

it a habit to examine ninebark wherever I found it growing in Missouri. Ninebark is actually rather common in the state along the rocky streams and rivers that dissect the Ozark Highlands. Interestingly, I almost never encountered this beetle on ninebark elsewhere in the state. I'm sure it occurs in other areas, but probably at too low a level to be easily detected. I surmised that the populations at Victoria and Valley View Glades were unusually high due to the non-optimal conditions for its host plant. The ravines and toeslopes where the plants grow are drier than typical for ninebark, and unlike the lush, robust plants found in moister streamside habitats, the plants at these glades are small, scraggly and often exhibit a certain amount of dieback. It seemed likely to me that the plants growing in the glades were less capable of fending off attacks by these insects, thus resulting in relatively higher numbers of beetles at these glades.

After the publication of my "Buprestidae of Missouri" (MacRae 1991), it would be many years before I actually returned to Victoria Glades. When I did return, I was pleased to see that management practices (e.g. prescribed burning, cedar removal, etc.) intended to halt the encroachment of woody vegetation and preserve the glade's pre-settlement character had been implemented in the area. I was a little bothered, however, by the seeming paucity of insects compared to the years prior to management. I visited the glades again several times afterwards, and not only did insect populations in general seem to be depressed, but I never succeeded in finding *D. pugionata* adults on the ninebark plants. I began to worry that the prescribed burns, while clearly beneficial to the glade flora, might have had a negative impact on the glade's insect populations.

I'm happy to report that, at last, I have found the beetles again. I returned to the glades in early May this year and, for the first time since 1987 I found the adults of this species—five in all (a typical number for the many dozens of plants checked) and right in the same areas where I had so consistently found them 25–30 years earlier. This does much to allay my concerns about the ability of these beetles to persist in the face of prescribed burning (though I remain convinced that this management technique [should be used more](#)

[judiciously](#) in our state's natural areas than it has in recent years), and I'm happy to have these new photographs of the species, which are a decided improvement over the [old scanned slides](#) taken nearly 30 years ago!

REFERENCES:

[MacRae, T. C. 1991.](#) The Buprestidae (Coleoptera) of Missouri. *Insecta Mundi* 5(2):101–126.

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[Nelson, G. H., D. S. Verity & R. L. Westcott. 1982.](#) Additional notes on the biology and distribution of Buprestidae (Coleoptera) of North America. *The Coleopterists Bulletin* 35(2) [1981]:129–151.



Upside down bee fly

*Ted C. MacRae*⁴



Bombylius sp. cf. *mexicanus*, Charleston Church Camp Preserve, Scott Co., Missouri.

This has got to be one of the strangest photos I've ever taken. Three weeks ago after visiting [Sam A. Baker State Park](#) (and photographing the scorpionfly featured in [last week's One-Shot Wednesday post](#)), my dad and I visited a couple of sand prairie remnants in the Mississippi lowlands of extreme southeastern Missouri. I was hoping to see (and photograph) some individuals of the unique population of *Cicindela scutellaris* that occurs

⁴ Originally posted May 16, 2012 at the author's website: *Beetles in the Bush* (<http://beetlesinthebush.wordpress.com>). Photo by the author.

in that part of the state—apparently disjunct, this populations shows an intergrade of characters typical of subspecies *C. s. lecontei* to the north and *C. s. unicolor* to the south. I've [photographed this population](#) before, but those photographs were taken with a small (though quite good) point-and-shoot camera before I acquired my [current DSLR camera setup](#).

Unfortunately, temperatures were quite cool that day, and no beetles were seen at either of the two locations we visited where I've seen good populations in past years. When I don't find what I'm looking for, I start noticing other things, one of which was this very fresh-looking bee fly (order Diptera, family Bombyliidae) resting on the sandy ground. I've not really attempted to photograph many bee flies—they are as skittish and difficult to approach as the tiger beetles I adore but, unlike the latter, not a subject of my research and, thus, harder to justify spending inordinate amounts of time attempting photographs. This one, however, was sitting so nicely on the ground, and with no tiger beetles around to demand my attention I thought I would give it a shot (pun intended!). I carefully assembled my rig and slowly crouched down to attempt a photograph, but before I could get in position the fly spooked and tried to fly away. As it took off, however, it hit a plant and fell to the ground on its back. As it laid there, seemingly stunned, I got myself into position and took a quick shot to make sure I had the settings and exposure that I wanted. In that regard, I couldn't ask for better, but of course what I really wanted was a photograph of the fly right-side up, resting on its feet rather than its back. Just as I was considering what to do next, the fly abruptly righted itself and flew away, leaving me with this single, rather unconventional photograph.

After perusing the [bee fly](#) pages at [BugGuide](#), I was fairly certain this was something in the tribe Bombyliini, with the genera [Bombylius](#) and [Systoechus](#) being the likeliest candidates. Apparently the location of the r-m vein on the wing is an important distinguishing character between these genera, but I wasn't quite sure about its location on the wing in this photograph. Nevertheless, some of the comments under the different species in these two genera suggested that members of *Bombylius* tend to be active as adults in the spring,

while those of *Systoechus* tend more towards fall. I sent the photo to dipterist [Joel Kitts](#) at University of Guelph for his opinion—he confirmed that it belonged to the genus *Bombylius* and suggested its appearance was consistent with that of [B. mexicanus](#)—many thanks Joel!



James F. Adams (1921–2012)

Paul Brockland

The Webster Groves Nature Study Society mourns the loss of James F. "Jim" Adams. Jim was a long-time member of WGNSS. He served on the Board as Historian, Secretary and *Nature Notes* Editor. As Historian, he compiled indices of all previous volumes, which he had bound for the archives located at the Missouri Botanical Garden. He researched the lives of former WGNSS leaders and published these biographies in *Nature Notes*, which he edited from September 2005 to December 2008.

Jim was a native of Longmott, Texas. After becoming a chemical engineer, he moved to Webster Groves and worked at Monsanto for 43 years. Jim was a long-time and significant Boy Scout leader. He began when his sons were Cub Scouts. He was the scout master of the troop at South Webster Presbyterian Church. After his sons were grown, he served on the Boy Scout Council's Historic Trails Committee. He was an avid hiker and contributed to the development of many of the council-sponsored hiking trails. He was also Editor of the Missouri Trail Association newsletter. In 2009 Jim was presented our society's Lifetime Achievement Award.



Seminars at St. Louis Zoo

Sandra Faneuff

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