consist of strip prairies—long, narrow prairie stands extending

along railroad rights-of-way. These often exhibit a variety of ecological communities found where conditions range from low, wet habitats along ditches to dry or mesic conditions occurring on higher ground. Some of the stands are fens where slightly alkaline conditions exist.

DISCUSSION OF DATA

The data show that a number of the species are quite rare in this region (Table 2). *Aster sericeus*, *A. ptarmicoides*, *Cerastium nutans*, *Linum sulcatum*, *Opuntia compressa*, and *Geum triflorum* are found only on dry prairies such as

TABLE 1. List of prairie sites visited.

REFERENCE	SYMBOL	PRAIRIE SITE	COUNTY	LOCATION
Thompson (1975)	A	Algonac St. Park	St. Clair	W of campground, M29 N of Algonac
Thompson (1968)	AA	Ann Arbor	Washtenaw	N of Nichols Arboretum, S bank of Huron River
	Al	Allegan	Allegan	Near 52 St. & 126 Ave., 13 mi. NW of Allegan
	**B	Bowens Mill Fen	Barry	Bowens Mill Rd. at Bassett Lk. Rd., 3 mi. S of Middleville
	**C	Concord Fen	Jackson	Eckert Rd. ¼ mi. of Lippert Rd., 3 mi. S of Concord
Thompson (1978)	**D	Dayton	Berrien	Curran Rd. at McCoy Creek, 2 mi. SE of Dayton
Thompson (1975)	*F	Fairfax RR	St. Joseph	M86 at W edge of Fairfax
	*FB	Fruitbelt RR	Kalamazoo	W of 4 St., N of O Ave., W of Kalamazoo
	G	German Settlers Cemetery	Lake, Ind.	E side of US-41, 1½ mi. S of Cedar Lake, Ind.
	**H	Helmer Brook	Calhoun	NW of Helmer & Harmonia Rds., NW Battle Creek
Thompson (1975)	**I	Indian Bowl	Berrien	E bank of St. Joseph River in Berrien Springs, N of Dean Hill Rd.
Thompson (1975)	J	Jackson RR	Jackson	RR W of Sharp Golf Club, E of Parks Rd., in Jackson
	*K	Klumbis Rd. RR	Cass	RR at Klumbis Rd., betw. Wells & Springs Rds., NE of Pokagon
Bliss & Cox (1964)	L	Lucy Prairie	Lake, Ind.	SE corner of US-41 & US-231, S of St. John, Ind.
	**M	McCoy Fen	Berrien	RR SW of Buchanan at McCoy Creek
Hauser (1953)	N	Newaygo Prairies	Newaygo	Areas near Muskegon River & Oak Rd., 6 mi. E of Newaygo
Thompson (1975)	*O	Otter Creek RR	Monroe	RR betw. S Otter Creek & Cousins Rds., 3 mi S of Monroe
	P	Petersburg	Monroe	Game area on Teal Rd., 2 mi. S of Petersburg
	*PC	Parma-Concord RR	Jackson	RR betw. Parma & Bath Mills Rd.
Walpole (1924)	**R	Riverbank	Washtenaw	Highland Cemetery, River & Holmes Rds., Ypsilanti
Thompson (1975)	*S	West Sturgis RR	St. Joseph	RR 4 mi W of Sturgis at Shimmel Rd.
Walpole (1924)	Sh	Shanghai	Washtenaw	RR & Huron River, 1 mi E of Dixboro Rd., Ann Arbor
Thompson (In press)	SJ	St. Johns	St. Clair	M29 3 mi W of Algonac
	*Th	Thompson RR	Cass	Thompson Rd. at RR, N of White Rd., 1 mi SW of Pokagon
	**T	Teeple Lake Fen	Oakland	Highland Recr. Area NW edge of Teeple Lake
Rogers (1966)	W	Ojibway	Essex	Matchette & Titcombe Rds., S edge of Windsor, Canada

*RR strip prairie stand

**Fen community occupying at least a portion of the site

TABLE 2, continued

	Sh	AA	W	L	G	O	PC	FB	Th	K	J	S	F	A	P	Al	N	I	T	C	B	H	M	D	R	SJ	
<i>Panicum implicatum</i>						*					*									*						*	*
<i>P. leibergii</i>	*			*						*											*		*				*
<i>P. oligoanthos</i>									*	*														*			
<i>P. virgatum</i>			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>			*							*										*							
<i>S. heterolepis</i>				*																	*						
<i>Stipa spartea</i>					*										*	*	*				*					*	
Legumes																											
<i>Acorpha canescens</i>					*			*			*										*						
<i>Apocynum americana</i>	*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Baptisia leucantha</i>				*	*	*							*														
<i>B. tinctoria</i>			*	*		*								*	*												
<i>Cassia fasciculata</i>				*																							
<i>Desmodium canadense</i>	*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>D. illinoense</i>	*	*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>D. marilandicum</i>	*						*					*									*						
<i>D. sessilifolium</i>																				*							
<i>Lathyrus palustris</i>			*			*								*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Lespedeza capitata</i>	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>L. hirta</i>							*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	*					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Melilotus alba</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Petalostemum purpureum</i>				*	*																						
<i>Tephrosia virginiana</i>					*		*									*	*				*	*					
Lilies																											
<i>Aletris farinosa</i>			*			*								*					*	*	*						
<i>Allium cernuum</i>	*	*		*	*				*					*					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Camassia scilloides</i>				*																							
<i>Lilium michiganense</i>	*	*	*			*				*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Tofieldia glutinosa</i>																			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Zygadenus glaucus</i>			*															*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Milkweeds																											
<i>Acerates viridiflora</i>			*													*	*				*						
<i>Apocynum sibiricum</i>	*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	*	*	*			*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>A. amplexicaulis</i>							*									*											
<i>A. syriaca</i>	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>A. sullivantii</i>			*			*							*														
<i>A. tuberosa</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>A. verticillata</i>									*	*	*										*						

Newaygo and Allegan. *Camassia scilloides*, *Cassia fasciculata*, and *Gentiana puberula* were observed only at Lucy Prairie, which is situated at the southwest edge of the study region. *Silphium laciniatum* and *Petalostemum purpureum* occur only at this location and at German Settlers cemetery. *Dodecatheon meadia* provides a showy display at both of these sites but is only of limited occurrence at McCoy and Dayton fens. *Cacalia tuberosa* is found at McCoy and Bowens Mill sites, whereas *Filipendula rubra* occurs only at Helmer Brook and Indian Bowl. *Phlox maculata* is a rare species limited to Dayton and McCoy fens.

Species conspicuous in fens include *Lobelia kalmii*, *Cyripedium candidum*, *Potentilla fruticosa*, *Gentiana crinita* or *procera*, *Valeriana edulis* var. *ciliata*, and *Zygadenus glaucus*. Other species are *Lobelia siphilitica*, *Castilleja coccinea*, *Tofieldia glutinosa*, *Polemonium reptans*, and *Solidago patula*.

Data suggest that *Asclepias sullivantii*, *Sanguisorba canadensis*, and *Gaura biennis* are confined to the eastern portion of the region, where *Amorpha canescens*, *Asclepias amplexicaulis*, *Tephrosia virginiana*, *Eryngium yuccifolium*, *Dodecatheon meadia*, and *Polemonium reptans* are largely limited to the western section of the study area.

It is evident that a number of species are common on most of the prairie sites. As a group, asters and goldenrods occur quite frequently on prairies. Most of the other members of the composites listed fall in the same category except for a few rarer species such as *Parthenium integrifolium*, *Liatriis novae-angliae*, and *Eupatorium altissimum*. Common species in other families include *Fragaria virginiana*, *Potentilla canadensis*, *Thalictrum dasycarpum*, *Desmodium canadense*, *Lespedeza hirta* and *L. capitata*, *Melilotus alba*, *Zizia aurea*, *Monarda fistulosa*, *Pycnanthemum virginianum*, and *Euphorbia corollata*. Also, widespread are *Daucus carota*, *Onoclea sensibilis*, *Thelypteris palustris*, *Tradescantia ohioensis*, *Sisyrinchium albidum*, *Comandra umbellata* var. *decumbens*, *Oenothera biennis*, *Lithospermum canescens*, *Galium boreale*, *Apocynum sibiricum*, *Asclepias syriaca*, and *A. tuberosa*. Still other frequent species are *Veronicastrum virginicum*, *Andropogon gerardii*, *A. scoparius*, *Bromus inermis*, *Calamagrostis canadensis*, *Elymus canadensis*, *Panicum virgatum*, *Spartina pectinata*, *Sorghastrum nutans*, *Rubus flagellaris*, and *Salix humilis*.

The largest group represented on the various prairie sites is the composite family; the next largest group is the grass, and the third largest, the legume family.

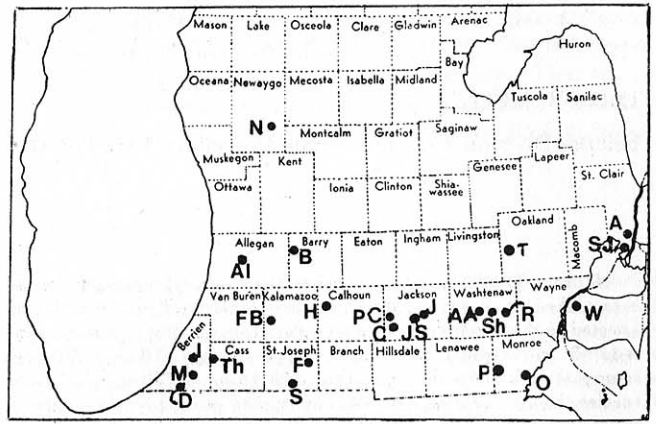


FIG. 1. Location of prairie stands in southern Michigan. Symbols listed in Table 1.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Most of the species list was based on field data I collected from surveys of the different prairie sites. However, a few missing species were added by other investigators. I wish to thank the following for this material: Heidi Appel, Kim Chapman, Margaret Kohring, Ronald Kapp, Max Medley, Daniel Nepstad, Robert Pleznac, Edward Scharrer, and Leon Schaddelee. I thank Cranbrook Institute of Science for research funds.

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