

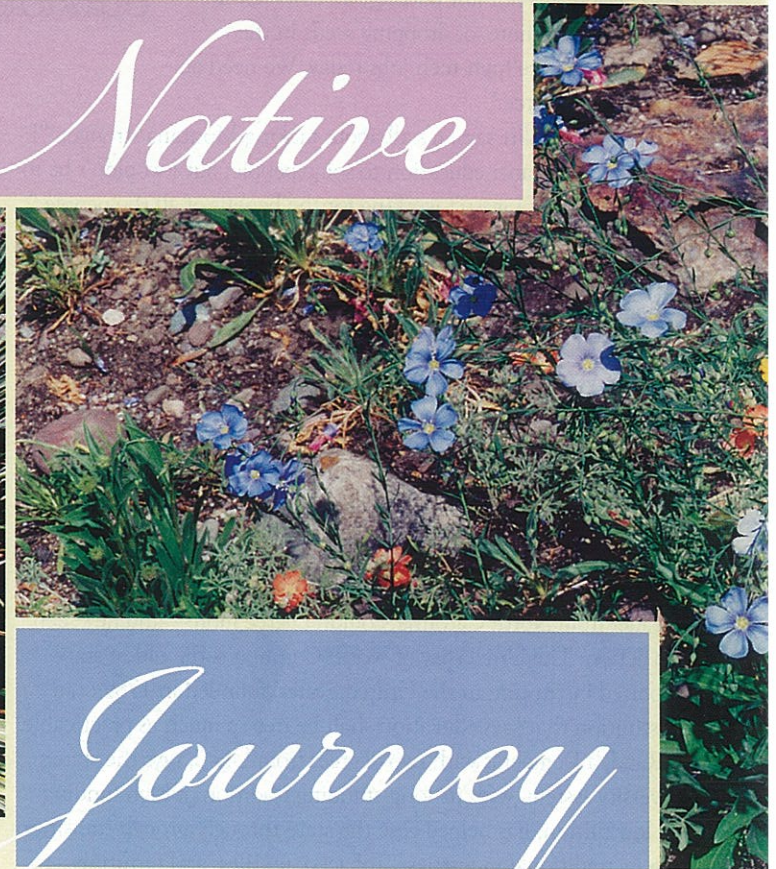
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Native



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Journey

STORY BY RYAN NEWHOUSE

We should go forth on the shortest walk, perchance, in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return...

HENRY DAVID THOREAU, *Walking*

When Klaus Lackschewitz was a child living in Germany, he came to his father with a flower he had picked in the forest and asked what it was. His father, a forester, replied, "Das ist eine *Pyrola* mein kind." Fifty years later Klaus again stood over a delicate, singular stem of pink flowers, the *Pyrola* (wintergreen). He had found it on one of his many walks in the Bitterroot Mountains in southwest Montana.

Lackschewitz discovered other flora in the Bitterroots, two of

which were named for him—*Agroseris lackschewitzii* and *Lesquerella klausii*. And the U.S. Forest Service recognized his keen eye for native flora with the publication of his guidebook, *Vascular Plants of West Central Montana* in 1991. But this is not why a 2,400-pound quartzite rock, taken from the lower Blackfoot River, now sits near the Natural Sciences building on UM's campus. A plaque on the commemorative rock reads, "Klaus Lackschewitz and Sherman Preece: Men of vision who created this native plant garden and generously shared their knowledge of Montana plants." Lackschewitz and his wife, Gertrud, moved to Missoula in 1960 when Gertrud was hired to teach in the University's foreign language department. A former German soldier and Russian POW, Lackschewitz had been trained as a botanist in the Baltics. A few years later, Sherman Preece, chair of UM's botany department, asked Lackschewitz to teach botany courses.

On a Saturday morning in May 1967, the two professors began planting the native gardens that surround UM's Natural Sciences