

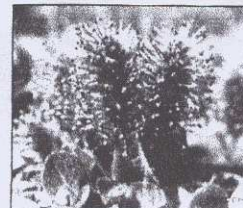
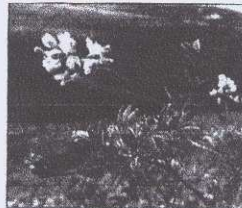
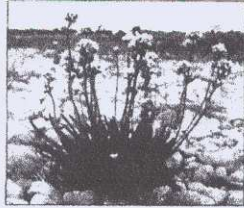


Limestone barrens: a landscape under stress

Limestone Barrens: a landscape under stress is an international symposium that will be held at the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College campus of Memorial University of Newfoundland July 1-6, 2004. Its focus will be the appreciation and understanding of the fragile nature of the lime-

stone barrens and on issues surrounding their stewardship and conservation worldwide. The symposium is being held in conjunction with the opening at the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College Art Gallery of *The Limestone Barrens Project*, an interdisciplinary creative exchange between Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Ireland that includes a major exhibition of photo-based art and creative writing by Ontario, Newfoundland, and Irish artists. The exhibition will subsequently tour to venues in Ontario and Ireland and will be accompanied by a publication.

The first day will include two three-hour panels which present key issues relating to the ecology and conservation of the limestone barrens, a reception, poetry-reading, and artist presentations at the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College Art Gallery. The following three days will comprise field trips and presentations in various limestone barrens sites and communities along Newfoundland's Great Northern



Three at-risk species on the Northern Peninsula's limestone barrens: from left, Barrens Willow, endangered; Fernalds Milk-vetch, special concern; and Longs Braya, endangered. Photos courtesy of Dulcie House.

Peninsula. Speakers will come from Ireland, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador and will use the sites along the Northern Peninsula as an opportunity to engage the various communities and as a resource for the presentations.

The field trips will provide an opportunity to view the unique botany of the limestone barrens on the Great Northern Peninsula. These barrens contain the highest proportion of rare plants of any area of similar size in Newfoundland. In addition participants will view the unusual and beautiful frost-patterned soils and erosional features that are easily destroyed by careless use; and have an opportunity to discuss community stewardship programs with people associated with the limestone barrens of Western Newfoundland.

Panel 1: Limestone Barrens, a landscape under stress. This science portion of the symposium will consist of three 45-minute talks followed by

question and answer sessions. Limestone barrens cliffs and alvars are rare habitats. They support a wide range of rare organisms with unusual characteristics such as slow growth and extraordinary age.

Scientists from each of the three regions will talk about the geology, geographical features of the areas, and the plants and animals that live there. They will address conservation and restoration issues that surround these unusual habitats. Comparisons will be drawn between the natural and human components of the different locales.

Panel 2: Living in the Barrens: Conservation, Education, Stewardship. The conservation portion of the symposium will consist of presentations by educators and conservationists from Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador and Ireland. Panels and field trips will delve into the opportunities and problems that attend life in a rare habitat surrounded by rare plants. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of developing community stewardship for these fragile barrens.

For further information on the *Limestone Barrens Project*, please visit the Web site at: www.swgc.mun.ca/limestone.