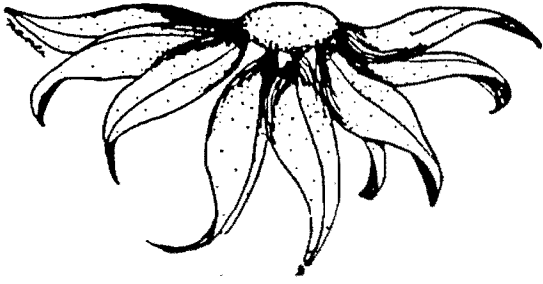


wild ones



# The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

vol. 4 no. 2

March-April 1991

Bayside, Wisconsin

**KNOW WHAT YOU ARE BUYING...**A new program to properly label harvested tropical hardwoods has been instituted to get consumers to ask about where the wood or wood products they buy comes from and if the forest was properly managed. Retailers will then have to press suppliers for answers to questions, according to the Rainforest Alliance.

Carolee Colter of the Seattle Audubon Society says that most tropical woods currently being cut are being harvested at a "terrible cost" to the environment. She looks for "groundswells" in demand for wood from environmentally sound sources. Colter suggests that consumers buy products made from domestic woods such as oak, walnut, or maple. "We can control how those are harvested," she says, "but we can't control what happens in another country".

Domestic woods are more expensive because the price reflects the true value of the wood.

Some suggestions from Cascade Holistic Economic Consultants are: Avoid buying Cedar Shakes for siding or roofing. "Cedar shakes are almost certainly from old growth cedar trees." Shakes come from the heartwood of older trees, while cedar boards most likely come from second growth trees.

Use laminated boards rather than solid wood. Laminated beams contain on the average about 80 percent second growth and 20 percent old growth, while solid beams are from old-growth trees, often from the ancient forests of the Northwest.

If you would like a copy of the Smart Wood list and more information on the program, contact the Rainforest Alliance, 270 Lafayette Street, Suite 512, New York, N.Y. 10012 212/941-1900.

The Tropical Forests Committee of Seattle Audubon has a slide show and booklet telling what can be done to help save forests. Write Carolee Colter, c/o Seattle Audubon Society, 88028 35th Avenue, N.E. Seattle, WA 98115.

*Lorrie Otto*



## ON THE EDGE OF A SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE by Darrel Morrison

Increasingly, we hear about landscapes with "meaning": designed or managed landscapes that have a connection with their natural, cultural and/or spiritual history; places that go beyond the achievement of purely artistic goals (e.g., "unity with variety") to become symbols of a region and/or its people and their traditions.

Now, as we sit on the front edge of a new decade and on the threshold of a new century, it is essential that our landscapes take on yet another layer of meaning. Designed and managed landscapes need also to symbolize and demonstrate a new environmental consciousness and a shift in values, even as they symbolize their regions and traditions. A part of the "beauty" of a landscape in the 21st Century will be derived from its resource consciousness, its productivity, its sustainability.

These thoughts are stimulated in part by a February, 1990 prediction by the Worldwatch Institute. That Washington "think-tank" predicted (optimistically, maybe) that the world will become "self-sustainable" by the year 2030; i.e., that society will see that basic human needs are met without depleting or further polluting the earth's resources. The Institute acknowledges that in order for their prediction to become reality, a new set of values will need to be adopted, with one (difficult) component being a shift away from materialism and conspicuous consumption.

In the Institute's hopeful scenario, in any case, today's "throw-away" society will be replaced by one with a comprehensive recycling ethic. In the sustainable world, people will rely much less on automobiles, living closer to their work in mixed-use neighborhoods, or working at home with the assistance of computer and FAX technology. Far from being a cold, automated Brave New World, however, this will be one where neighborliness and sociability can be revived, with people walking or biking to schools, shops, and offices, perhaps along streets where houses have front porches again. Already, in new communities such as Seaside, designed by Duany and Plater-Zyberk, we see these patterns re-emerging. Small towns will experience their own revival, populated by people whose information-age employment gives them the flexibility to choose alternatives to living in sprawling auto-dependent metropolitan areas. Historic buildings, in the sustainable society, will be preserved, restored and re-used, partly in response to the re-cycling ethic, but also to provide valuable and irreplaceable links with our past, a win-win combination.



And what will a sustainable Piedmont landscape be like in the year 2030, a mere forty years from now? The Worldwatch Institute doesn't propose a scenario for this, so I will—with a few personal biases superimposed:

- Expansive resource-consuming lawns around homes and industries will be unfashionable, obsolete symbols of over-consumption and pretense. Alternatives to the expansive lawns will take several forms, each considered beautiful not only in response to the lines, forms, colors, and textures that are intrinsic to it, but also in response to its productivity and sustainability.
- Where there is a need or an urge for large, open lawn-like areas these will be pastures in which cattle and sheep graze on native, drought-tolerant grasses, returning nutrients to the soil.
- Other fields will be set aside with rows of solar collection panels harvesting sunlight for power. In the space between the solar collectors will be soil-rebuilding grasses like the Andropogons and Purpletop, intermingled with colorful drifts of native wildflowers.
- On the shoulders of roads, hiking and biking trails, and in small openings on residential and industrial sites, will be infrequently-mown short meadows with flowers such as bluets, field pansies, and verbenas mingling with short,

fine textured grasses like Eragrostis spectabilis which provides a soft, purplish haze over the ground in late summer and fall.

-- Food-producing landscapes will have a resurgence, providing more food close to home and reducing the need for long-haul transportation of fruits and vegetables: pecan and peach orchards, vineyards, blueberry and raspberry farms, and large-scale organic truck farms producing various vegetables from March through November, picked when ripe and eaten in season.

-- In the same vein, beautiful vegetable and herb gardens, as well as grape arbors and mini-orchards of dwarf fruit trees will be integrated into home grounds, tended by their owners in the time they spent commuting to and from work in the 1980s and 1990s.

-- "Ornamental" plantings will also include a large component of time-proven native shrubs and trees, flowers, ferns and grasses, providing seasonal changes and links with our natural history without the need for irrigation or fertilizing. Additionally, our cultural history will be acknowledged with the inclusion of long-surviving, adaptable introduced plants: nandinas, winter honeysuckle, wintersweet, irises, daylilies, and Dorothy Perkins roses that have persisted, unaided, around old homesteads for a century or two--truly sustainable plants.

-- A network of Piedmont forests and other natural areas will be preserved and protected, in various stages of succession, throughout the region by 2030, but only after they become threatened landscapes during the 1990s. In any event, with management to maintain their natural diversity and beauty, various-sized patches and corridors of natural areas will be protected, and managed, and they will in turn protect the quality of water in streams and rivers and will help counteract global warming trends.

--At the edges of the forests, and along fence rows between solar collection fields, pastures and orchards, there will be a network of consciously-managed "edge" plantings: clumps of blackberries, native plums, wildroses, sumac, and red cedar--all symbols of the human-modified Piedmont landscape, and all productive of food and habitat for many species of birds and mammals.

Are these just the futile, frivolous fantasies of an eco-freak, a granola-head? Maybe. But I don't think so. I believe we actually are on the edge of a quiet, healthy revolution--we are seeing the beginnings of the change in values which the Worldwatch Institute acknowledges must come about if we are to live in a self-sustaining world by 2030.

Even five years ago, who would have believed that Athens, Georgia would by 1990 initiate a program for recycling of paper, plastics, glass, and old license tags? But it has. Five years ago, who would have believed that the clear winner among exhibition gardens at the 1990 Atlanta Flower show (in the opinion of the public as well as the judges) would be a vegetable garden? But it is. Or that the Standard Club--a prestigious private club in Atlanta--would have already planted such species on parts of its new golf course, and is looking toward more native grass, tree and shrub plantings. It is, in early 1990, doing just that, and as a result is helping to establish a new landscape aesthetic which simultaneously links our region's natural and cultural heritage with resource conservation.

These are all signals, to me at least, that we are on the brink of significant changes, and that we have a major role to play in leading the way by planning, designing, and managing of sustainable, productive, beautiful landscapes. The challenges are clear, to us as a profession and as a School, and fall into two major categories.

1. First, more than ever before, we need to understand the materials and processes of nature--the ultimate model of sustainability--in whatever region we work, in order to intelligently manage, restore, or re-create sustainable systems in an altered, designed-and-managed world.



2. Secondly, we need to keep sight of the fact that ours is a design field, and that through our art, we can make the sustainable, productive landscape a beautiful landscape. There clearly is an aesthetic component in:

- managing natural forests and wetlands.
- restoring or re-creating ecosystems
- giving form to open spaces and to the edges between field and forest.
- selecting species and seed distribution patterns for diverse meadow and alternative lawn plantings in a variety of settings.
- planning vegetable and herb plantings and arranging them in either traditional or new patterns in productive home gardens. (Ryan Gainey's 1990 Atlanta Flower Show vegetable gardens are proof of the aesthetic potential of such gardens.)

Whether we reach the goal of sustainability by 2030, just forty years from now, as the Worldwatch people predict, is to some degree dependent on our own professional and academic activities. We won't get there by maintaining a business-as-usual attitude. We won't get there if we permit the perpetuation of a perception that sustainable, productive landscapes are anti-design, or that they can never really be as beautiful as today's irrigated, herbicided, chemically-fertilized, and mowed landscapes. We may help achieve the goal of sustainable landscapes--and public demand for them--by demonstrating that they can possess a new level of beauty derived in part from the richness of their lines, forms, colors, and textures, in part from their regional associations, and in part from their very productivity and sustainability.



Our Wild Ones Natural Landscaping display traveled to dozens of sites last year. It will be at the Milwaukee Realtors Home, Landscape, and Community Show on March 22 - 30 and at the Community News Home and Garden Show on April 4-7. Both are at Wisconsin State Fair Park, Milwaukee.

## Note ...

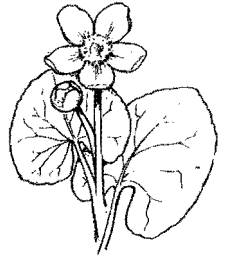
Upcoming classes of interest....To learn about small prairies, shrubs for birds and woodland plants, consider attending Native Landscaping Workshop on Friday-Sunday, June 28-30, at Bethel Horizons Nature Center, Dodgeville, Wisconsin. For more information call 608-935-5885.....Aspects and problems in natural landscaping will be the topic of the Natural Landscaping Workshop, on Saturday, 9-11:30 a.m. March 16 at the Retzer Nature Center in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Call 414-521-5407 for info.....The Retzer Spring Plant Sale and Native Plant Doctor will take place on Saturday, May 11 from 9a.m. to 3p.m. Another full day program is scheduled for May 11, in Madison at the U.W. Wisconsin Center.

# The Inside Story

Compiled by Janice Stiefel

## MARSH MARIGOLD

(*Caltha palustris*)  
Buttercup Family



**OTHER NAMES:** Cowslip, King's Cup, Meadow Bright, Meadow Routs, Colt's Foot, Water Blobs, Capers, Horse Blobs, Soldier's Buttons, Palsy-Wort, Drunkards, Boots, Gools, Verrucaria (Latin for wart), Leopard's Foot, Cow Lily, and more.

**HABITAT:** Wet meadows, swamps, marshes, along streams and creeks.

**DESCRIPTION:** This is a succulent plant with shiny yellow flowers; glossy, heart-shaped leaves; and a thick, hollow, branching stem. The flowers consist of 5 to 9 petal-like sepals. There are no petals, but numerous stamens and pistils. **Height:** 1-2 ft. **Flowering:** April to June

**COMMENTS:** This is a native perennial. The flower opens at the rising sun and closes at its setting. In parts of the south, the flower buds are pickled as a substitute for capers. The flowers have often been used to make dye in England and Scandinavia. The yellow floral pigment can be easily removed from the cell sap of the sepals by boiling them with alum. This gives a rich and delicate dye which has been used for tinting paper, cotton and fine silk. The color is not permanent, however.

**MEDICINAL USE:** The leaves were used to treat anemia because they contain a high amount of iron. However, they should be cooked first, since they could be poisonous if eaten raw. Rubbing the leaves on insect bites or bee stings was thought to alleviate pain and itching.

The plant was also used to loosen mucous and hardened phlegm from the throat and bronchial passages. The sap was used for curing warts, hence the name, Verrucaria. Several of my sources warned that all parts of the plant may irritate and blister the skin. Intoxication has resulted from the use of the **raw** leaves in salads or using the **raw** flower buds as caper substitutes.

**NAME ORIGIN:** It was thought that the plant was named in honor of the Virgin Mary. In the Grete Herbal of the 16th Century, the flower is referred to as "Mary Gowles," which in time became corrupted into "Marigold." In the 17th Century slang, Marigold or Marygold meant "a sovereign."

The **Genus Name**, *Caltha* (Kal'tha), is from the Greek word, calathos, meaning "a cup or goblet," alluding to the shape of the flowers. The **Species Name**, *palustris* (pa-lus'tris), is Latin for "of the swamps," indicating where the plant grows.

The name, Cowslip, is from the Anglo-Saxon word, cuslyppe, with cu meaning "cow," and slyppe meaning, "slop." So, Cowslip actually means "cow slop" and "cow dung."

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** After the Skunk Cabbage, the Marsh Marigolds are one of the first flowers to bloom in our wetland in spring. They transform the drab winter grays and browns into a brilliant yellow. If I had the time, I could sit among them for hours — listening to the rushing river and the trickle of the bubbling springs. Oh, how I wish I could preserve our "special spot," and those like it, forever. I am reminded of the words of President Lyndon Johnson, in an address given soon after his election. He said: "We have always prided ourselves on being not only America the strong and the free, but America the beautiful. Today that beauty is in danger. The water we drink, the food that we eat, and the very air we breathe are threatened with pollution. Our parks are overcrowded and our seashores overburdened. Green fields and dense forests are disappearing. A few years ago we were concerned about the Ugly American. Today, we must act to prevent an Ugly America. For once the battle is lost, once our natural splendor is destroyed, it can **never** be recaptured. And once man can no longer walk with beauty or wonder at nature, his spirit will wither and his sustenance be wasted."

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Don Vorpahl N6143 Hilbert Rd. Hilbert, WI. 54129 414-853-3729

Mary Carlson/Jerry Marcelle The Plantscapers  
2776 Canyon Bluff Rd. Green Bay, WI. 54302 414-465-1306

Kerry Leigh The Natural Garden  
38W443 Rt. 64 St. Charles, IL. 60174 708-584-0150



# creating a Lawnless Landscape



A lawnless landscape, a passively solar home and a passionate belief in the value of conserving dwindling fossil fuels are all key components in the design of Ron and Vicki Nowicki's landscape in Downer's Grove, Illinois.

The Nowickis hope their energy-saving home and low-maintenance landscape — a nontraditional treatment in a very traditional neighborhood — will become a model for other home builders and garden design experts.

By eliminating the need for lawn mowers, weed killers, trash bags, gasoline and refuse pickup, the Nowickis are doing their part to minimize the amount of fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas required to maintain the site. In addition, because of the careful selection and placement of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs, the landscape enhances and complements the passively solar home, and this brings further savings in fuel consumption and costs.

According to Vicki Nowicki, the overriding consideration in the design of her and her husband's home and garden was the "compelling notion that we wanted to live in a way that would make the least impact on the environment in the process of our daily lives."

To achieve that goal, Ron, a landscape architect who works throughout the Chicago area, designed the house with a severely sloped, ground-hugging roofline and only one small window on the northern exposure. Light and warmth enter primarily through picture windows facing south.

These are complemented by numerous plantings of woodland wildflowers such as wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Jacob's-ladder (*Polemonium caeruleum*) and Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*).

Perennials and more deciduous trees flank a similar path on the western side of the home. To the south, the landscape is dominated by extensive vegetable and herb gardens and a mini-orchard containing fruit and nut trees.

Ten years after the initial plantings, the Nowickis have a lush and easily maintained lawnless landscape. But considerable effort was required to achieve those results.

Faced in 1979 with a vacant lot of about half an acre — part of a farm that had never been built on or landscaped — the couple first battled to remove existing weeds and lawn grasses. For several years, truckloads of wood-chip mulch were brought to the site and used to cover beds and open areas. The first trees were planted in 1980, with shrubs, perennials, herbs and vegetables added gradually over the next few years.

Deciduous trees such as green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica lanceolata*) and white ash (*Fraxinus americana*) were chosen for the south side because of their open branching habit, which allows the maximum amount of sunlight to penetrate the home in winter.

The landscape's eastern edge features a woodland setting enhanced by such design features as bird feeders and a winding, mulched path.

Although the lawnless landscape required intensive labor to establish initially, the Nowickis say the site now is much less time-consuming than a traditional grass lawn with foundation plantings would have been, and will remain low-maintenance for years to come. Since they have eliminated the need for mowing, raking, edging and applying lawn fertilizers and weed killers, they in fact have only one major chore: adding wood-chip mulch to beds and paths.

In addition to decreasing owners' labor and costs, the lawnless landscape provides a diverse habitat for a variety of insects and small animals.

Vicki, who has taught classes in wild edible plants at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, notes with pride that the animals attracted to the property's woodland mini-environment include opossums, raccoons, squirrels, bats, mice, voles, rabbits and a number of different species of birds.

She points out that diversity in wildlife is discouraged by lawns, whose monocultures provide food, protection and nesting sites for only a limited number of animals. Another disadvantage of a lawn, she says, is that it tends to make water run off quickly rather than trickle downward to replenish the groundwater.

Although the site uses conventional materials in an unconventional way, Ron feels that the results are "extremely attractive and appropriate," even for more traditional neighborhoods.

For him and his wife, satisfaction is derived not only from gathering the tangible fruits of their labor, but also from knowing the reasoning behind their choices. As Ron says, "It's a good feeling to mesh your behavior with your values." □

- used by permission of Garden Design magazine (Summer 1990)  
Vicki and Ron Nowicki will give our March 9 program.

# From the Secretary ...

JANUARY: Did you know that there are approximately 1,800 to 2,000 native species of flora in Wisconsin? Approximately 500 of these can still be found somewhere in Milwaukee County. About 350 alien species in Milwaukee County occupy a large percent of the land. Sedges account for 150 species of native Wisconsin flora. The more species present in a given area, the more resilient the area is to change or stress.

These are just a few of the interesting facts that we learned from Richard Barloga at our January meeting. Richard acquainted us with Wisconsin's native flora, woodland and prairie, and in between.

We also learned that the average space taken up by tree trunks, (all trees over 4" in diameter) in a typical Wisconsin woods is only 1/3 of 1 percent. It will take about 200 years to replace a 40" diameter tree, (or about 7-8 human generations). Many Milwaukee County forests were grazed by cattle. Therefore, today you find large trees and small trees, but no intermediate trees. The lower to the ground that trees are branching, the more sunlight they have had while growing. If trees are not branched until 40 feet or more up, this tells you that there was a preexisting forest while these trees were growing up.

There is only 1 tenth of 1 percent, (2,000 acres) of original Wisconsin prairie left today meaning that 99.9 percent of our state's prairie is lost forever. Therefore, it is inappropriate to talk about "sharing" this land for other uses. We must be "selfish" to protect the little prairie that is left. We are losing our "blueprint" to be able to even attempt to "redo" a prairie.

Richard warned us about the treat of the non-native, aggressive garlic mustard and emerald crown vetch plants that are rapidly expanding in our area. Three years ago the state stopped planting this crown vetch on slopes of state highways, but counties and towns are still planting it. Being alien species, these plants are freed from their native "enemies". They destroy many native species by displacing them and create a monoculture.

Richard acquainted us with 12 species of native Wisconsin milkweed plants through slides and comments. The species ranged from the common milkweed to the wooly milkweed which is on the state's threatened list. He went on to show us and discuss many other native Wisconsin plants, and which of these are suitable for home landscaping.

Barloga shared three quotes with us:

"We travel together as passengers on a space ship" - Adlai Stevenson  
"The first prerequisite for intelligent tinkering is to save all the parts."  
- Aldo Leopole. "We should not unnecessarily destroy what we can't create."-unnamed East Indian man.

FEBRUARY: Seven hundred people attended the annual Natural Landscaping Seminar, held again at the U.W.M. Union, sponsored jointly by Wild Ones, Milwaukee Audubon Society, and U.W.M. Conservation Club.

Darrel Morrison was our Keynote Julie Mark's Memorial Speaker this year. He was followed by a choice of several speakers and various topics through the day. People with bag lunches watched a slide presentation by our "very own" Lorrie Otto during the noon hour.



# Calendar

March 9: Vicki and Ron Nowicki will explain how they have created a "lawnless landscape". See the article on page 7 for more information.

April 13: Gloy Jacobson, a member of Wild Ones who runs the Landscape Lady, will give hints on installing and maintaining natural landscaping.

May 11: This is the month for our annual spring dig. We'll meet at the Audubon Center with tools and containers and drive to various development sites to bring back and save native plants.

## Don't Forget ...

### Wisconsin: Then and Now

Consider this dramatic picture:

- \* The prairies that once covered over 2 million acres of Wisconsin are now 99.9% gone.
- \* Oak savannas, grasslands with scattered big trees, once covered 15% of the state and have nearly disappeared. Less than .02% of the original 7,300,000 acres is known to remain in scattered sites.
- \* Seventeen species of animals—four birds, six mammals, and seven fish—have become extinct in Wisconsin.
- \* Eleven bird species are endangered in Wisconsin; so are: 23 species of invertebrates, nine fish, one amphibian, six reptiles, and three mammals.
- \* One hundred eighteen of Wisconsin's plant species are endangered or threatened.
- \* One quarter of Wisconsin—almost 10 million acres—was wetland in the early 1800s, prior to the arrival of European settlers. Now only half of these original wetlands remain.

—From: *The Nature Conservancy*, Fall 1988. Newsletter of the Wisconsin Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Facts updated 1990.

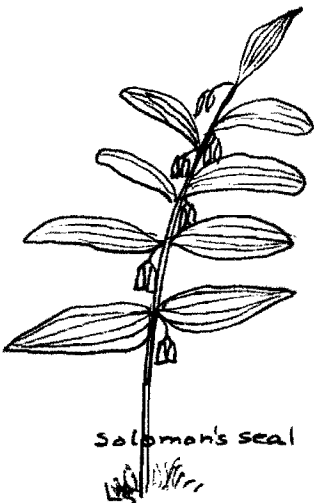
Please send your 1991 dues to: Judi Ficks, 10848 North Pebble Lane,  
Mequon, Wisconsin 53092

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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We are holding our dues at the same price as previous years even though our postage costs have increased. Help us by sending your \$12 check. Thanks!



Salomon's seal

As we look to the coming year for activities, the MAY DIG doesn't seem too far away. We ask you all to be on the lookout for possible sites.....Last year the call from a Wild Ones member got us to our site. What we are looking for is a place that will be developed soon and has endangered plants to be rescued... Please contact any of the officers should you have an idea for us. We appreciate your help!

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IF YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST IN TYPING, EDITING OR COLLATING THE NEWSLETTER, PLEASE CALL CAROL OR JUDI. THEIR PHONE NUMBERS ARE LISTED BELOW.

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Meetings are held on second Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. at the Schlitz Audubon, 1111 E. Brown Deer Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53217. Phone 414-352-2880. Dues are \$12/year.

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*The Outside Story*

newsletter for natural landscapers

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