

The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

Vol. 7 No. 2

March - April 1994

One Dollar

A meadow is a meadow is a meadow - or is it?

Previously, I've expressed concern over the widely-used term "wildflower" (see *November - December 1991 issue*). The word blurs the distinction between native and non-native plants. This imprecise usage is confusing. People plant Queen Anne's lace and chicory, and believe they are helping perpetuate the natural heritage of the region. But these plants are naturalized, not native. In the meantime, true natives are lost at an ever-increasing rate because of a lack of understanding and knowledge of what needs protection and restoration.

Lately, I've noticed the term "meadow" appearing frequently, and I wonder whether its growing usage is likewise a cause for concern.

Meadow does not describe a native presettlement ecological community, consisting of specific plants and animals that evolved together over centuries. A meadow is often a disturbed site and usually includes naturalized as well as true native plants. (In the case of the infamous "meadow-in-a-can," actual problem species have even been included.) In the eastern United States, the term often refers to the herbaceous cover that represents an early successional stage on the way to a forest community. But there is no standard definition of what constitutes a meadow and no scientifically-agreed-upon list of plants.

There are many parallels between meadows and prairies. Like a prairie, a meadow is open and sunny. Typically, it has a mix of open and sunny. Typically, it has a mix of grasses and flowers that grow to about knee-height. Many prairie plants are found in meadows and small animals, birds and insects typical of prairies frequent meadows.

When I researched books for the Arboretum's ecology and restoration bibliography for children, I noticed the word meadow appearing frequently in children's literature. Here, it takes on an evocative quality, often referring to a secret place -- intimate, magical, filled with beauty and gentle surprises. In such a place, a child can have a personal relationship with nature, explore its mysteries and not be overwhelmed.

After that I started to notice how frequently "meadow" appears in natural landscaping books and in catalogs from native plant nurseries. Again, the word conjures up an inviting, even romantic place where one would enjoy spending time. In Wisconsin publication, the term often

used is "prairie meadow".

Here, then, is my dilemma. My purist side is concerned that by encouraging the planting of meadows, we obscure the true natural heritage of our area.

It is true that meadows often represent an early successional stage which, if given the right conditions, can evolve to a stage with native plants predominant. But meadow is not a Wisconsin native community, and most meadows include naturalized as well as native plants.

(continued on page 3)



L.H. Schumann

Conservation Congress meetings are April 11

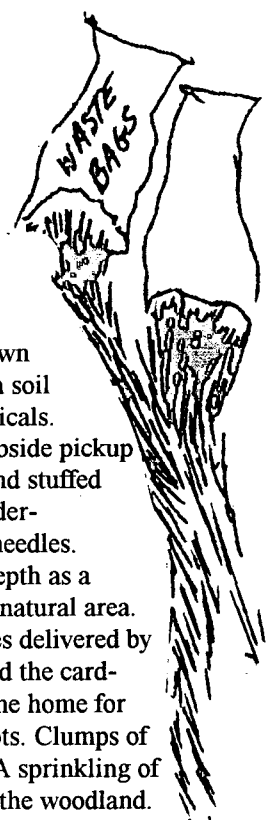
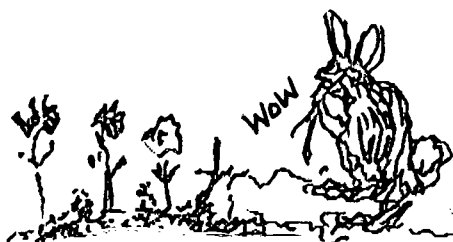
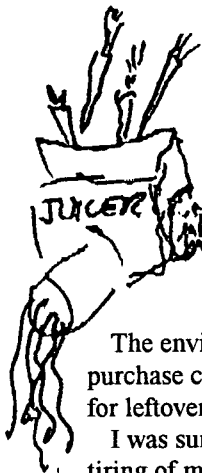
Clean water and other environmental issues are on the agenda for the Wisconsin Conservation Congress hearings set for Monday evening, April 11 at 7 p.m.

Meetings in Southeastern Wisconsin will be held in the following places: Sheboygan Falls High School (Sheboygan County), U.W. - Washington County Campus in West Bend (Washington County), American Legion Hall in Port Washington (Ozaukee County), Waukesha County Expo Center (Waukesha County), Nathan Hale High School in West Allis (Milwaukee County), Elkhorn Area Middle School (Walworth County), Union Grove High School (Racine County), and Central High School in Paddock Lake (Kenosha County).

The congress, through state-wide hearings, takes the concerns of citizens to the state level.



CHINQUAPIW OAK TWIG



Look around for creative yard recycling ideas

The environmentally-aware health food store where I purchase carrot juice seemed to understand when I asked for leftover buckets of pulp. "It's all yours," they smiled.

I was sure I could make good use of the pulp. Finally, tiring of making carrot cakes, I decided it could best be used as a mulch around newly planted native wildflowers. Not. It acted as bait for rabbits, attracting them to plants they might not have noticed otherwise. Embarrassed by the obvious, but undaunted, I haven't stopped trying to conserve and recycle.

A few spoons of dried blood, a bit of human hair and a glob of a sticky mess sold under the name "Tanglefoot" scares deer from delicate new trees and shrubs.

Cardboard boxes ready to be discarded at the grocery store are stacked in carts as they are unpacked--all set for a watchful shopper to easily rescue and push to the car trunk. In my case, once home, the flattened boxes went directly to work covering large areas of periwinkle plants

that were crowding out native plants. Brown cardboard underlayment blends better with soil if exposed, and doesn't contain print chemicals.

Expensive paper bags purchased for curbside pickup by a neighbor to hold yard waste were found stuffed with delicate pine needles. The brown underlayment disappeared under recycled pine needles. Rotting logs and moss added immediate depth as a border to a winding path through the new natural area.

A truckload of year-old composted leaves delivered by understanding city workers quickly covered the cardboard on either side of the path and became home for easy-to-plant wild geranium and violet roots. Clumps of blue lobelia were dropped into low areas. A sprinkling of sand and Solomon's seal seeds topped off the woodland.

Now, as spring approaches, anticipation increases to see what will sprout where periwinkle once smothered imagination. Gardening is great for leftovers and creative adventures. - Rochelle Whiteman

Recommended reading . . .

The Diversity of Life is a startlingly lyrical tour of life on our planet throughout its existence and how it came to be as it is, the result of millions of years of becoming. For the fifth time in five hundred million years, this fabulous planet is suffering extinctions occurring at a rate that meant a massive shifting of life forces. But this time neither a meteor shower nor a natural cataclysmic event is the cause. Humans are.

E.O. Wilson's poignant and endearing tribute seethes with memorable images, opening with a stormy night in the rainforest, one of few remaining original terrains, partial and fragmented and critically threatened. The crucial loss of the now dangling web of life as it collapses is gently presented with the delicate stroke of a genius, but the loss is terrifyingly clear.

The book is beautiful, a charted course by a brilliant visionary scientist gifted with poetry's kinesthetic and tactile usefulness. A tangible gift of hope to all who head, I can think of few books more worthy of reading or rereading. Peg Cadigan, Schlitz Audubon Center bookstore manager holds a Wednesday evening discussion group through winter. Currently the book under discussion is *Diversity of Life*. Call 414/352-2880.

Biodiversity, edited by E.O. Wilson, is a compilation of writings of 54 scientists from a variety of fields. In just four pages each and in understandable terms, each tells about important recent findings.

Native Wildflowers for Prairies & Meadows

SEEDS & PLANTS

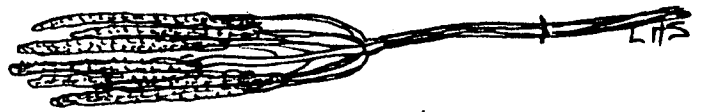
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Culver's-Root Pod

(Meadows, from page 1)

But what a shame not to take advantage of the positive image that the word has! Imagine how many potentially irate neighbors will be soothed when you tell them you are planting a meadow garden. What a lovely alternative to a straggly ol' prairie, with it's - horrors! - unruly grasses, and wild, raw essence. A meadow garden sounds manageable and appealing; nothing radical or offensive about it. No threat of buffalo bursting through a fence, just an occasional butterfly flitting by.

Despite our best efforts, landscaping with native plants is not yet the universal method of choice.

Is it necessary sometimes to utilize terms that tickle the imagination in order to popularize our cause? Or are we really hurting that cause in the long run and setting people up to stray off course? - Donna Thomas, *Newsleaf*, Friends of the UW Arboretum, used by permission.

Lorrie's Notes . . .

Bountiful urban deer destroying forest understory

Herds of "urban deer" are becoming an ever increasing problem for many communities throughout our country. In Milwaukee's restoration yards so many plants have been ravages that we've been obliged to cancel appointments with "Victory Garden" TV crews. In Winnetka, Illinois, and in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, we have reports of deer stripping wooden siding off houses. In New Jersey, a single hunter is allowed to kill 20 deer each year. A Pennsylvania deer biologist suggests that governments should temporarily condemn private land for hunting on the grounds that owners are harboring a public nuisance. In southern Wisconsin, it's common practice to hang bags of pungent soap or human hair from branches of isolated young trees in lawns. People with thousands of dollars invested in landscaping are wrapping nursery stock in plastic netting. All of us who enjoy wildflowers and relic woodland islands of native trees and shrubs mourn the loss and are embittered by the cattle-yard appearance. Even a deerless decade in an Illinois forest preserve has not helped it recover. Only alien or weed species invaded while the researcher has declared that the land will probably never return to its original character.

With the loss of ground cover ground nesting birds are lost. With the loss of wildflowers, seeds and berries are lost which once provided a full pantry for migrating birds. With the loss of leaves to the browse height of seven feet, butterfly eggs and their larvae are destroyed. With the loss of diversity of plant life above ground, macroscopic and microscopic life below ground is depleted. One large, beautiful mammal is being allowed to destroy an entire interlocking and interdependent system of plant and animal life. And in the end, that protected species is destroying its own foundation of life! In response to the public outcry, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has belately appointed a Task Force to educate and advise the public on the most humane and efficient method of culling herds of deer. Twenty-five people representing different interests and philosophies have been selected to meet once a month, read their homework, and after a final meeting in June, go home and educate their constituents. I will be reporting on these meeting for *The Outside Story* and the Citizens' Natural Resources Association, Inc. of Wisconsin. - Lorrie Otto

Wisconsin residents: stop a bad idea before it becomes law

Right now the Wisconsin's pesticide registry is free, but Senator Margaret Farrow (R-Elm Grove) wants to introduce a bill to make citizens pay \$1 for each address they list after the first six. Why should victims have to pay a fine simply to get information on poisons sprayed near their homes? The burden belongs on those dumping poisons into our environment! Contact Margaret Farrow and your state Senator and Representative to tell them what you think of their proposal. Most effective is to call or write their office directly, but your may also leave a message on the toll-free hotline (1-800-362-9472.) The legislative session ends March 25 and Sen. Farrow hopes to get her proposal passed by then.

For more information call Lori Schwingshagl at Citizens for a Better Environment (414/271-7280.)

KETTLE MORaine

NATURAL LANDSCAPING

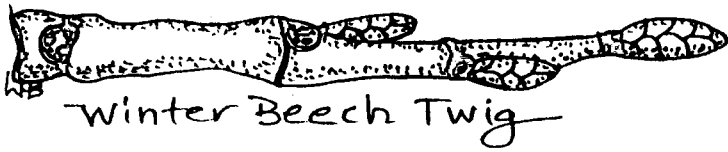


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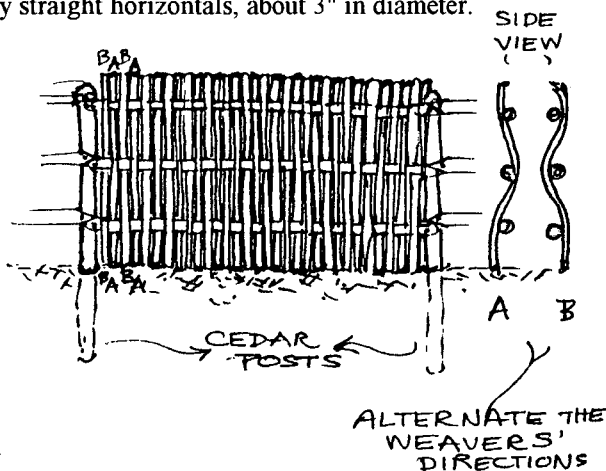
Winter Beech Twig

Wildcare . . .

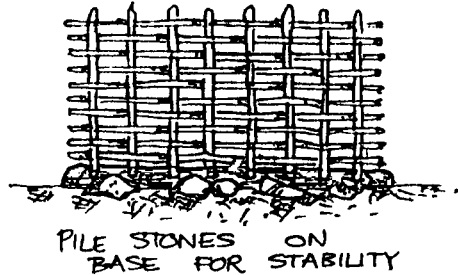
MARCH: LAST CHANCE (maybe) for in-depth reading of natural yard topics. The really scientific-looking books in our local library used to make me feel guilty or frustrated with terms that are too technical. Then librarians started to combine young peoples' non-fiction with adults'. Now when an adult book prods me to investigate names of flower parts, I check out a children's book on the topic and it often speeds my understanding. Many of the young peoples' books are extremely well done, and more up-to-date scientifically than older books in the adult category. Librarians appreciate input on the value of particularly good books, too.

. . . **VERNAL POND** was a term that popped into a conversation I had recently. . . and was I at a loss! When I checked I realized that many people may actually have one & may even regard it as a problem when the opposite is really true. Ann Downer's book, *Spring Pool: A Guide to the Ecology of Temporary Ponds*, is a great introduction to these really special eco-systems. If you have recently cut down a large tree or two, the low area nearby may "become" one. The chapter on "Keeping a Spring Pool Diary" really sets those planning wheels spinning. . . Of course, identifying salamanders and other creatures that depend on such areas will be an interesting part of the process. . .

APRIL: SPRING BUSY SEASON can be eased with some thoughtful planning. . . If your natural area needs a bit of structure for shelter or to look purposeful, consider a section or two of wattle fence. Find a few pictures to determine its appropriateness to your home's style. It will be more natural if it meanders a bit & all panel need not even be the same length or width. Some existing fence posts & supple one-inch branches from dogwood or whatever the neighbors are pruning, may make it quite an inexpensive project. Labor costs may be less than expected, too because your whole family may decide to get involved when they see how much fun it is to weave in and out! Version 1 needs three fairly straight horizontals, about 3" in diameter.



Version 2 starts with a split log laid on the ground, with holes drilled about 6" to 12" apart. Verticals will need to have 2" to 3" diameters from more critter-protection. A three-foot height is quite workable.



Fresh, "green" wood is best for the weavers, but you may prefer seasoned wood for the others (less shrinkage.) You might need to replace a few of the weavers if they loosen or use a few galvanized nails here and there. Late last fall, when I couldn't bring myself to compost the almost horizontal stalks of browning asters, I nipped them off at the ground and wove them into my fence in a few spaces. They are still there just barely poking their seedheads through our late winter snowbank. I'm going to have to do that every year from now on. . .

MARK OFF an easily watered, visible-from-the-kitchen spot in your larger wild area for direct seeding of collected seeds of forbs (wildflowers) & grasses. - Barb Glassel

Schools need plants and planting partners

Edge of woodland or prairie plants are needed for various school projects. If you have any extra plants to contribute, or would like to be a partner with an elementary student and help develop a school natural area site, please call Rochelle Whiteman at 414/351-2291.



American Hazelnut Twig

The Inside Story

GOLDENSEAL

(*Hydrastis canadensis*)

Buttercup Family

Other Names: Yellow Puccoon, Orangeroot, Eyebalm, Indian Tumeric, Ground Raspberry, Yellow Indian Paint, Jaundice Root, Ohio Curcuma, Warnera, and Eye Root.

Habitat: Rich woods.

Description: A single, large, wrinkled basal leaf rises from a yellow underground stem. The stalk is hairy with a solitary flower above two 5-lobed stem leaves. The flower is about 1/2 in. wide, composed entirely of numerous, greenish-white stamens. The leaves can be up to 4 in. wide at flowering time, up to 10 in. wide later. They are toothed, prominently veined. The basal leaf is similar to the stem leaves but long-stalked. The fruit is a red berry.

Height: 1 - 1-1/4 ft.

Flowering: April to May

Comments: The root was used extensively as a natural dye by the Indians. If the root was mixed with fat, it was useful as an insect repellent. Goldenseal was first introduced into England in 1760 under the name of Warnera, after a man named Richard Warner. Ninety years ago it was plentiful in its wild haunts and sold for 8¢ per lb., but as its supply diminished, not only from over-collection, but from the forests in the central U.S. being destroyed, the price rose in proportion and is now almost prohibitive.

Medicinal Use: An early herb doctor commented, "Goldenseal is one of the most wonderful remedies in the entire herb kingdom. When it is considered all that can be accomplished by its use, and what it actually will do, it does seem like a real cure-all."

There is such a thing as too much of a good thing, and people got so much good out of the Goldenseal they nearly caused its extinction. The root has been collected for centuries for its medicinal purposes, having been used by American Indians and pioneers as a laxative, a tonic, an astringent, and a stimulant. A salve made from



the root was used as an antiseptic for skin sores and to heal external wounds. A powder was used to treat inflammation of the throat and eyes, plus mouth ulcers. A drug, called hydrastine, was made from this plant and used to treat malaria. The plant is still widely used today in many herbal preparations.

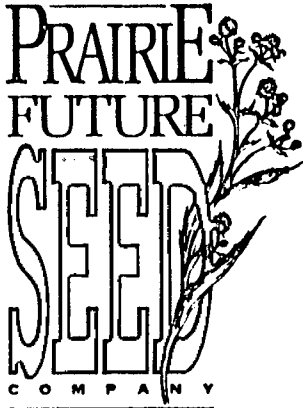
Goldenseal was at one time used by heroin addicts. When the plant was eaten, certain chemicals it contains masked the presence of heroin or morphine in urine tests. Because of this, new detection tests were devised.

Name Origin: The Genus Name, *Hydrastis* (*Hy-dras'tis*), is derived from two Greek words, signifying


"water" and "to accomplish," – probably given to the plant because of its effect on the mucous membranes.

The Species Name, *canadensis* (*kan-a-den'sis*), means "from Canada."

Author's Note: I was introduced to the virtues of this plant while reading an old herbal many years ago. Since that time, it has always been a source of mystery and intrigue to me. It used to be found in abundance in our eastern forests, including Wisconsin. It generally is found in the same habitat as Ginseng (most likely a north-facing hill). I was able to obtain some Goldenseal plants several years ago from a grower in Ohio. They have done very well on our "north-facing" hill, along the Mullet River. However, it took me 15 years to obtain a good picture of Goldenseal, in bloom, for my slide collection. A beautiful specimen would be about ready to blossom but, alas, when I returned with my camera and tripod to snap that long-awaited picture, it had been eaten! The red berry that forms after the flower has bloomed, rarely lasts more than a few days. I don't think deer are color-blind, because they have no trouble selecting the most colorful plants for their dining pleasure. Goldenseal's virtues have been known and appreciated for hundreds of years. I feel honored to reacquaint you with this delicate woodland plant.



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**Green Bay Chapter
selects new officers**

Charles Muehlethaler is the new president of the Green Bay Natural Landscaping Club. Keith Fawcett is vice president and Kathy Meyer, secretary/treasurer. Programs for 1994 include: March - natural landscaping program; May - wild-flower rescue; June - members' woodland projects; July - visit prairie; August - members' prairie projects; September - seed gathering; November - seed exchange.

Branch out with new ideas

What can you do with yard waste besides chopping and shredding it? A solution came to mind while cutting out dead honeysuckle as I noticed that some branches seemed to form their own sculptural configurations. An investment in a ball of baling twine produced an abstract form which resembles a tee-pee and a bison "grazing" in my prairie garden. ("With a few seeds, 'Chea Buffalo!' one viewer exclaimed. "Neat Volkswagon!" was another comment.) Birds find these artistic attempts great perching places.

Another use for long sticks and branches is creating giant outdoor dried arrangements. Place them along with tall, dried prairie flowers into a barrel or other large container and display in the corner of your yard.

All those really small sticks can be used as a deer barrier to encircle those small, defenseless and expensive prairie plants. These are just a few ideas that are more fun than hauling. - Mary Ann Kniep

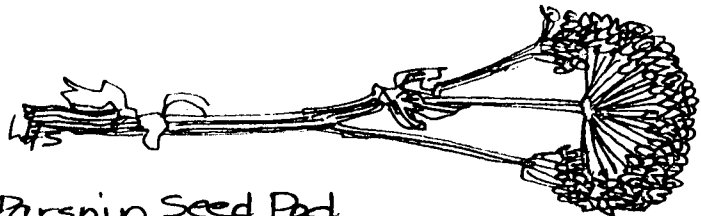
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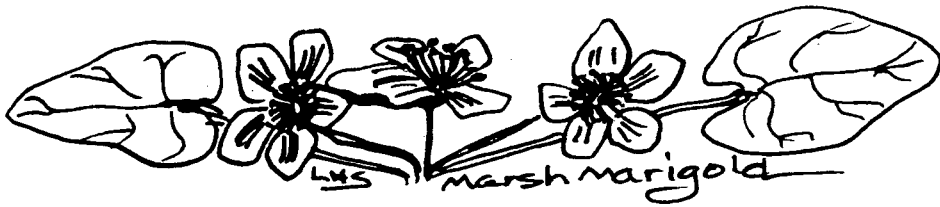
Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers, Ltd. is a non-profit organization with a mission to educate and share information with members and community at the "plants-roots" level and to promote biodiversity and environmentally sound practices. We are a diverse membership interested in natural landscaping using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

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Cow-Parsnip Seed Pod



Mailbox

Dear Ms. Chew: I look forward to receiving every issue of The Outside Story, both for the terrific tips in every copy and to keep up with many of the wonderful people active in the Wild Ones. I'm looking forward to seeing Neil Diboll here at our facility in a few weeks, and I've corresponded with Lorrie Otto, Bret Rappaport and David Kopitzke over the years. It's really gratifying and exciting to see the Wild Ones grow.

One very important reminder included in your most recent newsletter is somewhat weak in the reality arena. I wanted to point that out to you. The piece about Saving Dead Wood is extremely important and even the Federal agencies have responded with the nationwide Animal Inn campaign to save snags and dead wood. The very best scientific evaluation of the importance of dead wood may be in Jack Ward Thomas' classic "Wildlife Habitats in Managed Forests-- the Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington."

The last two sentences contain some inaccuracies-- swifts and purple martins are very rarely snag nesters now. Our eastern swifts and purple martins were snag nesters but prefer human constructed nest sites. The magazines of the Purple Martin Conservation Association recently ran an article that documented one case of a martin using a natural snag-- the first reported in the United States in decades. Also, both swifts and martins are not likely to eat many mosquitoes. Most inland mosquito species are much more active at dawn and dusk-- time periods when swifts, and definitely martins, are rather inactive. A few other species of swallow are cavity nesters-- tree swallows in the east and violet-greens in the Western U.S. use snags as those in the west, but even

out west, they prefer man-made structures such as silos or nest boxes. Other owls, screech and saw-whet, do use nest boxes and snags readily. And the ivory-billed woodpecker is extinct-- at least in the U.S. It will soon be proclaimed so by the Fish and Wildlife Service. It was last observed reliably in the mid-50s. Pileated woodpeckers, however, almost as large and relatively common, will use those snags.

I wasn't sure about the link between saving snags and kicking the pesticide habit. It just didn't seem to fit-- perhaps more of an explanation is needed.

Keep this wonderful newsletter going. We are attempting to keep our brand new Home and Habitat newsletter going as we know our 12,600 habitat program participants want to hear from us. - Craig Tufts, Chief Naturalist and Manager, Backyard Wildlife Habitat Programs, National Wildlife Federation
(Editor's note: Learn more about the Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program and their new publication, Home & Habitat, by contacting the National Wildlife Federation, 1400 Sixteenth Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-2266 202/797-6800)

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1994 Wild Ones Membership

I'm interested in becoming a member of Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers, Ltd.. The nearest chapter location is: Milwaukee (Schlitz Audubon Center), Milwaukee (Wehr Nature Center), Green Bay, Madison, Northern Illinois (Circle, please).

There is no chapter in my area, but I'm interested in chapter information.

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Skunk Cabbage

Calendar

Schlitz Audubon Center & Wehr Nature Center Chapters: (Note the same program is given at Schlitz Audubon Center, 1111 E. Brown Deer Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53217 at 9:30 a.m. and Wehr Nature Center, 9701 W. College Ave., Franklin, WI 53132 at 1:30 p.m.)

Saturday, March 12: Michael Yanny of Johnson Nursery will give us some good selection and propagation tips about which woody plants are best to use to replace all the honeysuckle and buckthorn we're eradicating. Expect an entertaining and informative talk.

Saturday, April 9: Ruth Stein will be with us to share her natural landscaping interests, particularly in creating wildlife habitat. She has developed prairie, woodland, and herb gardens.

Saturday, May 14: Plant sale or annual dig? It all depends, on available sites.

Green Bay Chapter: Call Kathy Meyer (414/434-6309) for current information about upcoming programs. Details of the March meeting will be mailed to members.

Wednesday, May 11, 6 - 8:30 p.m. SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK at UW-Green Bay Cofrin Arboretum. Call 414/465-2102 to register. The fee is \$3 for this evening tour.

Northern Illinois Chapter: (Meetings are held at College of DuPage, 22nd Street, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137.)

Thursday, March 17 at 7 p.m. (Building K, Room 157) AQUATIC GARDENING IN THE 90S. Gary Wittstock from Aquascapes will talk about construction techniques for a back yard pond plus plants and animals you can enjoy in your wetland.

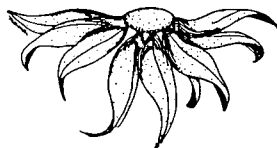
Thursday, April 21 at 7 p.m. (Building M, Room 165A & G) ON BEING ORGANIC is Jan Smith's topic. She will tell us how to garden organically and why it's such a good idea.

Thursday, May 19 at 7 p.m. (Building SRC, Room 1046 in cafeteria) Judy Perkins will present a program on WETLANDS FOR WILDLIFE and what you can expect if you add a pond or wetland to your yard.

Thursday, June 9 at 7 p.m. (Building K, Room 157) Share the fun as we learn to cook wild edibles with Pat and Vicki at this potluck party!

"Going Wild: Using Native Plants to Solve Landscaping Problems" is the theme of a symposium to be held at Jarrett Prairie Center in Byron, Illinois on Saturday, March 5, 1994. Call 815/234-8535 for details.

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The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

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