

while *laeve* has smooth stems. Other members of Asteraceae not yet blooming were *Solidago patula* (rough-leaved goldenrod), *Helianthus salicifolius* (willowleaf sunflower), and *Solidago rigida* (stiff goldenrod). We spent considerable time comparing and contrasting these sometimes difficult-to-distinguish plants. This garden is a good place to study them since so many species are growing side-by side here. We noted many other species from other plant families as well.

When we had finished studying the plants in the Howell Prairie Garden, we walked a trail to the east end of the disposal cell. This is where we originally found *Epilobium coloratum* last fall. The ground here is like a fen with water continuously flowing in a thin layer over the ground only here the water is not seeping out of the ground but is draining from the disposal cell. We found many water loving plants such as *Typha angustifolia* (narrow-leaved cat-tail), *Physostegia virginiana* (obedient plant), *Verbena hastata* (blue vervain), *Ludwigia alternifolia* (rattlebox), and *Epilobium coloratum*. There seemed to be less *E. coloratum* plants than we remembered from last fall and we speculated that they may be suffering from crowding, especially by the cat-tails and obedient plants.

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## Notes from West Texas

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### Fr. Jim Sullivan

[Ed. note: in August of this year, Fr. Sullivan made a trip to west Texas to botanize in the Davis Mountains Area. Following are two notes he submitted from this trip].

#### ***Philadelphus* likes rocks**

Like its cousins the hydrangeas and the saxifrages, *Philadelphus* likes rocks, mostly in wet situations. On a rocky slope above Limpia Creek, I saw a bush with four white petals, and I thought of *Philadelphus*. I wasn't far wrong. They call it *Fendlera*, but it is in the *Philadelphus* clan. Its species name is *rupicola*. It likes rocks.

The rocks were a disaster to me, but the Cliff Fendlerbush loves them and lives on them.

#### **A cactus wren was scolding me**

"This is my turf! What are you doing here?"

He didn't look much like a wren, since he was so large, and had a long tail that was NOT turned upward. But he sure acted wren-like. He kept scolding me, and by the time I got the message, I thoroughly agreed with him.

You always need to know where you are putting your feet when you are hiking. But this slope was made of rounded rocks, and you couldn't see where your foot was going because of all the thorny scrub. And when you lose your balance, you get an instant study of cactus spines, clawing mimosas, and slashing agave rosettes.

The cactus wren was scolding me! And he was right!



## The Marvelously Cryptic *Dicerca lurida*

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### Ted C. MacRae<sup>1</sup>



*Dicerca lurida* on trunk of wind-thrown mockernut hickory (*Carya alba*). Photo by Ted C. MacRae.

This is *Dicerca lurida* (family Buprestidae), another of several woodboring beetle species that I found on the trunk of a large, wind-thrown mockernut hickory (*Carya alba*) tree during my early April hike of the lower [Wappapello Section](#) of the [Ozark Trail](#). Actually, I had already spent some amount of time at the tree photographing a checkered beetle (*Enoclerus ichneumoneus*) and a longhorned beetle (*Stenosphenus notatus*) giving a ride to

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from an article posted May 21, 2010 on the author's website: <http://beetlesinthebush.wordpress.com>.

a [phoretic pseudoscorpion](#) before I even noticed not one, but several of these cryptically colored jewel beetles on the trunk of the tree.

Like other species in the genus, the brilliant metallic gaudiness of *Dicerca lurida* as a pinned insect specimen in a cabinet belies its near invisibility when sitting on the bark of its host trees. Several different trees have been reported as hosts (Nelson 1975), but hickories of the genus *Carya* seem to be the most preferred. The beetles rapidly colonize wind-thrown or cut trees and branches while the wood is still hard and strong, and I have collected it from a number of hickories and reared it from dead pignut hickory (*Cary glabra*) and shellbark hickory (*Carya laciniosa*), as well as sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*). Most jewel beetles are active as adults only during a limited time during the season – typically late spring and early summer in eastern North America, but species of *Dicerca* occur as adults throughout the year – even during winter hibernating under loose bark.

This individual probably represents one of those hibernating adults that resumed activity in the first warm days of spring, searching for freshly killed host trees on which to mate and lay their eggs.

Widespread across eastern North America, it is perhaps the commonest species of the genus and one of the commonest jewel beetles in North America. Yet, despite its abundance, year-round occurrence, relatively large size, and attractive coloration, its cryptic habits keep it seldom seen by those who don't look for it.

#### REFERENCE:

**Nelson, G. H. 1975.** A revision of the genus *Dicerca* in North America (Coleoptera: Buprestidae). *Entomologische Arbeiten aus dem Museum G. Frey* 26:87–180.



## Rejoicing the End of Summer

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*Ted C. MacRae*<sup>1</sup>

Last week I awoke to refreshingly cool temperatures for the first time in a long time – a brutal heat wave that had gripped the Midwest for

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from an article posted August 28, 2010 on the author's website: <http://beetlesinthebush.wordpress.com>.



**Russet browns of big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) blend with still-green foliage in early autumn at White River Balds Natural Area in southwestern Missouri. Photo by Ted C. MacRae.**

some time had finally (if only briefly) passed. Missouri typically experiences substantial heat and humidity during the height of summer, a result of warm, moisture-laden air sweeping up from the Gulf of Mexico and over our mid-continental position. The first cool snap in mid-August, however, usually marks the beginning of the end of protracted heat. High temps may return (and usually do), but they are intermittent and the writing is on the wall – summer's end is near, and fall is on its way! For most of my life, the coming of fall has always been something to which I looked forward eagerly – it really is my favorite time of year. I don't just love fall, I adooore it!!!

As a result, I sometimes forget that not everyone shares my feelings, so when I mentioned to a colleague last week how excited I was that fall was on the way, I was a little surprised by her less-than-pleased reaction. Kids I can understand – fall means a return to school and the end of fun and sun and no responsibilities. However, for most adults, fall does not entail as dramatic a paradigm shift – we get up and go to work everyday regardless of the season. Indeed, to my colleague, fall was not dreaded so much for what it is but what it portends – winter! I convinced myself that if she was as interested in natural history as I, surely she would appreciate fall as a time of transition in the natural world. This logic proved faulty, however, when just a few days later one of my favorite entomologist/natural historian bloggers voiced a similar lamentation.

That the charms of fall are not immediately apparent to everyone is beyond me. Who in middle America doesn't rejoice the end of long,