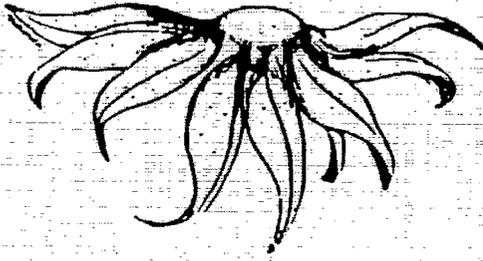


wild ones



# The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

Vol. 5 No. 6

November - December 1992

One Dollar

## Good design benefits quality of our water

Runoff rainwater and melting snow can carry pesticides, fertilizers, oil, road salt, and other pollutants off rural and urban land and into streams and lakes. The result is a serious water quality problem known as *nonpoint source pollution*.

Careful landscape planning of your own yard can prevent runoff and conserve water for your plants. By converting turf to natural areas, the need for chemicals is minimized or eliminated because native plant communities supply their own nutrient requirements. They also absorb water and prevent soil erosion.

Consider using buffer strips of native plants along ponds or streams to reduce runoff and filter any pollutants. Well-planned strips can be used to frame good views or screen unsightly ones. They also shelter small animals and (continued on page 4)

### In this issue

**New seeding techniques** 2  
*Planting acres of wildflowers?*

**Designing natural areas** 6  
*Now is the time to plan.*

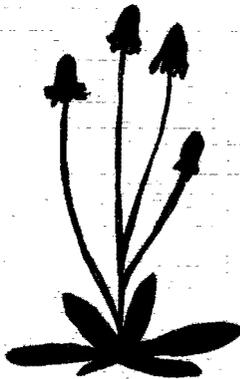
**Aldo Leopold bench design** 8  
*A holiday woodworking project.*

**A house for all birds** Insert

## Going wild with native plants: Is it less work? It depends.

People vary widely in their perception of what a garden should be. Promotion of native plants for planned landscapes has added a new dimension to the factors to be considered. Designers encounter on a daily basis the homeowner's uncertainty of how exactly to use these plants in the landscape. There is no one answer. At the beginning of the design process, the designer and client must determine how the garden will be maintained. If native plants are to be incorporated, the client will want to know what this means and how the native plants can be expected to perform.

Analyze what you want to happen in your landscape. Define your goals. Do you wish to increase diversity in a traditional perennial garden by re-introducing prairie plants? If so, it will require applying traditional maintenance techniques to the native selection. Do you plan a micro-ecosystem--your own plot of recreated prairie? If so, it will require management such as burning--the "low maintenance" many envision when they think of "going native." Native plants are often promoted as low- or no-maintenance plants when in fact how they are used is a primary determining factor in how much and what care they require.



Native forbs such as *Rudbeckia hirta*, black-eyed Susan or *Echinacea purpurea*, purple coneflower, if planted within a traditional English-style perennial garden, will require traditional English-style maintenance. They may need to be staked since they won't be interplanted with grasses which provide structural support. In addition, the enriched garden soil and lack of competition allow them to grow taller than usual and less able to support themselves. They won't have to be dug up and

divided periodically but they will require cutting and removal of dead material.

These same species used in an inter-dependent community of native forbs and grasses will perform quite differently. They will be smaller and less bold in their visual effect but staking, weeding, cutting, and cleaning will no longer be required. Instead, *Rudbeckia* and *Echinacea* become part of an eternally evolving, self-renewing ecosystem. In reality, this eco-system will be small and isolated, surrounded on all sides by alien species and requiring consistent management. However, these techniques are easy to learn and advantages of native plants are numerous.

There is a wide gradation in the degrees of "nativeness" that people will accept in their gardens. Just how they wish to manage their "wild ones" should be as important as aesthetics in the final decision. - Kerry Leigh, Landscape Architect



## Sophisticated machinery developed to plant wildflower acreages

New wildflower seeding techniques are discussed in a recent issue of *Land and Water*. Although suggestions for new machinery are aimed at large spaces, the emphasis on soil preparation, weed control, and seeding techniques have importance for smaller projects as well.

Preparing the seed bed means having soil that retains water but that still has good drainage. Methods include tilling (not recommended unless the soil is heavily compacted because it often turns up new weed seeds), cultivating, or scarifying to rough up the soil's surface. An effective and inexpensive technique is attaching a piece of chain link fence, weighted with stone or railroad ties, to a tractor and pulling it over existing vegetation. However, this may not be practical on all types of terrain. Weed control includes killing or removing aggressive plants and eliminating weed seed which may germinate when disturbed and exposed to air and light.

**Preparing a seed bed entails creating a soil environment which has the capacity to retain water . . . has good drainage and seed-to-soil contact."**

Although soil preparation and weed control are very important, even distribution of seed and good soil contact are also essential. It is important to remember that there are many ways to apply wildflower seed according to the particular site and situation. Now there are also machines designed specifically for wildflower seed planting. According to Craig Stevens of the Texas DOT the most expensive and most effective method of planting wildflowers is with a drill-type seeder with a rip shank that makes a groove in the soil, drops in seeds, and then comes back over to assure good seed-to-soil contact. A sophisticated type of drill seeder has been developed which has three different seed bins capable of being individually calibrated to accommodate different size seeds, allowing a greater diversity of seeds to be planted at one time.

Joseph Fraser of New Mexico State University is quoted as saying that wildflowers are often established on new construction cuts or at mining sites where there is no existing vegetation. Here the number one priority is erosion control by establishing wildflowers and native grasses as quickly as possible. Soil is disked, raked, and then seeded. Another new planter described is designed with special agitators and picker wheels which handle irregularly shaped seeds. Seeds drop into several baffles and are scattered the full width of the machine, eliminating the problems of planter rows showing after wildflowers and grasses are established.

A hydroseeder uses machinery to forcibly distribute a mixture of seed, water, and fertilizer to hard-to-reach areas. Hydro-mulchers do the same but add mulch to the mixture. The machines are useful on slopes where tractor-drawn seeders are impossible to use. In all wildflower plantings it is important that seeds be kept moist until they are established.

The article suggests that the American Seed Trade Association, Inc., 601 - 13th Street N.W., Suite 570 South, Washington, D.C. 20005-1593, (202/638-3128, Fax 202/638-3171) be contacted for additional information.

## More prairie planting tips shared

Experts, such as Hal Rock, recommend prairie mixes that are 80% forbs (flowers) and 20% grasses. Some others use 50% - 50% mixes, but both ratios are a change from years ago when more grasses were seeded. The rationale is that grasses are more aggressive and so more flower seeds are needed.

Buckwheat is sometimes used in establishing new prairie because, when disked, it adds phosphate and potassium to the soil. One caution is that it has to be disked in fast, before it goes to seed, or it is hard to eradicate later.



**Bayside Garden Center**  
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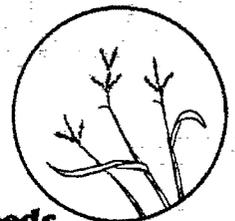
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## Lorrie's Notes . . .

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### School natural area needs preserving as an outdoor laboratory

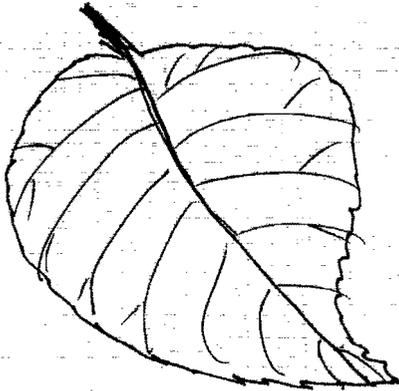
In the last few decades we have so ruptured the link between nature and our planned landscapes that a small, unmowed but managed natural area at Bayside's middle school appeared to threaten officials who were willing to destroy it. A neighbor who lived two blocks away claimed the "mess" lowered his property values. The president of the school board declared that she had four children attend the school and "not one of them ever put a foot into that place." One teacher said that she had her own native backyard garden and that this one was "only a weed patch." The school administrator said that the area was never "used." The principal told us that she only heard complaints about it. One of the staff said that the people who planted this area 18 years ago were no longer around and no longer cared; that all of the school officials had been replaced; and that 50% of the teachers are new this year.

In October, the long grassy path of this controversial strip is bordered with blooming asters. (See *The Outside Story*, September - October 1992 for a related story.) As the leaves fall from the trees, a twig tracery of shadows appears against the east wing of the cream brick school building. The diverse grace is in startling contrast to the adjoining blacktopped parking lot.

Since this Earth Day planting in 1974 we have taken far too much for granted. State-mandated environmental education does not include the study of organic diversity and the importance of maintaining bioregional sanctuaries for plants and animals. At first we couldn't find a teacher who appreciated the potential of this outdoor laboratory where no grass had been mowed or poisoned for 18 years, and where trees and shrubs had been planted by birds. However, the school administrator soon found such a teacher. Then in quick succession we helped her defend the project by asking people who had an interest to write the school. We typed out a history of the planting and made it the center of a display next to the cafeteria. This would educate teachers, students, maintenance crew, parents, and visitors. We found models for photographs: a fourth grader with an easel; another child with a butterfly net; one with a magnifying glass. They ate the grapes, tasted the crabapples, and sucked nectar from the clover. We enlarged the photos to embellish the display case. To further accent the positive, we summoned *The Herald* which has a talented reporter who is a retired teacher (see her article Thursday, October 8, 1992)

There is a tangle of form, color, and texture which greeted children returning to school in late summer. This simple, seasonal beauty should be its own excuse for being. The chrysalises of Monarch butterflies not far from the fading milkweed, and migrating birds flitting among vegetation as they eat and rest on their long journey south. . . Is this not "use" enough? Here children may learn that each small strand of land which they can protect and heal will help in reweaving nature's web of life.

The December Wild Ones program at Audubon and Wehr will describe the Bayside natural area. - Lorrie Otto



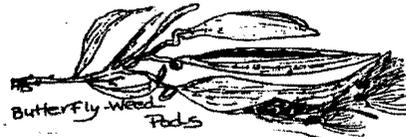
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(continued from page 1)

birds. Buffer zones can be 15' to 25' or wider on large sites.

Mulched beds can also be incorporated into landscape design and will provide several benefits. Composted yard waste (leaves, grass clippings, chipped branches etc.) can be recycled into several inches of topping for the beds which hold moisture, moderate soil temperature, and control weeds. They can be edged with native stones and wood. Use natural shapes rather than straight lines or geometric forms.

Selection of native plants which are well-adapted to the region means less watering and chemical-free gardening. Using buffer strips along water courses and adding mulched beds reduces runoff and water needed.

## Lewis Birkel's garden, school prairies in news

Lewis Birkel's sunny, flower-filled yard was the subject of a color photo feature article in *The Milwaukee Journal's* "Home" section on Sunday, September 6. Birkel, a member of Wild Ones, is known by many for his hand-made bird houses. He has been working on the gardens of his present home, "Bird Haven," since he and his wife moved there three years ago.

Two articles in the *Community Herald* on October 6 were on the subject of school natural areas. "A prairie picnic" featured Indian Hill School's fall celebration of their two-year-old prairie which surrounds the building. Over 400 students, parents, and others attended the fall festival. Principal Karen Winicki explained that, "We have our science lessons right outside our doors.

There are over 650 plants and many insects." The prairie has been useful, she says for art, English, and other classes as well. Children have learned much about the natural environment from it and give tours of the area. Wild Ones' President Deb Harwell was instrumental in starting and carrying out the project.

At nearby Bayside Middle School, a committee has been established to work out a solution for saving a portion of an 18-year-old natural area that school administrators want to use to expand a bus parking area. The strip of land in question represents nearly two decades of natural succession.



## Noted naturalist left legacy of learning from nature

James H. Zimmerman, author of the popular *Wildflowers and Weeds* field guide and Wisconsin's leading expert on wetlands, died in early October while tending a small prairie on the shore of Red Cedar Lake.

According to an article in *The Milwaukee Journal* he and his artist wife, Elizabeth, had nearly completed a book describing the state's sedges. Naturalists often sent plant samples to Zimmerman for identification. He was known as the "expert's expert" and as a "walking encyclopedia of our state's prairies and wetlands," according to Don Reed, principal biologist with the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. His wife plans to publish the book and continue to operate the couple's consulting business.

Zimmerman responded to a Wild Ones' membership survey in 1990 with many comments about his involvement with

wild plants and animals. Among his responses were: "A cousin interested me in wild plants in 1936 when I was 12. By 1939, I was planting them in an area where my parents let me garden. I got the "bug" from my grandmother, who gardened up a storm until her death when I was 15. My interest in birds was spurred by working with Aldo Leopold in 1944 and led to understanding habitat requirements, including abundant insects and natural leafy groundcover for many ground-feeding migrants such as thrashers, towhees, wild sparrows, ovenbirds and woodcocks. Plus hollow trees and leaf litter are needed for worms and grass/leaves/nuts for mice. Erosion control in shady places, especially on slopes, requires leaf litter, held in place by shade-adapted forest herbs."

The address for the Jim Zimmerman Memorial Environmental Fund is: 2114 Van Hise Ave., Madison, WI 53705.



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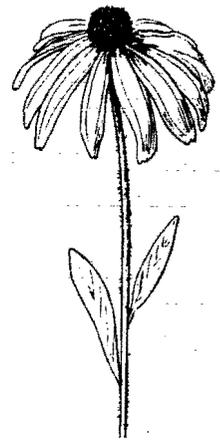
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# The Inside Story

Compiled by  
JANICE STIEFEL

**BLACK-EYED-SUSAN**  
(*Rudbeckia hirta*)  
Composite or Daisy Family



**OTHER NAMES:** Yellow Coneflower, Yellow Daisy, Nigger-Head, Brown-Eyed Susan, Darkey-Head, Nigger Daisy, Poor-Land Daisy, Ox-Eye Daisy, English Bull's Eye, Golden-Jerusalem, Brown Betty, Brown Daisy.

**DESCRIPTION:** A rough-stemmed plant with blossoms of golden-yellow ray flowers and disk flowers forming a brown central cone. The blossom head is 2 to 3 in. wide and the lanceolate to ovate, rough, hairy leaves are 2 to 7 in. long; the lower leaves are usually untoothed with three prominent veins and winged leafstalks. It is an annual or a biennial. Height is 1 to 3 ft.

**Habitat:** Fields, prairies and open woods.

**Flowering:** June to October

**COMMENTS:** Black-Eyed Susan is a native of the North American plains and prairies of the midwest. Unlike so many of our wild plants which landed on eastern shores and marched westward, this is a western species that travelled eastward, supposedly in bundles of hay.

Because it is avoided by livestock, a profusion of the plant indicates over-grazing and poor soil conditions, since it will take over when other plants have been grazed out. It is dependent on bees, butterflies, wasps, flies, beetles, and other insects for pollination. However, it has developed a system for keeping away unwanted pests, such as ants — the stems are covered with tiny barbs which make it very difficult for ants to crawl up.

Black-Eyed Susan is the state flower of Maryland. The Gloriosa Daisy is a hybridized version of this plant.

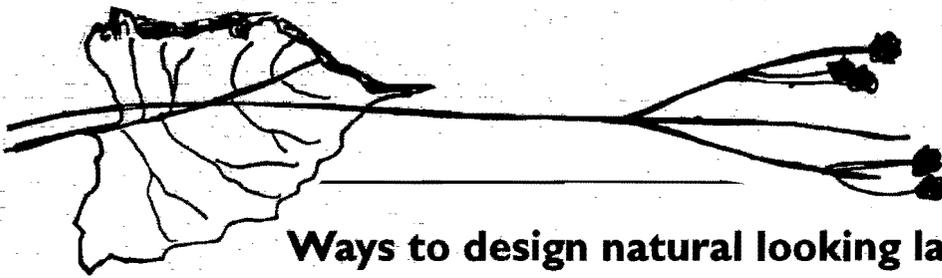
**MEDICINAL USE:** American Indians used the root tea for worms, colds; an external wash for sores, snakebites, and swellings. The Cherokee used an extract of the roots for the treatment of earache. The Forest Potawatomi made a drink by steeping the leaves for use as a kidney stimulant.

**NAME ORIGIN:** The **Genus Name**, *Rudbeckia* (Rood-beck'i-a) was named by Carolus Linnaeus in honor of the Professors Rudbeck: Olaf, 1630-1702, the father; and Olaf, 1660-1740, the son. They were his predecessors at the University of Uppsala, Sweden. Linnaeus, or Carl von Linne, was born in 1707 in a province of Sweden. When he was very young he looked forward to the day he could study under Professor Olaf Rudbeck, the son. However, shortly before Linnaeus arrived at the university, Professor Rudbeck lost all his research papers and accompanying data in a terrible fire. He was so distressed over losing the works which had taken him a lifetime to accumulate that he lost all enthusiasm and interest in teaching. This was a great disappointment to Linnaeus. Over time Professor Rudbeck recovered from his great loss, especially when he realized the potential young Linnaeus possessed. Linnaeus succeeded Olaf Rudbeck as professor. From there he went on to organize the naming of plants with the "two name" system (**genus** and **species**). Upon his death in 1777, the King of Sweden remarked, "The system of classification invented by Linnaeus, together with the great improvement he made in botanical nomenclature, have served to greatly popularize the study of botany; what was before chaos he brought into order, and what was before difficult he made easy."

The **Species Name**, *hirta* (hur'ta), means "rough," referring to the hairy stem and leaves.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** It was a privilege for the Black-Eyed Susan to be named in honor of Professors Rudbeck by Linnaeus. Whenever I see this plant, my mind goes back to the 18th Century, especially the loss that Professor Rudbeck experienced in losing his works in a fire. I learned a lesson from his misfortune. Even though my research papers could never be as important as his, nevertheless, they are important to me. I now keep my research papers, disks, slides, and out-of-print botany books in a fireproof safe. It's amazing the wisdom that can be acquired from events that occurred as far back as the 18th Century.

© 1992 Janice Stiefel  
Plymouth, Wisconsin



prairie-dock  
winter pods

## Ways to design natural looking landscaping

"Natural looking gardens don't result from simply 'letting things go.'" is the reminder from Darrel G. Morrison, Dean of the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia. "As appealing as that concept might be, from the standpoint of time and energy, there have been too many environmental changes on most residential sites to make that a realistic option. . . Hence, a *laissez-faire* approach under such conditions is likely to produce a chaotic mix of native and exotic plants," he states.

"We can't design gardens that will equal the order, complexity, integrity, and beauty of the typical undisturbed natural landscape. However, there is great value in studying natural landscapes and native plants in the field, where one can hear, see, smell, touch, and even taste them. Sadly, there are few examples of minimally disturbed natural landscapes remaining. . . making them more critical than ever as more and more of our land is 'developed,'" Morrison reminds us.

Morrison tells us to think about zones of vegetation by heights. Find out what the native tall tree canopy is in your geographic region (such as beech-maple forests or oak-hickory forests). What shrubs, and small trees in the three to fifteen foot range make up the understory. Finally, what are the companion plants under three feet in height and also groundcovers that make up the rest of the plant community? Figuring out these zones will be most helpful in designing your landscaping.

Find out also what species occur in a specific environment, such as which plants prefer sunny or shady locations; dry, sandy soil or heavy, rich loam. Learn which species occur naturally in the greatest numbers.

When looking to see where plants grow in nature check what grows next to them. Is there a particular one that grows only on the edge of woods or in the heart of the forest or sometimes both? Does the plant grow individually, scattered, or clustered in a tight group?

In a small landscape plan which simulates a larger natural one, don't try to grow too many types of plants. According to Morrison, five or six types of grasses unify 90% of the Midwestern prairie. There is room for diversity, however, while a native prairie may be mainly composed of fewer than a dozen species, there may be more than four dozen forb types per acre occurring in small numbers. Changing flower and leaf color and different ages of plants add to the variety. Younger, shorter shrubs are normally at the front edges providing a soft look.

We are reminded to use the river as an analogy for designing natural looking open spaces. "A river winds through a landscape, widening at turns or bends, and disappearing behind 'peninsulas' or vegetation. This provides an element of mystery, encouraging the observer to want to see what's beyond the next bend," he states.

### Design process

1. Inventory your site. Map out answers to the following questions on grid paper: Where is it sunny or shady in your yard? Where do you have sandy soil, clay, dry, or moist spots? Which existing plants are desirable or undesirable? Can the information shown on a tax survey or real estate map show you where to draw in building "footprints" or fence lines, etc.? Where does water drain? Are there any slopes? Any eroded spots? What views need to be emphasized or screened? Be sure to

include compass directions and your name and address (so you won't lose your drawing as you carry it around.)

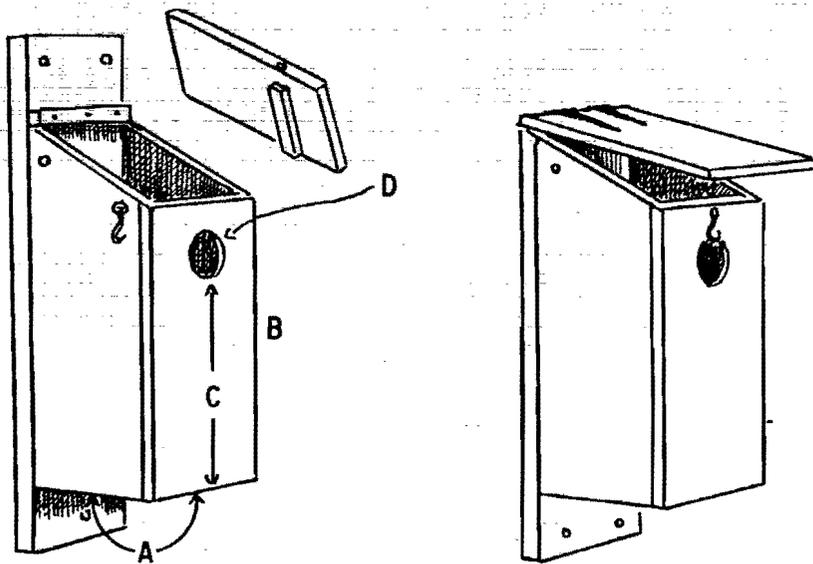
2. Plan spaces. Where will paths go? (Keep paths wide enough for three to walk abreast. This gives people enough room to avoid brushing against plants.) What spaces should be kept open? What natural lines can you repeat in your plan? What tall trees (upper story) will you have? What shrubs and smaller trees (middle story)? What will be shorter than a yard-stick (ground level)? Think in three-dimensional terms. Use a garden hose to lay out your plan on the ground when you work outside. (Don't use spray paint to mark layout.)

3. Select plants. When you have an understanding of species native to your own region and know your own yard's conditions, it is time to choose plants. Avoid exotic plants that are known to be aggressive and overpower natives. Generally, keep exotics separated from natives because of their somewhat incompatible growth patterns and unfair advantages due to hybridization. Think about companion plantings--which natives grow together in nature.



Purple  
Coneflower  
Pods  
HLS

# A House for All Birds . . . . Just Change Size & Dimension



THE DESIGN OF A BIRD NESTING BOX. The simple design of this birdhouse will suit *all* birds that will nest in bird boxes, but the *size* of your birdhouse and its dimensions must be made to suit each kind of bird as shown in the table. If you want to attract bluebirds, you must build a bluebird house; if you want to attract house wrens, you must build a house wren box. Make the roof of the house or one of its sides detachable or hinged to allow you to inspect the inside or to clean it.

## Dimensions for Birdhouses

(See accompanying illustration for corresponding lettered parts.)

<i>Kind of Bird</i>	<i>A</i> <i>Size of</i> <i>Floor</i> <i>(inches)</i>	<i>B</i> <i>Depth of</i> <i>Bird Box</i> <i>(inches)</i>	<i>C</i> <i>Height of</i> <i>Entrance</i> <i>Above</i> <i>Floor</i> <i>(inches)</i>	<i>D</i> <i>Diameter</i> <i>of</i> <i>Entrance</i> <i>Hole</i> <i>(inches)</i>	<i>Height to</i> <i>Fasten</i> <i>Above</i> <i>Ground</i> <i>(feet)</i>
Bluebird	5×5	8	6	1½	5-10
Chickadee	4×4	8-10	6-8	1⅝	6-15
Titmouse	4×4	8-10	6-8	1¼	6-15
Nuthatch	4×4	8-10	6-8	1¼	12-20
House wren and Bewick's wren	4×4	6-8	4-6	1-1¼	6-10
Carolina wren	4×4	6-8	4-6	1½	6-10
Violet-green swallow and Tree swallow	5×5	6	1-5	1½	10-15
Purple martin <sup>b</sup>	6×6 <sup>b</sup>	6 <sup>b</sup>	1 <sup>b</sup>	2½	15-20
House finch	6×6	6	4	2	8-12
Starling	6×6	16-18	14-16	2	10-25
Crested flycatcher	6×6	8-10	6-8	2	8-20
Flicker	7×7	16-18	14-16	2½	6-20
Golden-fronted woodpecker and red-headed wood- pecker	6×6	12-15	9-12	2	12-20
Downy woodpecker	4×4	8-10	6-8	1¼	6-20
Hairy woodpecker	6×6	12-15	9-12	1½	12-20
Screech owl	8×8	12-15	9-12	3	10-30
Saw-whet owl	6×6	10-12	8-10	2½	12-20
Barn owl	10×18	15-18	4	6	12-18
American kestrel	8×8	12-15	9-12	3	10-30
Wood duck	10×18	10-24	12-16	4	10-20

Information from *Homes for Birds*, Conservation Bulletin 14,  
U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. For sale by  
Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office.

Dimensions for martin house is for one pair of birds. It is  
customary to build martin houses eight compartments at  
a time, which constitutes a section.

4. Placing plants. Try as much as possible to simulate natural relationships in arranging plants. Put in ground covers and arrange "accent plants" in groups of three, five, or more. Color-coded stakes help to keep track of individual plants in an area. Keep sun-loving plants in the sun and shade-loving plants in the shade.

5. Expect changes. The beauty of natural landscaping is that it is ever-changing and evolving. The design you put down on paper now will not stay permanently the same in your garden. Plants will increase in size and numbers and will "migrate." Some plants will shade out others.

"The great thing to remember about creating a wild garden is that it should not be hurried. Take your time. As with any garden, one is well advised to spend the first year taking stock and planning gradually," advises Violet Stevenson in *The Wild Garden*. "Many of the plants that are despised or even feared horticulturally are essential to the lives of living creatures." She recommends spending time checking out plants' usefulness to birds and insects. "If plants prove to be unattractive visually, yet well worth saving, allow them to grow out of sight."

Quotes are from "Creating a Natural Looking Garden" by Darrel G. Morrison in *Gardening with Wildflowers & Native Plants* (Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record) and *The Wild Garden* by Violet Stevenson (Penguin Handbook)

## Learning Experiences . . .

Recently the Wild Ones board shared "dumb mistakes we'd never do again." Here they are, with the hope you won't have to experience the same ones:

"Canadian goldenrod is really pretty, but I wish I'd kept to the less aggressive varieties for my yard. A neighbor made a wreath with native berries, mainly poison ivy! As much damage as this can cause humans, it is good to remember that wildlife loves them." - Mariette Nowak

"I hired a landscape architect who recommended vinca. After two years, I knew it wasn't right, but it took a lot of work to get rid of!" - Mandy Ploch

"Don't dig those cute little spring plants when you aren't sure what they are. They could be garlic mustard." - Kristin Summerfield

"When my daughter was a first-grader, she brought home some cute little lilies of the valley. . . no matter how hard I try, I still can't get rid of them." - Lorrie Otto

"I seeded my prairie and thought it would be nice to have some field daisies. . . I deliberately threw some seed heads down. I nearly broke my back digging them out. . . They emit a toxin that could have jeopardized the whole project!!" - Deb Harwell

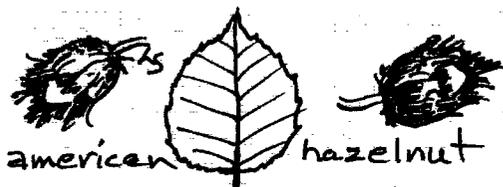
"Chokecherries look remarkably like buckthorn when they are little. . . I transplanted buckthorn into my yard!" - Jan Koel

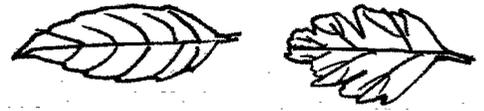
"My brother helped me transplant a few bishop's weed around my gardens to provide some contrast. . . It is very aggressive. . . to the point that it took out my asparagus and raspberries." - Lucy Schumann

"I bought some native asters from a garden center. . . Make sure *native* means native to the area. . . not to the whole United States!" - Delene Hansen

"The yews I planted looked nice to begin with but weren't planted in the right place. My husband transplanted them. . . but I'm still not satisfied. . . he'll move furniture, but moving trees. . . !!!" - Irena Macek

Do you have natural landscaping experiences or ideas you'd like to share? We'd love to hear from you! Our 1993 issues will focus on: site preparation/plant propagation (January - February); woodlands (March - April); wetlands (May - June); prairie (July - August); insects/animals (September - October). Please send information to: Editor, *The Outside Story*, 8920 North Lake Drive, Bayside, WI 53217.





## Wildcare...

**November:** PHOTOS taken now can serve as memory joggers next spring to show types of plants and their locations. Native landscapers' eyes become trained to see beauty in the full range of seasons - from emerging ephemerals to the last sturdy pods which slides record.

**DISTRACTIONS**, such as neighbor's lights which show up now that leaves are gone, can be screened with arborvitae or cedar. Rig a stake and cloth to estimate best location. Planting can be done, if a hole can still be dug.

**PLANT I.D.** is easier if you take a few plants at a time. Start with buckthorn and learn to recognize it in different seasons: It has a distinctive, broken twig odor; black, hairy roots; shiny green leaves; straight thorns and black berries. You'll want to replace this aggressive, alien shrub with natives. Learn the characteristics of some sub-

stitutes: redbud dogwood, snowberry, and some of the many good viburnums.

**CALENDARS** are good holiday gifts. One custom-made for the Wisconsin and Upper Michigan is the *1993 WeatherFriend Calendar*. Now in the 14th year of publication by the Northeast Wisconsin Audubon Society, it is full of fascinating observations of nature's habits related to season, weather and place (known as *phenology*.) It includes spaces to chart your own data and compare it with facts from prior years and nature art by area artists. Best of all, it's only \$4, postpaid. Wild Ones will share in the proceeds, if you order from this address: Calendar, Dept. WON, 1701 Ninth Street, Green Bay, WI 54304. Allow 3 to 4 weeks. We can't wait to hear your reactions!

**December:** WALKS through your property can yield surprising insight on where to place a path, locate compost,

imagine a butterfly patch, downspout garden, or berrybushes for birds. During this busy month, a walk is re-energizing and might replace caffeine.

**GIFTS** can also include bird houses and feeders. . .or try building the Aldo Leopold Bench pictured below. Here are some variations:

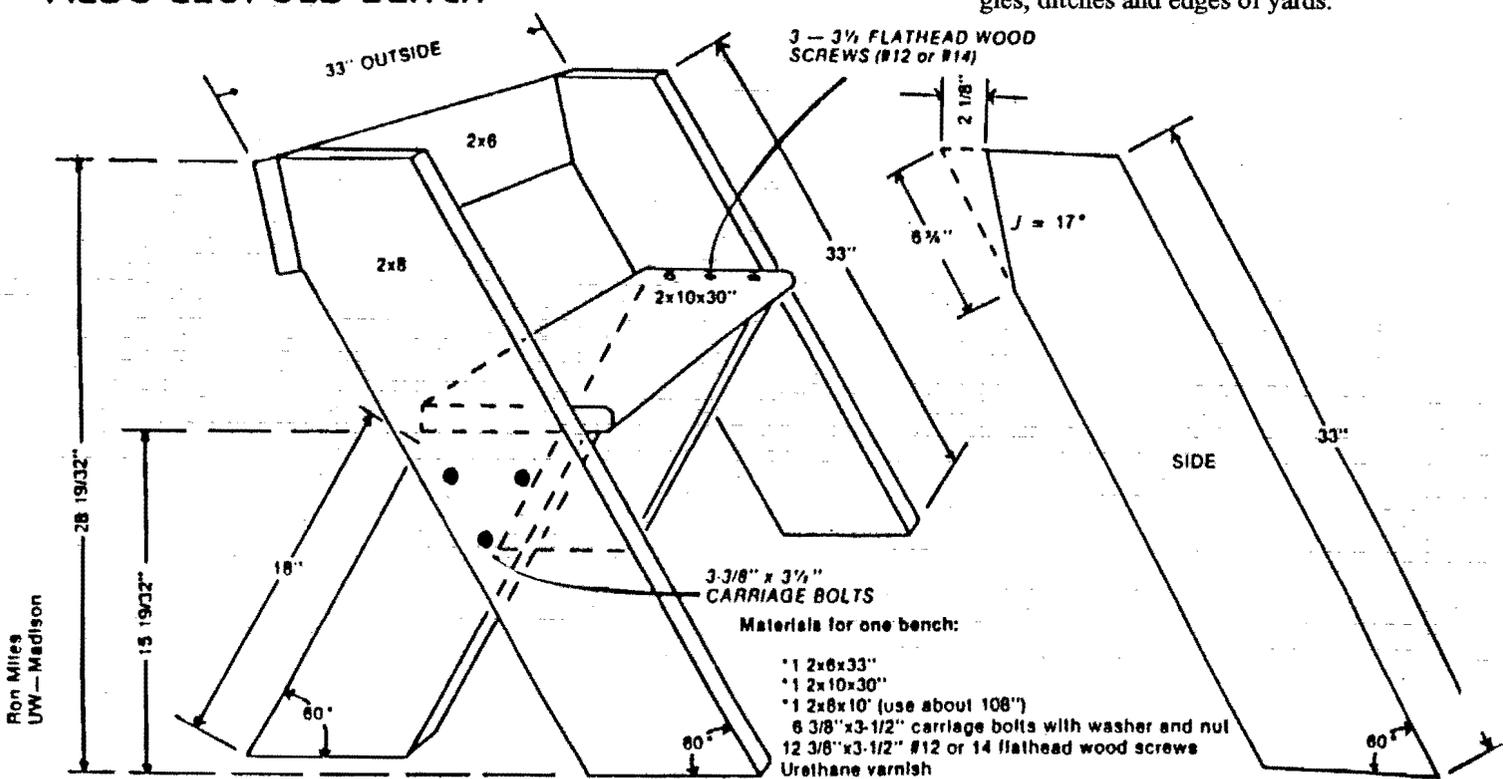
Wes Weinhold attached the 2" x 6" backrest *without* trimming off the 2 1/8" x 6 3/4" wedge and finds the angle more comfortable. He also says that structurally the bench can be made up to 6 feet wide as long as 2" thick wood is used.

Kristin Summerfield's three-year-old benches of unfinished cedar have weathered to a nice dark color.

Schlitz Audubon Center has several examples to try. Please let us know if you have made other changes, such as second back slat or a seat wider than 10". Where did you locate your bench?

## ALDO LEOPOLD BENCH

3 - 3/4" FLATHEAD WOOD SCREWS EACH END (#12 or #14)



**NEXT issue:** Deer and rabbit strategies, ditches and edges of yards.

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## "The Hunter and the Philosopher"

Once upon a time there was a hunter who spent his days tracking the wide prairies with his gun and dog. Often a small boy would beg to trot along. One day when they wandered far out on the land they spied a small rise pocked with gopher holes. Quietly, they watched as a small, striped gopher nervously darted from its den to the cover of the matted grass. Soon it reappeared with fattened, bulging cheeks and vanished deep into its hole.

"Smart little critters, those gophers," the hunter mused. "They have everything figured out. They build their villages near a patch of grain and close by a creek. They stay away from willows or alder clumps where owls or hawks nest and rocks where snakes hide. They put their homes in a sheltered, southwest slope of a knoll where the sun keeps their dens warm and cozy. In winter, blizzards that pound the north and west leave light drifts of powdery snow on their town. When they dig their dens they slant the runways steeply down and then back up to a dry ledge. That's where they lie - close to the sod and roots, out of the wind, warmed by the sun, near food and water, and safe from enemies."

"Is our town built on a southwest slope?" the boy asked thoughtfully.

"No," said the hunter, "our town slopes down to the north, in the teeth of bitter winter winds which are as cold as a frosty gun barrel." His mouth turned down in a frown. "When we build a mill, we put it where the summer breezes catch its smoke and blow it across our roofs and into our open windows!"

"At least our town is near the river," the boy suggested.

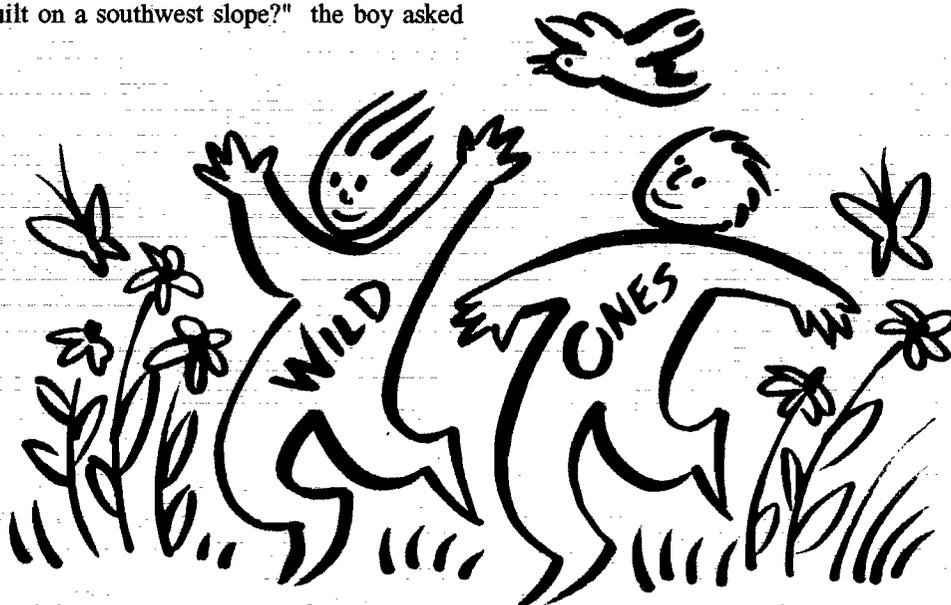
"Yes," replied the hunter, "but we build our homes on the low, flat land inside the river bend. Each spring when snow melts and the river swells, water floods every cellar in our town."

"Gophers would plan better than that," the boy decided.

"Yes," exclaimed the hunter, "a gopher would be smarter."

"When gophers plan their homes and towns," the boy philosophized, "they seem to do better than people."

"Yes," the hunter pondered, "and so do most animals I know. Sometimes, I wonder why." - Author unknown



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## FOR CHILDREN

Watch for fun, facts, folklore, and activities in the next issue. Writer Judee Hansen, Designer Cathy Pawlowski and Illustrator Edie Emmenegger are all set with a special pages for children. Please join us for this new feature.



## Members travel to see three native yards and gather prairie seeds

For our September meeting, we visited three yards on the southwest side of Milwaukee County. The first was the home of Delene Hanson and Tom Ueberroth in Hales Corners. Delene and Tom have been working on their native landscape for about six years. They have eliminated a part of the lawn each year by fencing off an area and covering it with a thick layer of leaves in the fall. Parts of the yard where there were existing large trees are gradually being converted back to woodland. They have added diversity to the tree species by planting a blue ash, hackberry, Kentucky coffee tree, shagbark hickory, and swamp white oak.

A thicket of wild grape and brambles is right outside their den window and provides excellent bird watching during migration with many warblers searching for insects among the leaves. The sunny part of the front yard contains a prairie that has been planted at various times within the last two years. Many plants, such as asters and goldenrods, have come in on their own just by letting things "go wild."

The next stop was in Greendale at the home of former Wild Ones' President Luanne Thompson. Luanne got started about ten years ago with native plantings in her back yard. After equipment working in the area ruined part of her front lawn, she replaced it with a prairie, using seed from Wehr Nature Center. The result is a lovely prairie in a sea of mowed lawns! A walk through the prairie makes one realize the number of species that are actually there, and the diversity that one can achieve without needing acres of land. Luanne leaves most of the plants over the winter so birds can eat seeds, and cuts everything back the following spring. A shady front door area has woodland species.

Our last stop was at Mariette and Dave Nowak's, also in Greendale. Since the first 15 feet of the property belongs to the Village, Mariette and Dave left that in mowed grass and used rocks between the lawn and their prairie. The effect is one of planning and "neatness" which is a useful idea for those who think neighbors might object. Along with that, Mariette noted that at first she felt they should keep the prairie from being too tall, but now she feels the silphiums and other tall plants provide a nice accent to the landscape.

Moving around the house, we came upon a shady area where lots of beautiful white snake-root was in bloom.

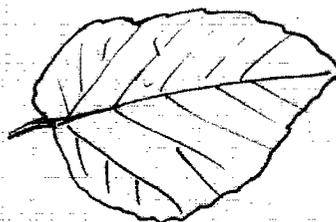
### Do you know?

Good landscaping design can save energy and make your home more comfortable. Here are a few tips:

You can save 10 - 50% of your summer energy costs by planting a deciduous tree on the south side of your home. Even vines planted on that side will have a cooling effect.

Prevailing summer winds are from the southwest - don't obstruct breezes from that direction with landscaping.

Evergreens on the northwest side act as a blanket against winter winds. - Jean Palm



A mini-field of wild sunflowers lines the back yard and provides bright color in late summer.

The Nowaks have used their sump pump drain as an area for wetland plants such as marsh marigold and Joe-Pye weed.

Gathering prairie plant seeds and digging asters was our delight in October. After hearing about how to treat our seeds, we formed several small groups and went out into the fields to gather our treasures. This is a wonderful way to increase diversity in our yards at no cost! - Delene Hansen and Kristin Summerfield

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**Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers, Ltd.** is a non-profit organization with a mission to educate and share information with members and community at the "plants-roots" level and to promote bio-diversity and environmentally sound practices. We are a diverse membership interested in natural landscaping using native species in developing plant communities.

*The Outside Story* is published bi-monthly by Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers, Ltd. Material for newsletters should be submitted by the first of the month preceding the next publication date to: Carol Chew, 8920 North Lake Drive, Bayside, WI53217. Send change of address to: Jean Palm, 625 Orchard Street, West Bend, WI53095. Advertising rates and back issues at \$1 each are available from: Deb Harwell, 8712 Spruce Road, River Hills, WI53217.



**From our mail . . .**

Dear Editor: I received the most recent newsletter and enjoyed it. However, I'd like to make some corrections about the trip to my place. I recommended working the top 2 - 3" of soil for site preparation, but the use of a rototiller would do that, whereas the plow and disk method works the soil too deep. "Whirled" milkweed should be "whorled." I suggest fanning out over the prairie because that doesn't compact soil - walking in the same path *does*. This was turned around and it makes an important difference. Hummingbirds are attracted to foxglove *penstemon* not foxglove - another difference. Lastly, the effigy mound is a dragonfly mound.

Also, I'll add another book to your butterfly resource list: *Butterflies East of the Great Plains* by Opler and Krizek. . .worth tracking down.

In current Waukesha Environmental Action League newsletter a portion of my letter in response to Richard Barloga's is printed. I have 17 years research on one plot of crown vetch and I'm still finding plants germinating from dormant seed (56 this year) 16 years after eliminating all mature plants. I'm suggesting that people who have "know-how" urge appropriate state authorities to place a *temporary* ban on the sale of the plant/seed until such time as we figure out how to get rid of it. I also suggest that at least one good possibility for *safe* elimination of crown vetch on *small* sites is a steam sterilizer as was used in past years by tobacco growers. It sterilizes soil to 2" to 3" - but would have to be tested. Anyone in Wild Ones interested? - Bob Ahrenhoerster *Editor's note: Thanks, Bob, for additional information and corrections. Myspell-checker and I take complete responsibility for any errors that crept into Kristin's excellent article. The WEAL newsletter is available from: Ellen Gennrich, editor, 2065 Donmar Lane, Brookfield, WI 53005.*

Dear Editor: Kevin Milaeger recommended your newsletter for information on meadow management. Could you please send a sample? The Morris Arboretum has about 20 acres of meadow patches. I am working on restoring some small areas near our entrance drive to make them more showy. We have problems with bittersweet, crabapples, and other woodies invading. - Monica Schultz, Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, The official arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

1993 Wild Ones Membership Dues

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$15 (includes meetings, plant digs, seed-gathering, six newsletters)

Make checks payable to: Wild Ones. Please pay by January 1, 1993.

Mail to: Jean Palm, 625 Orchard Street, West Bend, WI 53095

## Calendar

**North Milwaukee and Wehr Nature Center Chapters:** Saturday, November 14. Pat Armstrong is guest speaker.

Saturday, December 12. Annual holiday meeting. Program about Bayside School Natural Area.

Saturday, January 9. Deb Harwell tells about Indian Hill School project.

*Note: North Milwaukee Chapter meets at 9:30 a.m. at Schlitz Audubon Center, 1111 East Brown Deer Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53217. Program repeats at 1:30 p.m. at Wehr Nature Center, 9701 West College Ave., Franklin, WI 53132.*

Saturday, February 14. Natural Landscaping Seminar at University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. Mark your calendar for this informative all-day event.

**Northern Illinois Chapter:** Thursday, November 12 at 7 p.m. Building SRC, Room 1024A, College of Du Page, Twenty-second Street, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137. Holiday party/seed exchange-Call Jean Lyall to help. (708/887-0541)  
*Note: There is no meeting in December.*

**Green Bay Chapter:** Wednesday, November 11 at 7 p.m. Visitor Center, Heritage Hill State Park. Seed exchange. Call Sue Barry for details. (414/494-7811)



*Shooting Star Pods*

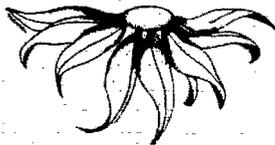
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