

The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

Vol. 5 No. 2

March - April 1992

Bayside, Wisconsin

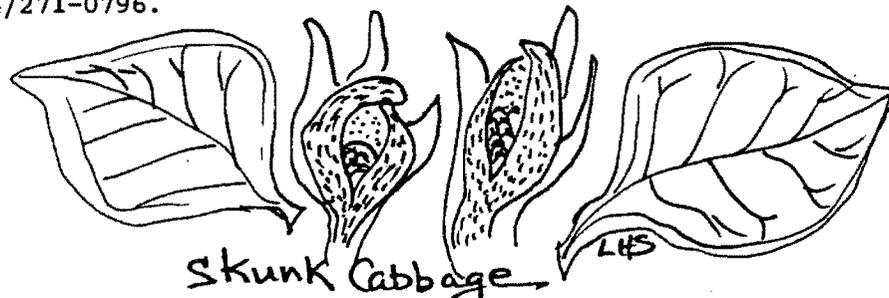
"No net loss of wetlands!" When George Bush made this promise during his campaign I assumed that we might finally be encouraged to form buffer zones around precious wildlife areas and begin revegetation with native species. "All existing wetlands, no matter how small, should be preserved." Wouldn't his message have been more convincing if protective margins of wildlife habitat had been "landscaped" into his declaration.

In the 1988 campaign, someone must have told him, "Hey, to get the votes of hunters and fishermen you'd better save the scruffy wet places for men with guns, and keep the silt and pesticides out of streams for the rod and boat guys--might also be a good idea to hang on to marshes for flood control. It would sure save money and grief for people. Then, there are also the Audubon birders. Lots of birds feed and nest in those mosquito places, ya know. And, you could appeal to those brainy, science-types who claim 30% of the threatened and endangered species of wildlife live in wetlands."

Three years later, the President of our country has been persuaded by a group of oil, mining, and real estate interests to redefine the word *wetland*. This is a political device which is marvelous in its ingenuity and hypocrisy. Also, the lobbying group calls itself **The National Wetlands Coalition** while using a bird flying over a marsh as its logo!! This evil deception of Congress and the American people may soon result in the tragic loss of millions of vernal woodland ponds, prairie potholes, and summer-dried bogs. The President's Council on Competitiveness, headed by Dan Quayle, is already being accused of overruling agency officials to arrive at a political definition of wetlands. Two bills (Senate Bill 1463 and House Bill 1330) will eviscerate the Clean Water Act's wetland protection. Are we going to allow the administration to only protect the heart of the wetlands and then destroy the body? The least we can do is write our senators and representatives to ask them to oppose any bill which would redefine wetlands or diminish them in any other way! - Lorrie Otto

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How much does your view count? According to *Wildlife Digest* (March 1992) constituent pressure caused six representatives to withdraw as co-sponsors of H.R. 1330, a bill that would accelerate the continued destruction of the nation's wetlands.
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Only 30% of our Great Lakes basin wetlands have been left untouched, the regional office of the National Audubon Society reports. "Right in your own neighborhood...one spot after another is gone. Sadly, enormous, insistent pressure by homebuilders and agribusiness has escalated so rapidly in just the past decade that this vital, endangered ecosystem is on the brink of devastation. Dangerous legislation before Congress would literally define wetlands out of existence, based on flimsy political, not scientific, considerations." The Lake Michigan Federation also voices objections to the proposed revisions in the 1989 *Federal Manual* which are based on political, rather than scientific basis. More information can be obtained from: The National Audubon Society, Great Lakes Regional Office, 692 North High Street, Suite 208, Carriage House Place, Columbus, Ohio 43215 614/224-3303; Lake Michigan Federation, 647 West Virginia, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204 414/271-5059 FAX 414/271-0796.
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From the President

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River Hills, WI 53217
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708/983-8404

We welcome the new members listed on this page. You are important to the success of this organization and we look forward to sharing ideas. All our new members will be recognized at meetings by their orange name tags.

It is also a pleasure to announce the formation of new Wild Ones chapters in Green Bay and Northern Illinois. Their contact people and meeting times are listed in this issue. I have also received calls from people in the Appleton and Oshkosh area about starting Wild Ones groups.

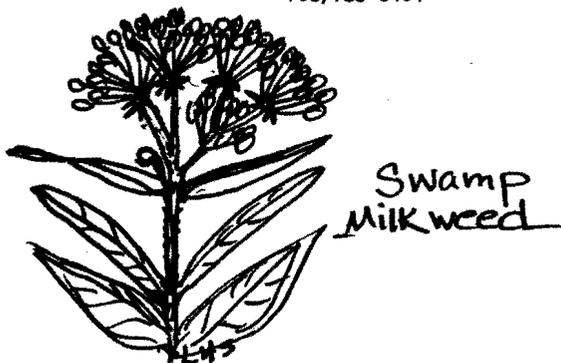
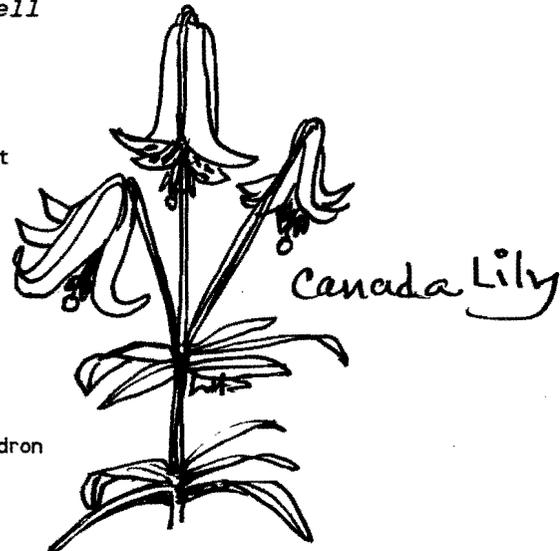
Please pay special attention to your mailing label on this issue. If it is starred, it will remind you that this is the LAST newsletter you will receive if your \$15 dues for 1992 are not paid.

We want to thank the Department of Natural Resources for making available the wetlands poster enclosed with this issue.

- Deb Harwell

New members:

Karl Schroeder
Jina & Bret Rappaport
Mary Norman
Lawrence Michael
Gretchen LaBudde
Phyllis Hanke
Joann Glawe
Randall Burkert
Fred Bossert
Debra Rappola
Gloria Poertner
Wilma McCallister
Jim Rieck
Elizabeth & John Waldron
Julie Winter
Marge Paukner
Vernon Kraemer
Boris Trbojevich
Loretta Hernday
Debra & Joe Pisarek
Lois Milburn
Emiline Kraus



The Inside Story

Compiled by
Janice Stiefel

NORTHERN PITCHER-PLANT

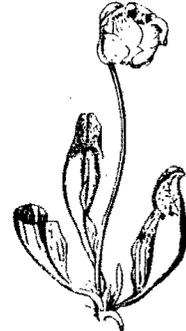
(*Sarracenia purpurea*)
Pitcher-Plant Family

OTHER NAMES: Fly-Catcher, Fly-Trap, Side-Saddle Plant, Water-Cup, Indian Pitcher, Adam's Cup, Whippoorwill's-Boots or Shoes, Skunk Cabbage, Fever-Cup, Meadow-Cup, Smallpox Plant, Forefather's-Cup, and many more.

HABITAT: Sphagnum bogs, peat bogs, savannas, calcareous fens, wet meadows.

DESCRIPTION: Rising from a leafless stalk above a rosette of reddish-brown, hollow, inflated leaves is a solitary purplish-red flower. The flower is up to 2 in. wide with 5 petals, numerous stamens, and a style expanded into an umbrella-like structure. The leaves are 4 to 12 in. long with broad-flaring lips covered with downward-pointing hairs that are very stiff.

Height: 8 to 24 in. **Flowering:** May to August.



COMMENTS: The Pitcher-Plant is especially fond of bogs because of their low nitrogen content. Many other plants are not able to survive there. This plant is able to withstand this condition because it is carnivorous, meaning it supplements its diet with small insects. Insects are attracted to a sweet substance on the leaf edges and since the hairs found on the inside of the hollow leaves point downward, once the insect lands on the inside of the leaf, there is no chance for him to escape. A pool of liquid is found in the bottom of the leaf which contains high amounts of enzymes. When the insect falls into this "pool of enzymes," his body immediately begins to break down for the plant to absorb him. Whew! Sounds like a horrible death for that poor insect!

MEDICINAL USE: American Indians used the root tea to treat smallpox, lung and liver ailments, spitting up of blood, childbirth aid, and diuretic. Dried leaf tea was used for fevers, chills, and shakiness. In the 1800's, an herbalist used the root as a remedy for that "dreadful scourge, smallpox." He says, "to my personal knowledge, this precious root not only saved my brother's life, but its use also appears to wholly obviate [prevent] the unsightly pitting common to the disease; if it is extracted and dried at the proper season. Indeed I have known many cases which were considered hopeless by medical men, but were cured by the *Sarracenia purpurea*; even Indians, with whom the dread malady so often proves fatal, finding it an absolute specific."

NAME ORIGIN: The Common Name, Pitcher-Plant, is in reference to the shape of the leaves and the fact that they actually hold a liquid. The **Genus Name**, *Sarracenia* (Sar-ra-see'ni-a) is in honor of Dr. Jean Antoine Sarracin, a botanist of Quebec. The **Species Name**, *purpurea*, (pur-pure'ee-a) is Latin for "purple."

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I bought a Pitcher-Plant from Country Wetlands Nursery about three years ago to place in our wetland. Since we think we have a calcareous fen, and it is listed as one of its habitats, I felt it was worth trying. It has survived and more than tripled in size. However, we noticed a few weeks ago that "something" tore off the little fence I had around it and ate many of the leaves. Needless to say, I was very upset, because those leaves stay evergreen through the winter. It will be interesting to see how or if the plant recovers this spring.

While shopping at one of our local supermarkets last summer, I "just happened" to be drawn to the plant section, like something was crying to be rescued. There, in a tiny 3 in. dome-covered pot, was a Northern Pitcher-Plant! It was squished into this minute container with one of its leaves totally turned back and almost breaking. Immediately this brought back memories of when, as a child, I was visiting a pet shop and wanted to take all the animals home with me so they wouldn't have to suffer in their small cages. It was so wonderful to be an adult and not have to ask permission to rescue this creature. Of course, you guessed it! I bought it, for \$4.95. Worst of all it was being sold under the name of "Little Pot of Horrors!" This same plant now has an honored spot in a sedge pot in our atrium. It is very happy, the leaves are a healthy green and it's waiting to be released this spring. Several interesting species have also emerged from this clump - a Primrose-Leaved Violet (*Viola primulifolia*) and something that looks like Queen Anne's Lace, but has not bloomed. The Violet is almost taking over the pot with new shoots and blooms continually. The Pitcher-Plant and this Violet seem to be a perfect match for each other. I have been wondering where this plant originally came from. Obviously, it must have come from a wild situation. If anyone has ever seen a Pitcher-Plant growing with Primrose-Leaved Violets, please let me know where. It would be fascinating to know the "roots" of this little orphan that I rescued from the supermarket.

Native Gardeners' Notebook

Wild Ones member, Annette Alexander, describes how she incorporated a back yard pond into her native landscape plan last year:

"In April 1991, Rochelle Whiteman, an artist and Wild Ones member, made a drawing for us showing a partial prairie with a pond and wetland. It was especially designed with our young children in mind.

My children, aged five and six, helped me with much of the construction. Robbie dug most of the hole in our clay soil. Then we poured two to three inches of sand in the depression to level the area. The pond edge was formed with inverted sod covered with flagstone. Carol helped place the stones. Moss was added to conceal the edges of the preformed pool. A submersible pump was placed in the pond with the hose hidden between two rocks. The trickling of water created a delightful sound the children love. Fish and plants were added and the project was completed on June 24 in conjunction with my daughter's birthday.

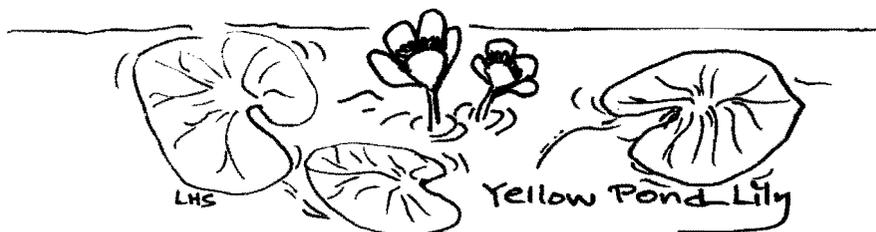
A small run-off stream was created from the gutter to the pond and with native stone added. During the wettest part of the year the water from it maintains a wetland area. The children's sand play area is also a storage place for sand used in the backyard prairie plantings.

We've noticed the new abundance of wildlife that now frequent the yard. Squirrels come to drink, birds are crazy about the pond, butterflies and bees are far more abundant than before.

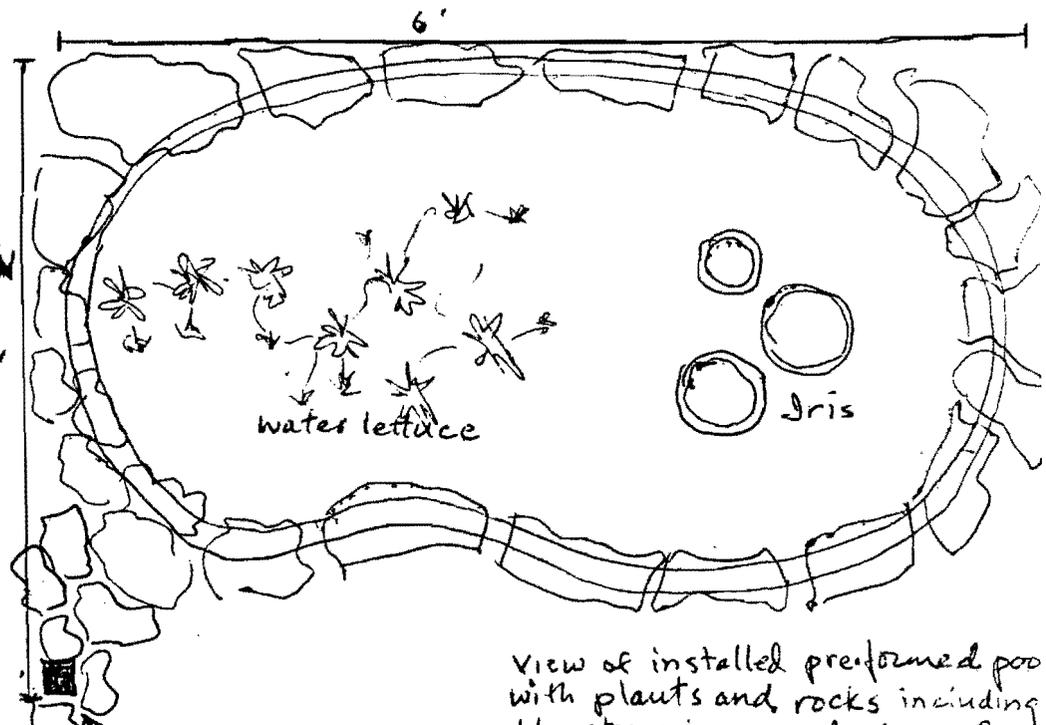
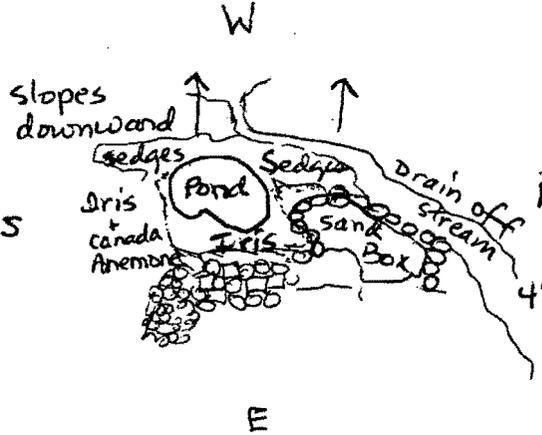
The children are in charge of goldfish maintenance. About 10 - 12 fish are kept in the pond. One note of caution--when a pond is first filled let the water sit for 48 hours so that it can dechlorinate before fish are added. Add only a few gallons of fresh water a week to replace evaporated water. If done carefully this will not disturb fish. The fish winter in a large tub with an air filter in our basement.

In the next two years we plan to add a few more pots of water-lilies, arrowhead, or bulrush in the pond as well as more sedges and wetland plants to the area surrounding the pond. A few more trees or shrubs will probably be planted as it was discovered that shade during the hottest part of the day, between 10 and 2, helps with an algae problem. Later, we plan to replace the preshaped pond with a pool liner to change the shape of the pond or add an additional pond in the same area."

Note: Annette will gladly answer any questions about the pond and natural landscaping shown on these pages. Call 414/332-3303. If you have a favorite project you would like to share with readers, please send your drawings and description to *The Outside Story*, 8920 North Lake Drive, Bayside, WI 53217 so it can be published in a later issue.



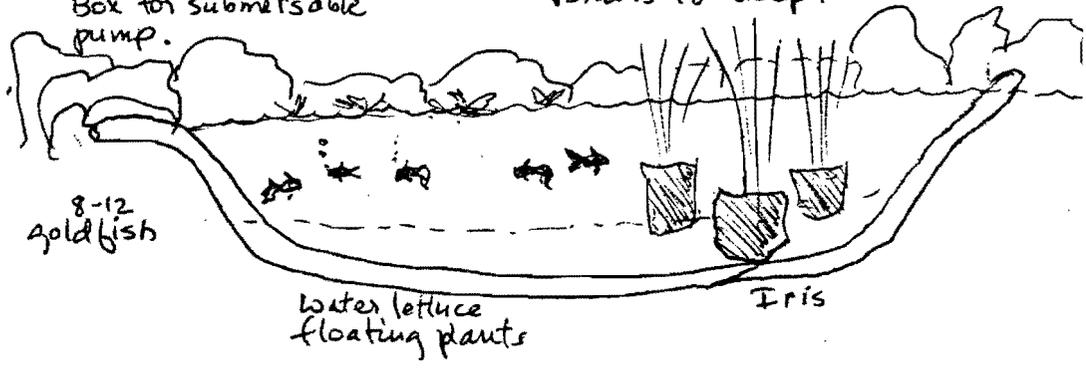
POND AND WETLAND AREA



Concealed electric Box for submersible pump.

View of installed preformed pool with plants and rocks including flagstone to conceal edges of pool. Pond is 18" deep.

Three views of Annette's landscaping project are shown in her drawings.



Wildcare

MARCH/First Week: Would your prairie benefit from a March burn? Review information and local regulations now. One small part of my front yard is ready, but I need training. The best way to learn seems to be by volunteering to help with well-supervised community burns, such as those at local nature centers... At the February natural landscaping seminar at UWM, Evelyn Howell gave a good suggestion, a "substitute burn." First, break off any remaining stalks, leaving a 2" stubble. Then, burn the dry cuttings, small bundles at a time, in an outdoor grill. Redistribute the ashes on the area that produced them, to speed up soil warmup and germination of prairie seeds in the soil. When I try this, I will leave one tiny patch "unbarbecued," for comparison.

Second Week: If you bring home armloads of "grazing" materials from the library, you probably skim and skip, photocopy and file, use sketches to summarize, and over all, try to benefit from sources you'll have little time for in May. If you are considering a small pond, you will appreciate the clear drawings in Norman Fassett's *Manual of Aquatic Plants*. Well-organized, with a minimum of jargon, and a good glossary to help define plant parts. Vere Temple's *How to Draw Pond Life*, written for British children, has thought-provoking observation methods. I meant to zip through Gene Logsdon's *Wildlife in Your Garden*, just to check on dealing with our own personal groundhog. But I began noticing a cast of human characters, Widow Lady, the Beekeeper, and the Dumb Farmer. So I had to go back to the beginning, a map of the "only slightly fictional 'Gwynedde Township'" (Montgomery County, PA). Suggestions for deer are limited, but I am really enjoying Logsdon's approach to the web of life. He examines different kinds of people and their varying interaction with critters in an intriguing way. James Herriot, move over...

Third Week: Watch for Pasque Flower (*Anemone patens*). Trilliums, troutlily, can't wait for all those wonderful spring wildflowers.

Fourth Week: Interested in phenology? That's the study of climatic influence on annual occurrences, such as bird migration, budding, etc. You might like the *Weather Friend Calendar* by Northeast Wisconsin Audubon. Obtainable by sending \$4.00 to Audubon, 1701 Ninth Street, Green Bay, WI 54304.

APRIL/First Week: As you note signs of land divisions, roadwork, and new construction, remember that Wild Ones' dig watch is looking for sites for May 10. Woodlands, wetlands, whatever--it takes a bit of time to get permission.

Second Week: Gradually remove mulch from asters.

Third Week: Wildflowers seem to bloom in the same order each year. It's still interesting to note dates on your calendar, to compare from one year to the next, or with others who live farther from Lake Michigan. More value might be in noting characteristics that stand out, such as "Wild geraniums bluest ever," or "Bloodroot bloomed in huge masses from ___ to ___."

Fourth Week: You may have been seasoning walking sticks of hazelnut, ash, wild plum or wild cherry, cut last year. (See *Wildcare*, Nov.-Dec. 1991 issue of *The Outside Story*.) If so, they are ready to finish. Pamela Michael, in *A Country Harvest* (a.k.a. *All Good Things Around Us*), recommends trimming the side shoot of your seasoned stick now, and also the handle or thumb rest. File the handle to a comfortable shape, then sand it and all the trimmed surfaces. Polishing the whole stick with furniture polish several times will give a coppery sheen to hazelnut. Ash will be silvery gray. I can only guess that the color of the wild cherry or plum will be reddish. It's too close to spring sap rise to try a new batch of sticks to find out...Nov. or Dec. is really the only time safe to cut them without weakening the shrubs/trees. Evaluate the winter enjoyment of your yard. Would it be better to move the woodpile farther back, add an Aldo Leopold bench, or relocate a few purple coneflowers to a spot where their seedheads will be seen in winter? Use a few wood pallets to plot out a boardwalk through a wet area. Get those cameras out for a spring record and to enter the Botanical Club of Wisconsin's annual competition. Contact Milwaukee Public Museum. - Barb Glassel



From the Secretary ...

January: Our own Janice Stiefel, who writes "The Inside Story" for our newsletter, brought us an unusual and fun program. She played "Stump the Audience" as she first showed us a slide of a young, native plant before blooming and we were asked to identify it. Next, we were shown the plant in full bloom. There was lots of audience participation and a few laughs as some of us were quick to shout out an answer only to discover that we were way off!

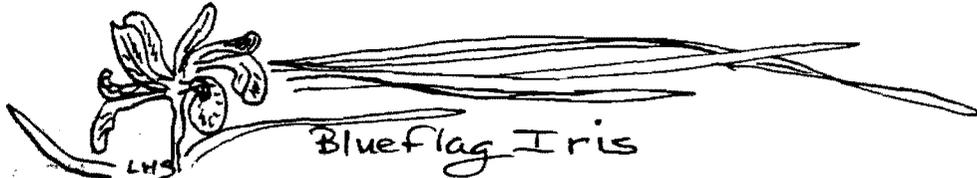
Janice has a beautiful collection of slides that she has taken herself, and it was a treat just to view them.

As an added surprise, one of the members from the audience, Joan Laux, was the lucky recipient of one of Janice's lovely photographs of a bloodroot flower.

Throughout the program, Janice told us interesting facts and legends concerning the plants. (Did you know that if a jack-in-the-pulpit has two stalks and berries, it is female. If it has one stalk and no berries, it is a male!)

February: In lieu of a February meeting, our members were invited to attend the Milwaukee Audubon Society's annual Natural Landscaping Seminar at U.W.M. There were several good speakers to choose from throughout the day, including our own Rae Sweet.

The Julie Marks Memorial Lecture speaker, sponsored by Wild Ones, was Neil Diboll whose topic was "A Prairie in Your Yard". As usual, he had much valuable information to share. - Kristin Summerfield



What are your experiences with lawn-care companies or pesticides you have purchased for home use? *Family Circle* would like to know. Write Pesticides, *Family Circle*, 110 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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"Destroy property and it is called vandalism. Destroy land and it is called development."

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Lovers of the Land: 5 - 8 beautiful, private Mequon acres with magnificent views are for sale. Surrounding land is to be restored to woodland and prairie plantings. Homesite and/or nature preserve potential. Historic area. Call Estherly (414/238-1416) for more information.

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Do any readers belong to Prodigy interactive computer service and use the Garden Bulletin Board? Let's establish a natural landscaping network. Please call Carol at 414/351-0644 or e-mail (RTMX10B) on Prodigy.

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Prairie may require bison to survive. A study by the Illinois Department of Conservation is examining whether several species of prairie plants and insects need bison to thrive. Bison have been absent from Illinois since 1820 and could be reintroduced some time in the future if areas are found large enough to support them. The animals transported seeds in their fur and trampled large areas of prairie, according to the *Milwaukee Journal*.

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Prairie potholes were formed twelve thousand years ago when an enormous ice sheet dug millions of depressions on its northward retreat says the National Wildlife Federation's *Resource News*. These unique and endangered wetlands can be found in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Montana, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa. To scientists, prairie potholes are among the most productive, and the most threatened, ecosystems in the country. Half the ducks hatched in the lower 48 states come from prairie potholes, the proportion is higher in wet years. They also purify the groundwater drinking supplies by removing excess nutrients, recharge aquifers, reduce the frequency of damaging floods, and provide drinking water for animals during drought.

Calendar

Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers, Ltd.



Meetings are held on the second Saturday.....

9:30 a.m. at Schlitz Audubon Center
1111 East Brown Deer Road
Bayside, WI 53217 414/352-2880

and repeated at.....

1:30 p.m. at Wehr Nature Center
9701 West College Avenue
Franklin, WI 53132 414/425-8550

in Green Bay, meetings are held at.....

The Heritage Hill Visitors Center
2640 South Webster Avenue
Green Bay, WI 54301 414/448-5150 (Call for times.)

in Northern Illinois, meetings are held at.....

College of Du Page
Twenty-second Street
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 708/983-8404

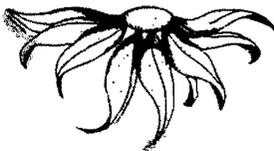
March 11: Green Bay 7 p.m. Dave Otto will show slides of Wisconsin wildflowers.
14: Milwaukee Bret Rappaport updates us on the Chicago lawsuit.

April 11: Milwaukee Randy Powers tells us about his growing native seed company.
16: N. Illinois Organizational Meeting, Building K, Rm. 127, College of Dupage.

May 2: Green Bay Plant Rescue Day.
9: Milwaukee Annual Spring Wildflower Dig. Bring shovels and containers.



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newsletter for natural landscapers

