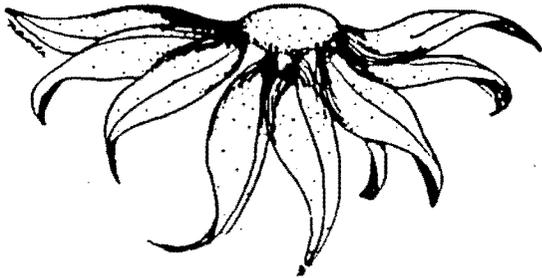


wild ones



The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

vol.4 no.5

Sept.-Oct. 1991

Bayside, Wisconsin

What do I tell my neighbor? What do you say to a neighbor who walks over to your newly landscaped native yard and tells you that "those weeds belong up north" . . . or "in back where the public doesn't have to look at that mess"?

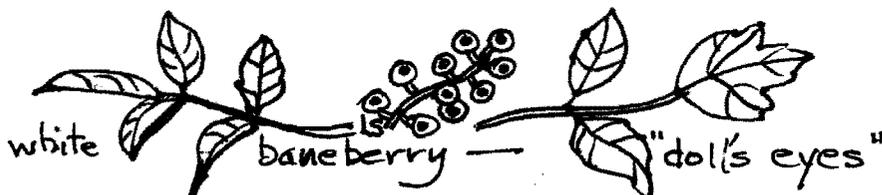
"I'm sorry" will suffice. He may assume that you are apologizing for offending his sense of order in the block. He feels secure in his rude judgment of your ideas because he is part of a massive, expanding, thoughtless landscaping amoeba which is destroying the cover of life on our earth.

You are really sorry because the people who mow lawns never seem to be aware of the precipitous drop in the song bird population, or notice the decline in the species of butterflies, or no longer even look for the pale green luna moths which once fluttered around our yard lights. You are sorry, too, that he doesn't recognize our native wildflowers or where they belong. Surely, those that you are propagating don't belong "up north" in the boreal forest with bunch berries and bead lilies! Your sunny areas with their prairie flowers and grasses reflect the growth of oak savannahs while the wildflowers in the shade are those of the deciduous forests which once covered our area of the state. You are sorry that he doesn't share your zeal and responsibility for trying to heal the earth by bringing back some diversity of plant and animal life which was here before we were.

You are sorry that the sound of lawn mowers spoil your luncheon on the porch; that you can't talk to friends in your yard when the edging machine is grinding along the sidewalk grass as it throws a cloud of dust at you and your guests. You are sorry that the city doesn't ban the use of leaf blowers. That high-pitched keening wail penetrates the walls of your home. These howling machines create a fierce satanic cacophony of land management sounds. You are sorry that you can't hear the quiet calls of the returning juncos, or the sounds of rustling leaves. This was your heritage for so many years and now it has been taken from you in the autumn of your life.

However, it is not only the noise which pollutes your territory. The smell of lawn chemicals is added to the abuse of your land. And sometimes you are extremely sorry when those toxic substances distort and destroy the vegetation on your property. You are even more sorry when you know that the pesticides adhering to pollen grains and dust particles float off to harm life in streams and lakes. And these biocides also contribute to non-point pollution. Run-off can be worse from suburbia than from our chemically-saturated farms.

Of course, you are sorry that he is the victim of the tyranny of the tidy mind. When you say that you are sorry, smile. You have all the marbles.



Terrie Otto

Letters

Last March I read with great interest your segment in *The Outside Story* regarding the use of tropical woods. I share your concern for the management, or lack of it, of forests in both Wisconsin and other parts of the world.

The suggestion made by Carolee Colter was that we use domestic woods because we can control the harvest of them. This makes sense because we do have the knowledge to manage our native forests for timber, wildlife, and other purposes. The unfortunate fact is that on private woodlands in Wisconsin (69% of the total) we often do not use this ability. Over two-thirds of the timber harvested on private lands in Wisconsin is cut without the benefit of professional assistance. In my own territory (Polk County), uncontrolled harvesting will have a dramatic impact on the forest in 10, 20, and 50 years. Sometimes this is caused by seemingly subtle practices (like only harvesting the best and biggest trees), other times by wholesale liquidation of a woodlot.

In my limited study and observation of tropical forestry I was quite surprised to find that their management troubles were prompted by factors I am very familiar with locally: ignorance and short-term greed.

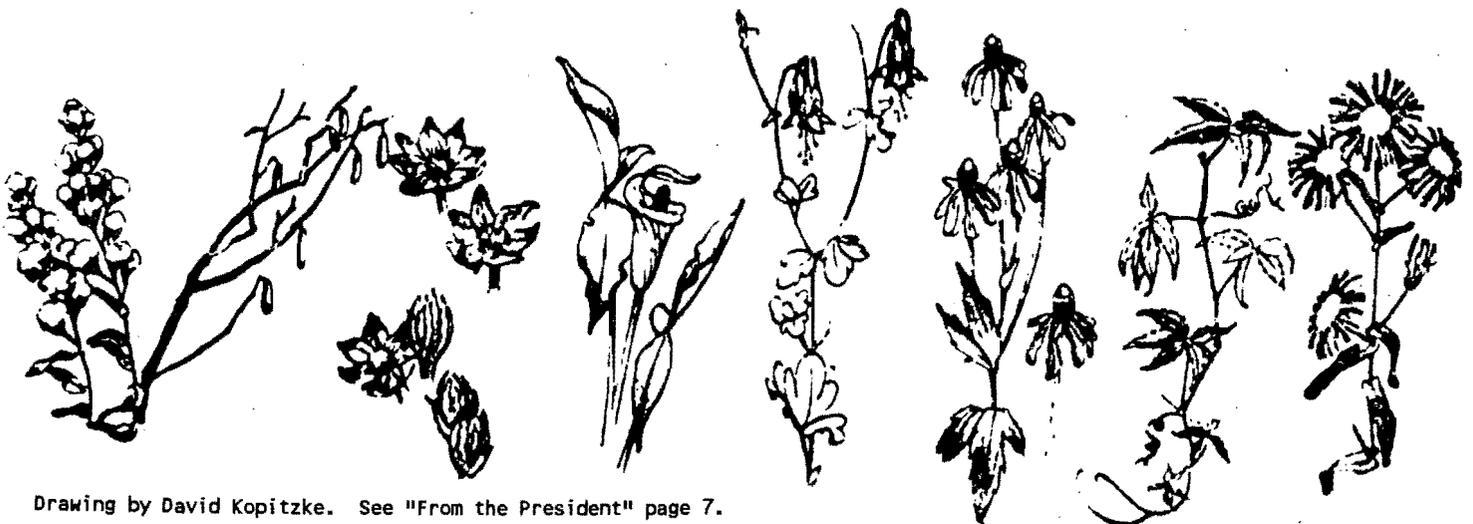
I was prompted to write simply so you would know that we are also fighting a running battle in Wisconsin to promote wise use of our forests. As world populations rise we know the pressure will be greater on our world's resources for both aesthetic and functional purposes. It's important that we manage to the best of our ability. Thanks for your concern. Sincerely, Michael R. Grinyer, State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

You Wild Ones have won over another gardener with your natural green charms, of course! We took the Saturday tour of gardens and found it educational, inspiring---and immensely enjoyable! The variety of effects achieved and the different sizes of the areas landscaped demonstrated how plants can be personalized to a particular habitat. It was a living and loving example of the beauty and satisfaction plants offer us. Please include me on your newsletter mailing list. Elaine Swanson

Note

Do you have anecdotal material to share about how people have reacted to your native landscaping? Send information to the editor for the next issue.

Upcoming Seminars: Daniel Boehlke will teach "Designing A Native Landscape", "Landscapes that Attract Wildlife", and "Composting". Call 243-4314 - Concordia University Wisconsin for more information and registration.



Drawing by David Kopitzke. See "From the President" page 7.

The Inside Story

Compiled by
Janice Stiefel

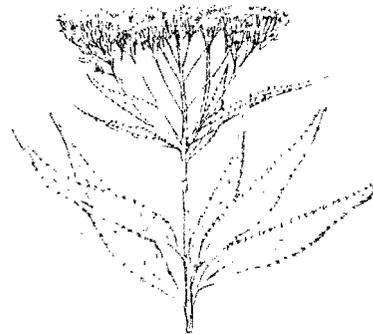
SPOTTED JOE-PYE WEED

(*Eupatorium maculatum*)
Composite or Daisy Family

OTHER NAMES: Gravel Root, Trumpet Weed, Kidney Root, Queen-of-the-Meadow, Purple Boneset, Quillwort, Indian Gravel Root, Motherwort, Niggerweed, Swamp Root, Hempweed, Spotted Boneset.

HABITAT: Shores, wet thickets, damp meadows.

DESCRIPTION: A large, purplish-pink, flat-topped cluster of fuzzy flower heads adorn the top of a robust purple or purple-spotted stem. The leaves are 2 to 8 in. long, thick, coarsely toothed, lanceolate, in whorls of 3 to 5. **Height:** 2 to 6 ft.



FLOWERING: July to September

MEDICINAL USE: Joe-Pye Weed was used to improve the appetite, soothe nerves, and, if used on a regular basis, was said to be of benefit to the complexion. The Iroquois Indians used it as a remedy for kidney disorders. A hot tea made from the leaves was said to "break a fever," because it produced sweating. The whole plant was used as a diuretic for dropsy, gout, kidney infections, and rheumatism. The root tea was used for fevers, colds, chills, sore womb after childbirth, diarrhea, and liver ailments.

NAME ORIGIN: The **Common Name**, Joe-Pye Weed is the name which was given to some species of the genus, *Eupatorium*. They were named after an Indian medicine man, who owned a large tract of land around Massachusetts Bay, whose name was Zhopai. He was kind enough to help the early colonists in that area when they came down with typhus. His treatment with this plant made the patients break out in a sweat and, ultimately, they recovered from the disease. Unfortunately, many years later his large tract of land was taken from him by the very colonists he had cured. Zhopai became a legend and his name was anglicized to Joe-Pye. The plant that he used in his cure was named Joe-Pye Weed.

The **Genus Name**, *Eupatorium* (You-pa-toe'ri-um), was named for Mithradates Eupator (120-63 b.c.). He was a cruel tyrant who defended his territory against the Romans. As a skilled medicine man, he recovered from being poisoned by his own mother by taking an antidote made from a species of the Joe-Pye Weed genus. This genus now bears his name, *Eupatorium*. In order to live, he had to take this antidote for the rest of his life.

The **Species Name**, *maculatum* (mak-you-lay'tum), is from the Latin word, *macula*, meaning "spotted."

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Whenever I see this beautiful plant blooming in our wetland or alongside the road as we drive, I always get a "flashback" to the days of the medicine man, Zhopai. I can imagine him kindly and gently helping the sick colonists. Then, I feel very sad and ashamed that maybe it was my ancestors who "ripped him off." We have a tendency to think these unjust deeds only occur in our modern times. If we look back through history, we will find that many people, animals AND plants have been treated unjustly, with no appreciation or regard for their contribution to the quality of our life.

Cat Food and Applesauce

by Einstein Starling as
communicated to Janice Stiefel

Life began for me when I fell out of the sky onto a concrete slab next to a window where people were having dinner. After lying there for what seemed like a long time, someone finally picked me up and tried to help me. They had been looking for my nest, but none could be found. I was, indeed, a fright — very few feathers on my body, with two wispy ones on the top of my head, which is probably why I was named "Einstein" (evidentially there once was a very wise man with that name who looked liked me). My eyes were open wide and I could see the lady who picked me up. She was strange looking with a white sailor hat, white shirt, and GREEN BOOTS! I disregarded what she looked like because she was very kind to me. I could not fly, one leg was lame and I didn't even remember how to EAT. She had to force my mouth open. However, I caught on quickly. That water-soaked cat food and homemade applesauce she gave me was delicious, so I would open my mouth real wide and screech if she didn't shove it in my mouth fast enough.

When I fell out of the sky, the fall must have knocked out my memory. I can't remember my brothers and sisters and not even my mother and father. So, the lady who picked me up was like a mother to me. The first two weeks she kept me in a cage with bars on the door and a soft cloth to snuggle up to.

However, that cloth didn't help when I was hungry, and I was always hungry. Usually the lady fed me every two or three hours, but sometimes she would have to go away for longer than that and by the time she returned I would be ravenous. My mouth was huge so I could take quite a chunk of food at a time. Screeching and screaming encouraged her to give me more food — and faster.

After two weeks I began to change. I could feel my big mouth disappearing. It was getting thinner and narrower. HEAVEN FORBID! How was I going to eat those chunks of food without my big mouth? My feathers filled in, my lame leg miraculously healed, and I was beginning to be quite a handsome AND intelligent bird.

There was one problem, though. The lady and her husband (he was ok, too) did not know what I was. Oh yes, they knew I was a bird but the BIG question was what kind? I didn't even know myself. They thought I might be a Grackle, a Starling or maybe a Phoebe (because sometimes I made sounds like "fee-bee"). I had black legs, a notch in my tail, slate-gray feathers with brown wing bars, a slender black beak, and beady eyes with no rings around them. I was a puzzlement! They didn't know if I should be eating seeds, bugs or both.

One day the lady opened my cage door and let me fly around. Wow, that was an exciting experience! My first attempt landed me in a field of wild flowers and grasses. I had a hard time finding my way out of those tall plants so the lady rescued me. My next attempt was much improved. I landed on the

lower branches of a lilac bush. I was allowed to fly around all day. I think the lady was worried about me because she looked for me often. Of course, I was looking for her, too, because she had the food. Every two or three hours I was starved. If she wasn't around I'd screech in the treetops. Since she was my "mom" she recognized my voice right away and I knew her voice also. Sometimes she would call me when it was time to eat and I would come swooping down through the tall trees and land on her arm, where she would immediately feed me. Even if I wasn't hungry, I would follow her as she walked along her prairie and woodland pathways. She would talk to me as I flew from tree to tree and I would answer with a cheerful, "chirp, chirp." I only screeched when I was hungry, she knew the difference.

For the first four nights I was placed back in my cage to protect me from hawks, owls and a wild cat that had been seen sneaking around the neighborhood. When morning came I was READY to explore the world again. Eventually I was allowed to stay out all night. I heard the lady say to her husband, "This is like the night the kids took the car out for the first time. I probably won't sleep all night." I was so famished the next morning that I screeched for food outside her bedroom window at 6 o'clock. She was delighted and relieved that I survived the night and didn't mind the early hour.



By now I was getting much better at my flying, with more power in my liftoffs. My favorite perch was in an old wild apple tree during the day and the dense lilac bush for the evening. As the days went by I gained confidence in myself and became aware of dangers that lurked around me. Larger, more experienced birds would try to attack me — what a horrific experience! The first time one dive-bombed me I quickly flew to the safety of the lady's shoulder. I snuggled next to her neck figuring that big, bad bird wouldn't dare look for me there.

Even though I was becoming sophisticated and wiser about worldly affairs, I still could not eat without having the lady stuff the food in my mouth. That was SO hard for me to learn. Even though she held the food right next to my gaping mouth, I just could not grab for the food. I tried very hard because I was hungry. One thing that really upset me was when the lady would wear her red hat with a visor. No matter how hungry I was I could not take food from her with THAT hat on her head. If she took it off I would fly

to her arm. That hat made her look sneaky and sinister, like she was hiding something under the visor.

After several days of freedom some bird experts came to visit me. They were supposed to know what kind of bird I was. One of the experts didn't know, but another one recognized my voice before he even met me. I was not a Grackle, or a Phoebe, but a STARLING! Gosh, that's a beautiful name. It sounds like I was named after the stars. After doing some research on my ancestors, the lady told me my scientific name is, *Sturnus* (which is Latin for Starling) and, *vulgaris* (meaning "common"). I'm supposed to be a very sociable bird that travels in flocks. I was meeting some friends in the neighborhood, so maybe someday I will be part of a flock, too. My relatives were introduced to the United States in 1890. Eighty of them were brought over from Europe and set free in Central Park in New York City. In 1891, forty more were released there. These one hundred twenty birds have now multiplied into many millions. The lady told me that some people consider us pests, so I must always be on my best behavior. If I can be a well-respected member of the bird community, maybe I could change the prejudice that people have against my species. She explained that God gave all creatures a reason for being allowed to live on Earth; that even I, as an insignificant little bird, have a "special purpose." One of my duties is to eat lots of insects that live on or in the ground. In summer 90% of my diet should come from animal matter. I was proud and honored to be a Starling when she disclosed the fact that in recent years we have become the most effective check on the Japanese Beetle.

Eventually my taste buds changed — after I tried some of the critters that were crawling in the lady's garden. I found them to be rather tasty. Since I could now find my own food and was quite independent, I decided to join some of my new friends on a long trip. I sat on the lady's arm and tried to tell her where I was going but she just didn't understand. Maybe it's best that she didn't because she would have been very sad. I know she really cared about me and I liked her, too. Perhaps one day I'll surprise her and return to the old neighborhood for some of her cat food and applesauce.

The End

Author's Note: Restoring this precious little bird to the wild was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I never realized how intelligent a bird could be. His name really did fit him, even though when I named him, his personality had not yet been revealed.

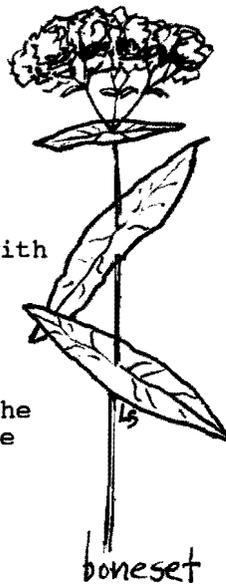
This is a true story of the bonding that can take place between a human and an animal or bird. I think we really did communicate — I understood him. However, when he was ready to leave I did not want to believe what my instincts were telling me. The "neighborhood" just isn't the same without him.

© Janice Stiefel 1991

DEPOT DISPATCH - AUGUST 1991



From the Secretary ...



July: The Wehr Natural Landscaping Club joined us for a two-bus caravan to Joyce Powers' Prairie Ridge Nursery in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin. The weather was glorious, and upon our arrival, we had a great picnic box lunch next to Joyce's prairie restoration. As we were eating lunch, a neighbor rode up with two magnificent Clydesdale horses pulling a wagon. This proved to be a special treat, as we got to ride in this hay wagon down to view the wildflowers in the lower fields.

And what a view it was! Joyce's flowers are a sight to see, one more beautiful than another. Because of unusual weather conditions this year, the flowers were two to four weeks ahead of their average blooming times. Joyce and her staff conducted guided tours through the nursery grounds, and afterwards we were treated to beverages and snacks. Many of us purchased wonderful wildflowers which rode home on the buses with us and are now residing in our yards!

Joyce voiced an important ethical question for us all to think about: "Where are the wildflowers coming from that we purchase?" Many garden centers now have wildflowers for sale, but where are they getting them? Are they being dug out of a natural area somewhere, destroying the habitat? All plants sold at Prairie Ridge Nursery are raised there, mostly from seed.

She also stressed that it is very important that your plants' ecotype come from a wild population within your geographic area. Some plants have altered biogenetics that are no longer the same as the wild variety. When saying your "geographic area" this does not mean any particular number of miles in radius from your home, but rather the general midwest area. She believes that natural occurrences, such as tornadoes, carry seeds miles from their origin.

We are very fortunate to have people like Joyce who continue their "labor of love". These landscape businesses struggle to survive, and we must support them by buying their plants and telling others about them. Fall is a good time to order, particularly plants that bloom in early spring.

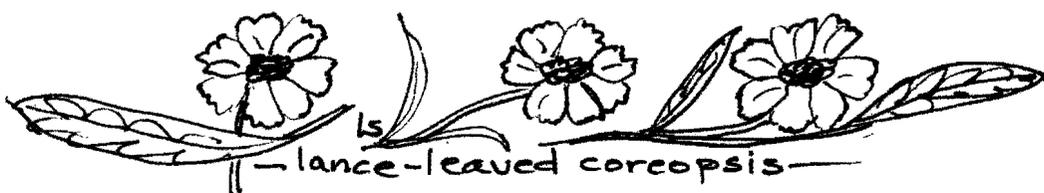
Because of proximity in the nursery setting, Joyce has bottled gentians for sale that are a cross between the cream gentian and the bottled gentian. They are a pale blue color. These would make excellent garden flowers. If you are interested in purchasing from Prairie Nursery, call 608/437-5245.

August: Once again we had our annual "Help Me" day. The first house that we car pooled to was a newly-constructed home in River Hills where the site had been disturbed by building. The surrounding land is woodland where it was suggested that the first step the homeowner can take is to remove the honeysuckle and buckthorn. These can be replaced with arrowwood viburnum, nannyberry viburnum, pagoda dogwood, silky dogwood, grayback dogwood (which forms thickets), hazelnut (which also forms thickets), and witch hazel. There are many flowers which can be used as edge-of-woods forbes, such as: columbine, wild geranium, sunflowers, and asters.

A sewer easement on one side of the home had already been planted with some prairie plants by a neighbor. It is important to rid the area of the tall clover and burdock which can kill butterflies, bats, and birds by snaring them in the Velcro-like barbs on the seeded plant. It was suggested that wide paths be developed (wide enough for three people to walk abreast).

The front yard had been seeded in prairie plants. The tops of the plants had been cut off this first year to keep weeds from going to seed. This area will require continued attention to keep out unwanted plants until the prairie plants become established. The owners are eager and motivated to learn about natural landscaping.

The second yard visited was in a typical residential area in Mequon. This owner has created a "bird haven" in his yard by hanging bird feeders, planting



many flowers, and providing sources of water for wildlife. In his front yard, he has a dripping hose draped over a branch. In the backyard a lovely, little pond has been created. Water from a sump pump is run from the house into a little stream that flows into the pond. Small bullheads swim around pots of wild iris and American lotus. In the back corner is a wonderful chipping and compost area.

Many of the plants in the yard are non-native. It was suggested that the owner enjoy his mixed gardens and, sometime in the future, devote one area of his yard to strictly midwestern natives.

To conclude our morning's meeting, we went to the Krueger's Mequon yard to enjoy the view of beautiful, established fields of native plants which have been incorporated into the landscaping plan.

From the President ...

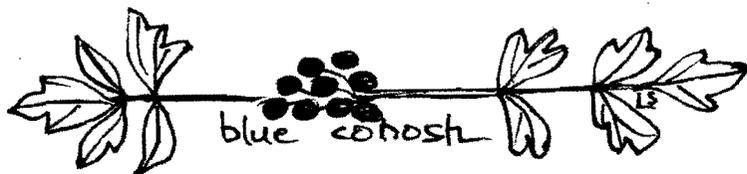
Greetings: Last year the *North Shore Herald* wrote an article about Wild Ones and Lorrie Otto. It has since been reprinted in *Wildflower*, a quarterly magazine published in Toronto. The story featured the only color photo in the publication! Lorrie's yard was used as the background for the weather segment on Channel 6 (Milwaukee) on August 23.

The Indian Hills School project has recently been granted \$11,000 from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Council to complete work begun last fall. Prairie restoration is planned on a four-acre site in back of the school to add to the prairie, woodland, and wetland gardens which have been developed outside the classrooms. A Fall Festival is planned for October 3 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. David Kopitzke will give a talk and his print, "A Year's Worth of Wildflowers", (signed and numbered on fine quality paper sized 12" x 24") will be sold for \$20. The pen and watercolor design can be ordered by sending the amount plus \$2.50 for postage to: Indian Hills Prairie Project, 1101 West Brown Deer Road, Milwaukee, WI 53217.

New board members whose names were announced in the last issue will help in a variety of ways. Please send your dues along with a correct address and phone number to Jean Palm who is taking care of the membership roster. Barbara Glassel is in charge of hospitality for the holiday meeting and special events. Irene Macek is looking for ways to save wild plants from bulldozers and needs members to advise her about sites about to be developed so she can alert us. She will also be finding areas for next May's dig. Jan Koel will handle community and public relations. Leslie Grove is the person to contact for our display which is shown at a variety of events. Their addresses and phone numbers are on the back of this issue. Dennis Anderson and Jan Koel are serving as our nominating committee. We are looking for new officer candidates, including men in leadership roles.

Did you remember to pay \$10 for the Mount Horeb trip? Do you have photos?

Midwest Native Plant Conference: "Native Plants: Your Backyard and Beyond," is the title of an event planned for Saturday, October 5, at Normandale Community College, Bloomington, Minnesota. Sponsored by the Midwest Regional Office of the National Wildflower Research Center, it will cover topics of interest to homeowners, landscape architects, garden store personnel, and municipal decision makers. Speakers from around the Midwest will discuss past, present, and future issues about the use of native plants and will emphasize how individuals can get involved by using native plants in planned landscapes and work for native plant conservation. For more information, contact: National Wildflower Research Center/Midwest Office, 725 Spring Hill Road, Wayzata, MN 55391 (612/475-0045).



Calendar

September 14: Tour of public and private established prairies in Racine. Leave from Park and Ride on Brown Deer Road at I-43 at 9:30 a.m. Please bring \$5 to cover transportation and a bag lunch as we will be returning in the early afternoon.

October 12: Annual seed gathering. Meet at Audubon Center as usual.

November 9: Robert Ahrenhoerster will lead the discussion on prairie restorations. Bring paper and pen because you'll want to take notes.

December 14: Our annual holiday meeting with seed exchange. There'll be a program as well. . . we'll surprise you.

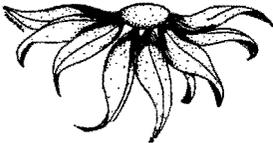
Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers, Inc.

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Treasurer: Judi Ficks, 10848 N. Pebble Ln., Mequon, WI 53092 414/241-3034
Program: Lorrie Otto, 9701 N. Lake Dr., Bayside, WI 53217 414/352-0734
Membership: Jean Palm, 625 Orchard, West Bend, WI 53095 414/334-3956
Hospitality: Barb Glassel, 8709 N. 66th, Milwaukee, WI 53233 414/354-8018
Display: Leslie Grove, 8029 N. Linksway, Milwaukee, WI 53217 414/351-3239
Newsletter: Carol Chew, 8920 N. Lake Dr., Bayside, WI 53217 414/351-0644
Dig Watch: Irene Macek, 4836 W. River Hollow, Mequon, WI 53092 414/242-7769
Community/Public Relations: Jan Koel, W176 N8610 Sunset Ridge, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051 414/251-7175

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



wild ones



The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

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