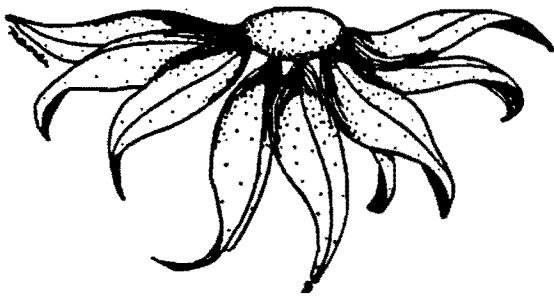


the wild ones



The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

vol. 3 no. 4

July-August 1990

Bayside, Wisconsin

Must suburbia shatter another frail ecosystem?

BEACHWOOD FARMS. What a name! In naming suburbs, developers tend to recall ghosts of what used to be. In this new Mequon subdivision, the streets might be identified as Chorus Frog Ct., Catbird Circle, Treefrog Ave. and Pewee Pl. Next year, teenagers may meet at the corner of Salamander Slope and Lamppropeltis Ln.

Today, however, there is a sign across the street from the isolated woods along N. Lake Shore Dr. It reads, "Magnificent Tudor: four baths, three fireplaces." Another monster house for another 1990s family.

Water may be a problem in the future but for now there is plenty of firewood in sight. The 26-acre island has red oak, white oak, hickory, basswood, sugar maple, red maple and American beech trees. The shaded vernal ponds harbor an innocent biota of life from blue iris to breeding treefrogs. The threatened section is in the midst of freshly sanitized suburbia with alien spruces and pines positioned like



**LORRIE OTTO
IN MY OPINION**

plastic sculptures on sodded lawns. Birds must quiver in horror as they look down on the shrinking acreage of their ancestral habitat!

The Exxon oil spill was an accident. If these woods are destroyed, it will be no accident. One wonders why we are allowing this to happen. Perhaps we have not thought about it or carefully observed that area.

Migrating birds, having escaped the burnings in their winter territories, fly north through toxic fumes, risk drinking in polluted waters, and flutter to the shores of Lake Michigan and over to the Reads' ponded woods. There, they rest and eat the wild berries and seeds, scratch in

the decaying leaves looking for decomposer insects and probe in the mud with their bills searching for worms.

Warblers feast in the treetops on other types of insects while woodpeckers drill into and under the bark of dead branches. They will also join the Jays to get acorns from mature oaks. Red-breasted Grosbeaks flock to the seeds of beech, basswood, ironwood and muscledwood trees. Honeybees gather pollen from the black willows growing in the vernal ponds. Others sip the fresh sap around the buds of maples.

The area provides a critical breeding site for frogs, salamanders and toads. None of these species is endangered in the state but all are on death row here if their spring ponds and buffer woodlands are scraped away and replaced by storm sewer ponds and landscaping. The diverse, self-sustaining ecosystem will be lost and replaced by a toxic environment.

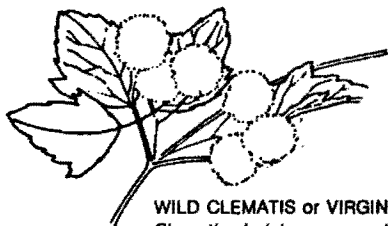
In the next decade all of us everywhere will notice a decline in

bird sightings. First, they will be without a place to rest and feed, then, they will be without a safe nesting habitat full of insects to feed their nestlings. Next, they will lose their mates and sister species. Lastly, there will be silence and emptiness with only my generation left to mourn for what we once knew. It was my generation which made the rules that officials so carefully follow to protect private property.

NO ONE takes into account that birds and butterflies belong to all of society and that we are the stewards of the fragile skin of life on our lonely planet.

Lorrie Otto is a teacher-naturalist living in Bayside.

Reprinted from the Milwaukee Journal, May 13, 1990



WILD CLEMATIS or VIRGIN'S BOWER

Clematis virginiana

WOODS/THICKETS/BANKS

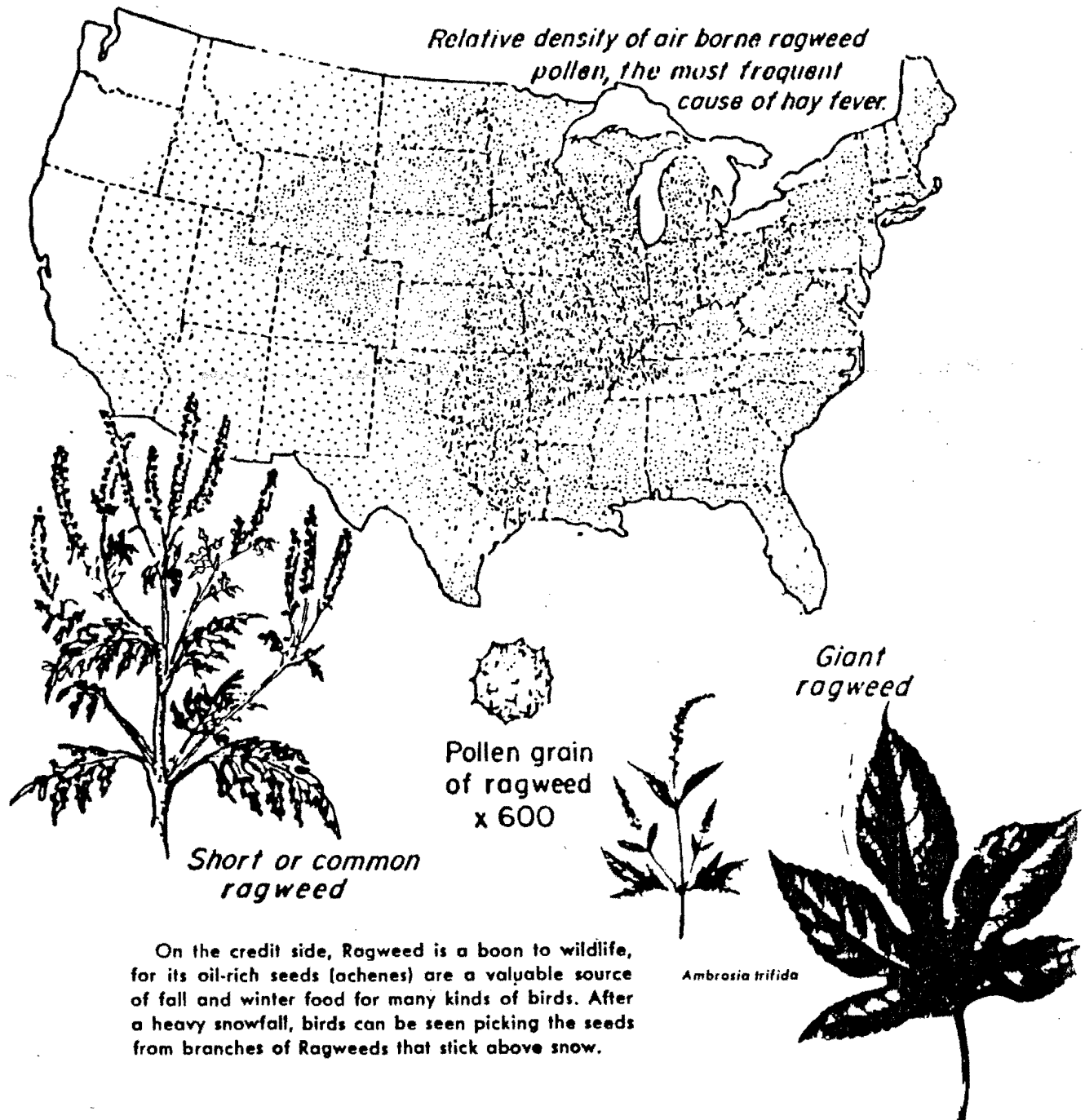
A lovely vine of woodland edges and sunny banks. Can be easily trained on fences or trellises. The white flowers are followed by large, showy clusters of fuzzy white seed heads. Perennial.

Lorrie Otto

Pollens cause hay fever and asthma

| Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | June | Jul. | Aug. | Sep. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. |
|------|------|-------|------|---------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|------|
| | | Trees | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Grasses | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Ragweed | | | | |

Chart showing seasons when pollen is in the air in most central and northern states.



Did you know?

People often wonder about native landscaping and plant allergies. Since the hayfever season is approaching we are reprinting information handed out at an earlier meeting.

The information below and on the preceeding page was collected from That the Patient May Know by Harry F. Dowling, M.D. and Tom Jones, M.D. and The International Textbook of Allergy by J.M. Jamar, M.D. (editor). Additional notes are by Lorrie Otto.

Important Causes of Hayfever

Trees:

Birches (Betula)**
Hickories (Carya)**
Ashes (Fraxinus)**
Walnuts (Juglans)**
Oaks (Quercus)***
Elms (Ulmus)**

Though many trees are important sources of allergenic pollens, there are no suggestions that woods be destroyed.

Grasses:

Redtop Grass (Agrostis alba)**
Bermuda Grass (Cynodon dactylon)**
Orchard Grass (Dactylis glomerata)**
Timothy (Phleum pratense)**
Kentucky Blue Grass (Poa pratense)***

None of the grasses listed above is native to the United States. There are approximately 1,100 kinds of grasses growing naturally in this country. Many grasses bloom in May and June when ground nesting birds need cover. To mow then destroys both cover and nests. Ironically, though it is against the law to shoot songbirds, it is not illegal to destroy nests.

Mowing grasses from mid-July to frost is counter-productive for the following reasons:

1. Many grasses are in seed at this time. Thus mowing does nothing to remove pollen.
2. Mowing eliminates a good filter that removes dust and other particulates and health hazards that pose problems for the entire population.
3. Cutting removes good food and cover for wildlife. (This does not include rats which do not gather grass seeds but depend on grain cribs, garbage, and pet food. Rats are not native to the U.S. They arrived in America with settlers, and are dependant on people.)
4. Mowing maintains the landscape at weed level. It allows weeds to germinate and grow.
5. Frequent mowing does not encourage perennial wildflowers.

Weeds:

Pigweeds (Amaranthus)**
Ragweeds (Ambrosia)****
Goosefoot (Chenopodium)**

These plants grow in disturbed areas only.

** Locally important *** Regionally important **** Very important

The Inside Story

Compiled by Janice Stiefel

WILD SARSAPARILLA

(*Aralia nudicaulis*)
Ginseng Family

OTHER NAMES: Virginian Sarsaparilla, American Spikenard, Shotbush, False Virginian, Spignet, Sweet Root, Wild Liquorice, Rabbit Root, Small Spikenard, False Sarsaparilla

HABITAT: Moist or dry upland woods.

DESCRIPTION: Beneath a large, umbrella-like leaf is a leafless flower stem topped with clusters of greenish-white flowers. The flowers are round clusters about 1½ to 2 in. wide. The leaves rise above the flower stalk in three branching parts, each with 3 to 5 ovate, finely toothed leaflets. The fruits are clusters of purple-black berries. Height is 8 to 15 in.

FLOWERING: July to August

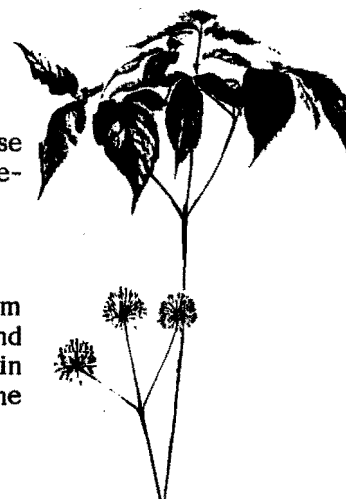
COMMENTS: Wild Sarsaparilla is not a relative of the true Sarsaparilla which comes from a tropical species of Catbrier (*Smilax*) in the Lily Family. The true Sarsaparilla has long been used as a treatment for syphilis, as a tonic, and as a flavor for food and carbonated beverages. The Wild Sarsaparilla has roots with a spicy taste and an agreeable, aromatic smell. It, too, has been used as a substitute for the true product, both medicinally and in homemade root beer. Its uses arose from native American traditions.

MEDICINAL USE: The Cree Indians called it Rabbit Root and used it for topical application on skin wounds, as well as for the treatment of syphilis. The Ojibwe pounded the fresh root and used it as a poultice to bring a boil to a head.

The roots display a long creeping system that grows horizontal to the level of the earth. According to the Doctrine of Signatures, this creeping root system identifies this plant directly with the bloodstream. Its use as a blood purifier and stimulant in blood and skin ailments and in rheumatic conditions has been unparalleled. Indian herbalists recommended it to promote blood purification during pregnancy and for painless childbirth. It has also been used as a wash for ulcers and shingles.

NAME ORIGIN: The name, Sarsaparilla, comes from Mexico - zarza, meaning "a bramble," and parra, "a vine." The **Genus Name**, *Aralia* (A-ray'li-a), is derived from an Indian name. The **Species Name**, *nudicaulis* (new-di'cau'lis) is from the Latin words, nudus, meaning "naked" and, cauli, meaning "stalk," referring to the leafless flowerstalk.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This plant has been a great source of frustration to me for the last ten years. I have a friend who has them growing quite prolifically in her woods and since I do not have even one in our woods, she has graciously let me dig hers. I have tried to do this many times, but the plant never comes back the following spring. It is very hard to get a good shovel of dirt with it because it is usually growing among rocks, so that is probably why it's not working for me. Since the roots grow horizontal to the level of the earth, it is almost impossible to get a good root system when transplanting. If anyone has figured out a way to do this or has the plant for sale in a container, please let me know. I never see it listed in the wild flower catalogs or available as a live plant. Miraculously, I have gotten Ginseng and Golden Seal to grow and bloom for several years, but this plant has me baffled.



Legalizing Wildflowers

As communities across the country expand their municipal ordinances to allow natural landscaping, Landscape designer Donald Vorpahl offers some helpful standards:

1. Ordinances must protect the fundamental right of every citizen to choose his/her own landscape.

2. Ordinances must apply equally to all citizens, and to the city, town, or village.

3. Ordinances must have a rational basis, i.e., a legitimate interest in public health, safety, or protection of the agricultural environment.

4. Ordinances must not legislate conformity or aesthetics, nor allow citizens to exercise control over their neighbor's landscapes.

5. Ordinances must not require filing an application, statement of intent, or management plan; no prior review and approval process; no fees.

6. If it is deemed necessary to appoint a "weed commissioner" to oversee the city's landscapes, that commissioner should be able to identify, with precision, the "weeds" prescribed by the ordinance.

7. Enforcement of the ordinance may only be undertaken through due process of law.

8. Ordinance(s) should address problems of environmental degradation and instability brought on by the proliferation of high-maintenance monocultural landscapes, and the indiscriminate use of toxic chemicals in landscape management. It should encourage the preservation and restoration of diverse, biologically-stable natural plant communities, and environmentally-sound management practices.

9. The city should recognize it has an opportunity here not only to resolve its own landscape problem, but to assume a leadership role among U.S. cities in dealing with environmental affairs. It should seek help from qualified environmental and legal professionals in drafting a positive, forward-looking ordinance which encourages the preservation and development of natural landscapes, and eschews repressive attempts to legislate conformity and aesthetic values.

Legislation should encourage those who would preserve and restore natural plant communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas, and to provide for their equal protection and due process under the law. It should define "restoration project" and "weeds" and define the enforcement procedure and limitations.





PHOTO: Rich and Marion Patterson

Natural Landscaping Is For The Birds...And They Love It!

by MARION J. PATTERSON

Before and after: The front view of the author's home as it appeared in 1979 (left), and the same house in 1987 after repainting and natural landscaping (right).

In a naturally landscaped yard, landowners replace the high-maintenance, sterile Kentucky bluegrass monoculture with communities of native vegetation. Natural landscaping eliminates the need to water, mow and spray—activities that drain our pocketbooks and deplete natural resources. With natural landscaping, landowners nurture the land, which improves its health and vigor, in turn attracting more birds.

The landscape that greeted the pioneers was a vast, flowing and dynamic complex of habitats well-suited to sustaining healthy

populations of diverse bird species. Agriculture and industry changed all that. Marshes and sloughs were drained. Estuaries were filled; forests logged. Prairie was converted to fields. Settlement virtually changed the face of North America.

In the farming heartland alone, over 90 percent of the prairie and 75 percent of the forests are gone. Only postage-stamp sized blocks of native cover and slender green fingers of timber lining waterways remain.

Natural yards, then, are critical habitat links for birds. They provide food, shelter and water throughout the year. For example, nesting orioles, attracted by overhanging trees in a natural yard, also find a vital supply of caterpillars to feed their babies. In addition to the natural supply of seeds, fruits and insects, feeders sustain birds over the winter and give them an edge when spring migration and breeding demand extra energy.

Natural yards are resource efficient as well. Evergreens block the full force of frigid "Alberta Clippers" and shelter birds. The vegetation also holds snow, which, when it melts, recharges ponds.

A gravel drive has the grit necessary for bird digestion. Both gravel and driveway tiles seeded with grass let water percolate into the ground rather than run off into storm sewers. The attractive tiles are a concession to lawns that open-space birds, like Chipping Sparrows, need.

Natural yards are dynamic. They change seasonally and over time, thus attracting different birds. More migratory birds begin to stop regularly. The number of nesting species increases as the habitat improves. In winter, when food and adequate shelter are scarce, birds literally flock to natural yards.

Our original pair of hungry Cardinals has grown to a dozen. We've



PHOTO: Rich and Marion Patterson

counted more than 50 goldfinches (Iowa's state bird) feeding at one time. A Brown Creeper has showed up for the past two years. Sapsuckers tap our trees each April. We keep an eye out for the elusive Eastern Screech Owl among our pines.

While creating important habitat for birds, owners also add year-round

interest and color. John Diekelmann, a certified landscape architect from Madison, Wisconsin, who specializes in natural designs, delights in the fine textures and soft lines naturally landscaped yards offer—a welcome break from the linear elements of our lives.

Naturally landscaped yards also

attract other wildlife. This can be a mixed bag, but a balanced ecosystem keeps animal populations in control. One summer woodland voles overran our yard. We weren't happy about it, but we didn't panic, either. Soon owls moved in for the feast. We've had no problems since.

The one major wildlife problem

Gardening Tips

Here are specific things to think about before you start to redo your yard:

1. Learn about the native vegetation in your area. Decide how much time you want to devote to yard care and what birds you want to attract.
2. Explain to your neighbors what you would like to do. Natural landscaping does not mean blatant neglect of your yard. In fact, initially it is hard work!
3. Start small, especially if you have close and traditional neighbors. Incorporate into the lawn a back-

drop of shrubs, a pocket prairie or a border of woodland flowers, all with soft and flowing lines. Choose plants that do not infringe on neighbors. Some excellent wildlife shrubs send up suckers. Remember too that 12-inch coniferous seedlings will grow to be towering windbreaks and possibly shade your neighbor's garden.

4. Be ready to work hard the first few years to encourage native species and keep invaders down. Mechanical and biological methods of weed control are preferable to chemical means. Composting and mulching leaves and grass clippings enriches the soil and habitat for organisms

that the birds eat.

5. Be aware of noxious weed laws.
6. Be patient, accept failure and try again.
7. Keep a record, either through pictures or in writing, to mark your progress.
8. Get seeds and plants from reputable sources that specialize in native material. Natural landscape advocates agree that the "meadow-in-a-can" concept is misleading and ineffective for establishing a balanced habitat. Some of the mixes contain loosestrife, an aggressive exotic that chokes out other vegetation.

landowners may encounter is deer. Solving deer overpopulation is a sticky issue facing the private sector and municipal and state governments.

Darrel Morrison, Dean of the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia, stresses that a goal of natural landscaping is to create communities of plants which interrelate and promote vitality. When natural landscaping is

done properly, a variety of plants will be available to meet birds' needs all year. The birds will respond.

We agree. Our yard today is a dramatic contrast to the same yard 12 years ago. Our front boundary is a busy city street, but the back half is bounded on three sides by second-growth woods. In 1978, our urban lot con-



PHOTO: J. LARSEN

Natural landscaping provides a rich source of both seed and cover for birds.

Attracting wildlife is even more popular for kids today than it was in 1886 when this appeared in *Harpers Weekly*.



sisted of grass and grazed pasture. We had six oaks, one walnut, two willows, five mulberries, and a box elder. That was it. Still, we counted 33 bird species at that time. Several of them were pests, while the rest preferred to live out of sight in the fields and woods.

That first spring, we heeled in pine and cedar seedlings; planted red-buds, maples and fruit trees; red, gray and pagoda dogwood; and shrubs of ninebark. In 1982 we dug a small pond and landscaped with shrubs, ferns, Cardinal flower and marsh marigold. Each year we add sections of woodland ephemerals like Virginia bluebells, wild ginger, hepatica, May apple, columbine and dogtooth violet. These early spring flowers enrich the soil and offer cover for birds. Prairie rose (Iowa's state flower) and wild strawberry produce fruits. Native forbes and grasses like yellow and purple cone-flowers, big and little bluestem, Indian and sweet grass all mature to provide a winter seed supply. We maintain the cultivated iris and raspberry patches, and we encourage phlox and mulberry trees. Several bird species nest in these and eat the fruits and various insects associated with them.

Our bird count has more than doubled since we began re-landscaping. We now enjoy many desirable species from the house as well as in the yard.

In addition to having cardinals, chickadees and wrens nesting just outside our windows, we have resident Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Pileated Woodpeckers. Vultures and hawks, including the recently released Peregrine Falcon, drop in for a quick meal. Turkeys compete with Blue Jays and squirrels for acorns. Cuckoos, woodpeckers, flycatchers, Whip-poor-wills, night-hawks, swifts and swallows devour insects and larvae. We annually anticipate the brief stay of Golden and Ruby-crowned kinglets and the numerous warblers as they migrate.

The hardy, drought-resistant native plants reproduce well. Within a few years, a natural yard maintains itself with minimal care, so homeowners can do what they like to do best—*watch birds!*

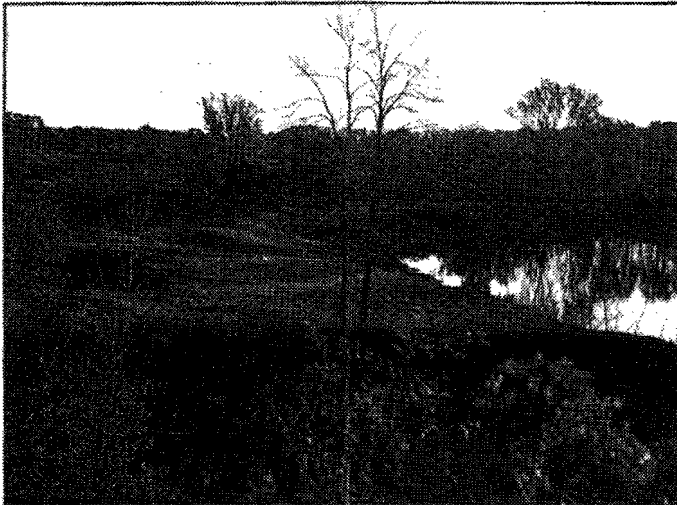
And in their own yards, no less.



Join us in July ...



On Saturday, July 14, 1990 we will be leaving Schlitz Audubon Center at 9:30 a.m. for a memorable trip!! We'll be touring Kohler's beautiful natural areas, Blackwolf Run and River Wildlife Preserve, with David Grant (Kohler's landscape architect) as our guide. Your \$10 fee will cover coach bus travel and a delicious box lunch. Register by JULY 1 for this exciting event!!!



JULY 14, 1990

9:30 a.m. - SCHLITZ AUDUBON CENTER

\$10 FEE (includes travel & lunch)

REGISTER BY JULY 1, 1990

WILD ONES MEMBERS ONLY

Registration for Kohler Trip

Name _____

☐

\$10 enclosed for each current member.

Address _____

☐

\$22 enclosed (includes 1990 paid dues.)

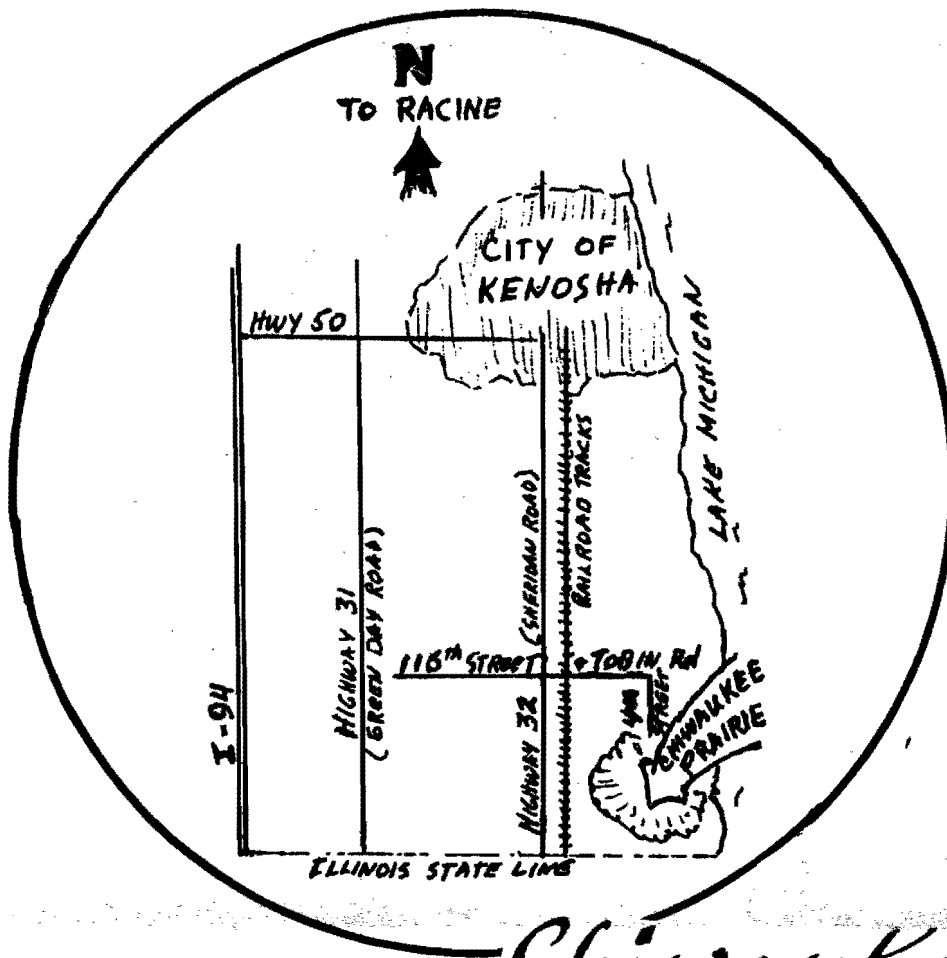
City _____

Phone _____

Make out checks to THE WILD ONES and mail to: Sue Hurda

4528 W. Hiawatha Drive

Mequon, WI 53092



Shooting stars by the thousands, as well as hoary puccoon, swamp wood betony, and other wonderful spring prairie flowers greet the visitor to Chiwaukee Prairie in late May. Use these directions to help you find it. (You'll always remember how to spell it if you think of the two cities which are north and south of it.) Be sure and visit!

Chiwaukee Prairie

GREETINGS...Things certainly have not slowed down for our club! Interest is still growing and we officers are getting calls frequently about joining or landscaping projects. Thank you for the calls. We have also been "called" to be an exhibitor for the fall garden show at State Fair Park...We have accepted and as we have more details we will have it in our newsletter.... We would appreciate any calls for volunteers to help with the booth during the show. Volunteers are still needed for putting the newsletter together and/or help with the mailing...here's another opportunity for you to be more involved. There were so many with a shovel, ready to dig in May...you will find that these jobs are a lot easier on your back and are truly rewarding... Give it a thought and give us a call!

Dub

→ → PLEASE REMEMBER TO PAY YOUR DUES! ← ←

From the Secretary ...

April: Wild Ones was fortunate to have Lee Olsen speaker at our April meeting. Olsen is a teacher, a naturalist, and a photographer, who has studied extensively with the Native American Indians to learn their traditional uses of our native plants.

Lee's program concentrated on some of the insects which inhabit natural plant communities. A beautiful slide show was accompanied by fascinating insect information. Did you know that:

- ants are wonderful for turning the soil and keeping it loose; ants protect the development of certain flower heads?

- mimicking looks and sounds of bees and wasps is an adaptation for survival for several insects?

- there are 13 species of native bumblebees in Wisconsin?

- most insects have 4 wings, (2 on each side), but flies, gnats, and mosquitos have only 2 wings?

- all spiders have 6-8 eyes?

Lee's main theme was that there are no "bad" insects, and that the need for diversity is essential.

May: A wonderful dig was had by all at our May meeting. Gene Fransee, owner of Fransee's Tree Nursery, and Fransee's Garden Villa (a garden center), both located in Saukville, generously allowed us to dig woodland wildflowers at his development site. The digging was terrific - hepatica, spring beauty, solomon's plume, trillium, jack-in-the-pulpit, wood anemone, baneberry, mayapple, etc.

We want to extend a big "thank-you" to Gene for allowing us to rescue plants from the bulldozer. They have found new homes in our yards and will be treasured for years to come!

MANY THANKS, GENE FRANSEE!!

Attention: Dan Boehlke has agreed to provide us with a plant sale after our June trip to Waukesha. Last year we really found some treasures from Dan and we do appreciate his efforts again this year. The date is Saturday, June 9, 1990. Don't forget your checkbooks and a little extra for the bus trip.

Calendar



August: Our annual Help Me Day. Members get suggestions and ideas for developing their native landscaping.

September: A yard tour is planned.

October: We'll be gathering seeds and transplanting New England asters.

November: Carol Fuchs, a popular speaker, returns to talk about shady plants.

December: Holiday meeting. Special treats in store.

Natural landscapes done in pastels are the speciality of Peggy Leonard Rust. Her address is 4003 West Kiley Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53209. (414/352-8146)

Check out Highway 51 north from Portage to Plainfield, Wisconsin this summer to see the prairie restoration planned by John Harrington and the D.O.T.



One brown bat, the most common species in the United States, can gobble 500 mosquitoes an hour, according to Bat Conservation International (Brackenridge Field Laboratory, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712). Get rid of your ultraviolet bug zapper (which kills useful insects and doesn't do nearly as effective a job as a bat.) Check plans for a bat house in our March-April issue.

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The Wild Ones Natural Landscapers

Pres. - Deb Harwell, 8712 N. Spruce Road, River Hills, WI 53217 (351-4253)
V. Pres. - Lucy Schumann, 8108 N. Regent Road, Fox Point, WI 53217 (352-0313)
Sec. - Kristen Summerfield, 7901 W. Bridge, Cedarburg, WI 53012 (375-1230)
Treas. - Sue Hurda, 4528 W. Hiawatha Drive, Mequon, WI 53092 (242-5910)
Newsletter - Carol Chew, 8920 N. Lake Drive, Bayside, WI 53217 (351-0644)
Mentor - Lorrie Otto, 9701 N. Lake Drive, Bayside, WI 53217 (352-0734)

Meetings are held on second Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. at Schlitz Audubon Center, 1111 E. Brown Deer Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53217, 414/352-2880. Dues are \$12/yr.

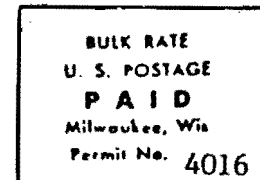
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HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?