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University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "UM Herbarium hosts plants collected by Lewis & Clark (correction)" (1982). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 7606. <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/7606>

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MEDIA RELEASE

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5/14/82
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N.B.: THIS CORRECTED VERSION REPLACES STORY OF SAME TITLE, DATED:

5/11/82

UM HERBARIUM HOSTS PLANTS COLLECTED
BY LEWIS & CLARK

MISSOULA--

Nearly 176 years after they were plucked and pressed by the Lewis and Clark expedition along the Clearwater River in Idaho, two plant specimens have almost made it back home and are the loaned guests of the University of Montana Herbarium this spring.

The yellow-blossomed plants, known as Erythroium grandiflorum by scientists and commonly called Glacier Lily, are to be used as part of a study by UM botany doctoral student Jane Fritz-Sheridan.

The Lewis and Clark specimens ~~will be on public exhibit from 9 to 11 a.m. Friday, May 21,~~ will be on public exhibit from 9 to 11 a.m. Friday, May ^{21,} in the display cases on the second floor landing of the UM Botany Building. Other display times may be arranged through the Botany department office, phone 243-5222.

However, the plants are the property of the Philadelphia Academy of Science, where almost all of the plantspecimens from the 1805-'06 Lewis and Clark expedition are housed.

"The Academy said they were 'national treasures' and so I was surprised that they were loaned to us so easily," Dr. Sherman Preece, curator of the UM Herbarium, commented. He said the plants are very brittle and require extremely careful handling and are protected by pests in special fumigated cases.

Fritz-Sheridan said one specimen is missing a few parts but the other is fairly complete. The 19th-century specimens were collected in May and June 1806.

(over)

UM HERBARIUM HOSTS-- add one

She said they were the original specimens used to name and distinguish the species after the expedition returned to the East. She will use them for comparisons in her study of their white-blossomed relatives that grow in the Seeley Lake and Glacier National Park areas of Montana.

She explained that no one has studied the white Glacier Lily enough to determine its status in relation to other plants or the reasons for its differences; for example, why it's modern yellow-blossomed relatives don't share its territory.

Preece said that there aren't many surviving specimens of plants as old as these in the United States and that the oldest in the UM Herbarium's permanent collection date from 1902. Herbaria in Europe have specimens dating back to the 16th century.

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