

The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

Vol. 7 No. 3

May - June 1994

One Dollar

Smile for the camera!

If you are planning on starting a major new project in your yard this spring, or are going to add to your existing landscaping, dust off your camera along with your gardening tools. Chronicling your project with photos can be a very important tool for your own project, as well as a source of inspiration and education for others who may be interested in natural yards. Pictures are more dependable than memory when it comes to remembering aspects of your yard from year to year.

They can be studied to determine areas that need improving or areas that were extremely successful. It's also fun to "fondly" recall all the hard work that went into your project.

The other advantage of such a record is the possible use of photos and slides in presentations or albums that can be shared with other groups eager to learn about natural landscaping. One of the best tools in gaining acceptance for natural ways of gardening is by educating and exposing others to the beauties we already enjoy. Whether it's a local garden club or Girl Scouts, we can spread the word of the joys and ecological advantages of natural landscaping techniques. If you don't think you would like to "go public" personally, there are other who could benefit from the use of your photos.

The Wild Ones would like to create a library of just such slides to provide a resource for any member who may be asked to do such a presentation. If you already have slides of your native yard, particular native species, or of yourself creating your masterpiece,

(Photos, page 3)

Wild bogs and wild gardens: Improving the soil and caring for the environment

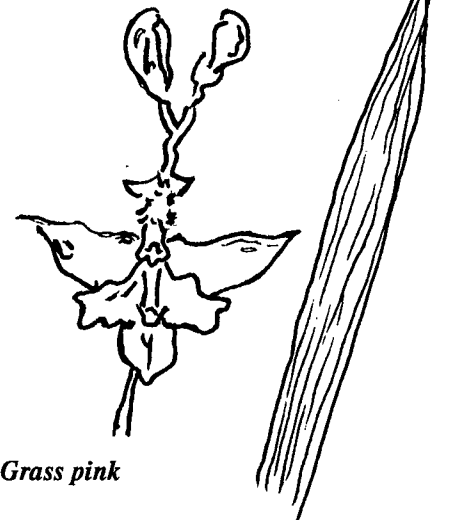
So you've decided to change that patch of grass beside the walk to a patch of prairie phlox and you know the first step is some serious soil improvement. Despite your best efforts, there just isn't enough homemade compost to do the job, so what are you going to buy? In our efforts to heal our own piece of earth, we may also want to avoid damaging unseen environments: *primum non nocere!* (First, do no harm.) Ecologically speaking, the best organic matter is produced from local plant waste: leaves and clippings, weeds agricultural by-products like cranberry skins and pulp or spent mushroom compost, cow and duck manure and woodchips. There are three advantages to the environment in using locally produced compost: hauling by truck is reduced, waste is not added to overburdened landfills, and plants are used that would have been removed from their site anyway.

Peat, a popular soil conditioner, is used by the horticultural industry to grow potted plants and make packaged soil mixtures, and sold by garden stores to home gardeners. Sometimes the word "peat" is used for locally made compost, especially fully rotted tree stumps, branches and wood chips, which make superior soil conditioner. Accurately used, however, the terms "peat" or "peat moss" mean partially decomposed sphagnum moss. It is rich in calcium and other minerals, it's acidic, which helps moderate our alkaline soils, it absorbs many times its weight in water, and it has antibiotic properties

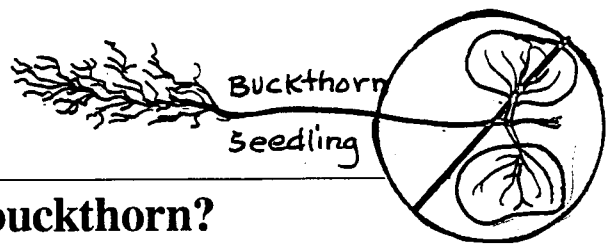
which help keep seedlings and greenhouse plants disease-free, but its use has some disadvantages for the larger environment.

Peat is formed in bogs from generations of sphagnum mosses and the specialized plants that coexist with the mosses. In a healthy bog, the plant matter produced each year exceeds the amount that decays, and the extra matter forms a layer that pushes earlier layers ever deeper into the water, forming a thick mat that supports each succeeding generation of plants. Isolated from groundwater, with decay arrested by an acidic environment without oxygen, peat is plants on their way to becoming coal! The plants growing atop the floating mat of vegetation include pitcher plants (*Sarracenia*) and sundews (*Drosera*), especially adapted to get nutrients from animal protein instead of soil. Grass pink (*Calopogon tuberosus*) and other orchids display

(Peat moss, page 4)



Grass pink



Wondering how to effectively eliminate buckthorn?

During the last year or so I have frequently gotten into discussions with other Wild Ones members on the best way to get rid of buckthorn. Having fought it intensively for the past three years on about 20 acres of property, I've gained a lot of practical experience in this task.

I don't know if it's necessary to explain to anyone in Wild Ones why we want to eradicate this thorny but attractive tree, but if anyone is uncertain, take a walk through some of the lovely wooded areas of southeastern Wisconsin where it has taken hold. You'll see large areas of woods where the only new woody growth under 10 feet is buckthorn. It grows where it's wet or dry, sunny or shady and in most types of soil.

The best way by far to remove buckthorn is to pull it up by its roots. Seedlings up to two or even three feet tall will frequently pull relatively easily, so try this first. If young trees are too big to be pulled by hand, some can be pulled out using a garden tractor and chains. We have even pulled fairly large trees out using a larger farm tractor. However, this is a difficult task and frequently

impractical, so that brings us to the **second method - Roundup.**

Now I know many of you will object to using any type of chemical to control problem plants, but when it comes to buckthorn, I think there is little question that the environment is better off with the judicious use of this herbicide rather than leaving the buckthorn go unchecked. Roundup disappears from the site where it is applied within a very short time and does not have any long-lasting affects.

If you have large buckthorn trees, cut them down and paint the stump with undiluted Roundup (the strength normally supplied by the garden stores.) This must be done during the trees' growing season. If you cut off multiple branches or trunks, each one must be painted. I use a vegetable brush for painting; its stiffness works well.

Particularly tough are areas where buckthorn has gotten a good start in the forest undergrowth and there are a lot of small trees ranging from two feet to ten feet. To do these areas I would suggest working in pairs, with one person clipping off young trees near the ground and the other painting newly clipped stumps. It's almost impossible to do this without two people. When one person works along a prohibitive amount of time is lost in setting down clippers and picking up the Roundup. Also, I find that if I clip more than one or two trees, I lose my place even in fairly open areas. Working as a pair, my husband and I do roughly 1000 square feet an hour.

Some don'ts for removing buckthorn. **Don't cut it down without treating the stump with Roundup.** Cutting seems to act as a growth stimulus. Particularly, **don't brush cut buckthorn.** We did this in a couple of areas on the theory that sooner or later it would die off. Well it may, but we'll run out of energy to cut it long before it runs out of energy to regenerate itself. It became impossible to pull in an area along our drive (the roots were so well established) or even "cut and paint" because it branched out so much. Our only recourse was to spray this entire small area. Of course, in doing so we killed all the wonderful native plants that were growing there, too. By the way, while everything else died with one spraying, it took two to remove all the buckthorn.

A second caution is don't cut down trees large enough to bear fruit after the middle of July. We found the following summer these trees (which we'd just let lie) covered underneath with small seedlings. Buckthorn grows well either from seed or by underground runners.

Good luck in your battle, and if anyone comes up with a good way to get rid of large areas of garlic mustard, please let me know! - Mary Lou Findley

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(Photos, from page 1)

we ask that you share a copy (slides, please) with us so we can begin our library as soon as possible. Delene Hansen of the Wehr Chapter has offered to be the project coordinator. IF YOU HAVE SLIDES YOU COULD SHARE, PLEASE SEND THEM TO: Delene Hansen, 10203 W. Ridge Rd., Hales Corners, WI 53130. Please include your name and any pertinent information about the images. Thanks in advance for any help that you can give towards this project. - Pat Brust

Schlitz Audubon Center seeking help with wildflower garden

Volunteer Coordinator Kris Kronenberg is looking for native plant experts to guide volunteers working on the Center's Green Tree Wildflower Garden. Anyone interested is asked to call her at 352-2880.

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Lorrie's Notes . . .

This month I want to share Jim French's affection for his woodland garden. His article is reprinted with permission of *Wildflower* where it appeared in Winter 1994 issue. -Lorrie Otto

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways

Elizabeth Barrett was not referring to wildflowers when she wrote these passionate words to Robert Browning. Yet, I chose to believe she would not object to my using them to mirror the feelings I have for my woodland wildflowers and their companions.

I cannot imagine now, a springtime without experiencing the pure bliss of meandering slowly through my woodland gardens, totally absorbed by the beauty and charm of these spring bloomers. I often pause on my log bench to soak up the ambience - to make it part of me. There are no disturbing thoughts, no nagging cares, no worrying about undone tasks, only the joy of being in a special place at the perfect time. The songbirds fill the balmy air with their sweet amorous songs and I am at peace with myself and the world around me.

How can words describe the loveliness of the brilliant white bloom of the bloodroot, the tiny golden anthers glowing in the spring sunshine and the large green leaves wrapped protectively around the stem. I gaze with love and awe at this exquisite creation treasuring it while I may for I know that a spring rainfall or gusty breeze will scatter its petals in an instant. The hepaticas - sparkle like gems above the unfurled leaves in dazzling shades of blue, pink or white. The tiny spring beauty wends its way among the leaf litter, lifting its delicate white, pink striped blooms to the warming sun. I adore the large flowered white trilliums forming breathtaking drifts through out the gardens. Its close relative, the red trillium, offers a striking contrast although tending to coyly hide its colourful bloom by nodding toward the ground. The bellworts, more vigorous in cultivation than in the wild, add further colour to the floral rainbow with their butter-yellow, pendulous flowers. Who could resist the charm of the sensual Virginia bluebells, at the first pink-budded and then a glorious blue?

I want my garden to look as natural as possible so I spend many hours in the woods observing the undisturbed landscape. My gardens have many of these features such as moss covered rocks, rotted stumps and other forest detritus. Similarly, I make liberal use of ferns, grasses and sedges. Of course, one can never duplicate nature but the overall effect is as close as one can hope to get.

(Woodlands, page 8)

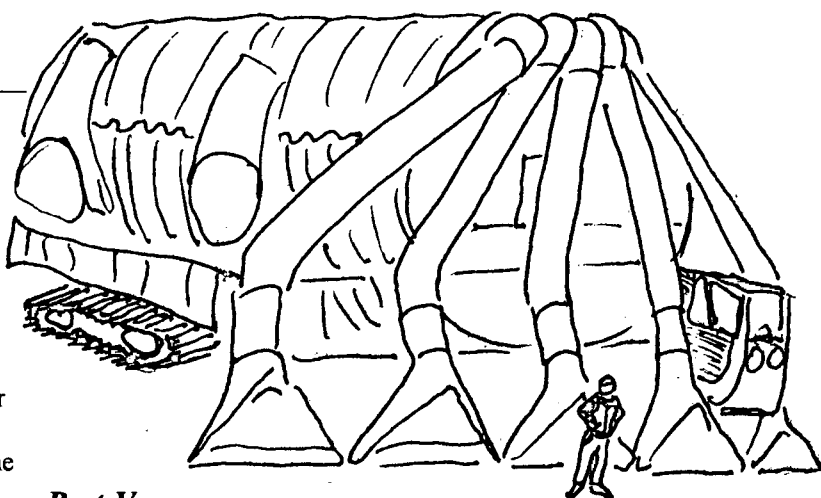


(Peat moss, from page 1)

their highly individualized cross-pollination strategies. Insect, bird, and animal life is less well understood, but similarly specialized and unusual. Many studies have been completed recently under the threat of accelerating wetland destruction.

In harvesting peat, the first step must be to drain the bog completely, releasing trapped water into circulation and destroying the filtering power of the bog. Draining may take as long as five years. In one method, the pitcher plants, sundews, sedges and sphagnum mosses are rototilled into the surface peats, and then, after drying, the top 1/2 inch is harvested by huge vacuums and then screened, bagged and marketed to garden centers. In another method, large machines strip the peat layer by layer and package it into plugs for burning ("peat poops"). In Maine, the Denbo Heath is being converted to electricity in a peat-burning power plant, which means the vacuums and video games of Boston are running on energy captured by mosses from Maine. The problem, of course, is that land is left that has been strip-mined. A bog is not a renewable resource. Restoration may stop erosion, but it will never give you another 6,000-year-old bog. It can take a century to build three inches of peat! To quote from a story about the destruction of Thorne Moors in England by a garden supply company: "A scientifically rich and inspiring moorland became a fragmented habitat with vulnerable wildlife. . . (and) is about to become a derelict industrial site."

The Canadian Peat Moss Association, which sees peat as a profit-making commodity, will argue that peat is plentiful, and peat mining preserves bogs from development. The Association cooperates with conservationists to "identify bogs that need saving" and claims that vegetation is restored to stripped areas. Canada does have 270 million acres of peatland. Realistically, however, the most accessible will be mined first, and roads built to those areas will open them to further destruction. A managed bog is like a tree farm - its diversity is gone. And water drained from any part of a widespread system affects what is left. There are peat bogs in Indiana, Michigan, and Minnesota, and one small family company in the



Peat Vacuum

*Charles W. Johnson, p. 188 sketch after **Bogs of the Northeast**, copyright 1985 by Charles W. Johnson by permission of the University Press of New England*

"It can take years for peatlands to recover from just one footprint" - Adirondack Life

Wausau area still harvests living sphagnum moss without machines, but many of our bogs are destroyed and most of our garden peat comes from Canada. Ninety percent of Canada's harvest is shipped to the USA.

Energy use, agriculture, and just plain suburban sprawl are bigger threats to peat bogs, here or in Canada, than the garden industry. And more peat is used in propagating and preparing ornamentals for sale - house plants, gift plants, spring plants, peat pots - than by home gardeners. Local peat suppliers are usually mining areas that were drained a generation ago and used for agriculture, although this is not always the case. Big suppliers find it more efficient to order bales by the semi-load. Bales labeled "Canadian Sphagnum Peat" are stockpiled north of Milwaukee. Locally made compost is still, unfortunately, more expensive than peat. Bags of compost are labeled as to content and place of origin. So while using peat is probably no worse for the environment than using your dryer, you can still ask a few questions. If you set out to improve your local soil, you might want to think globally, by choosing an alternative that doesn't deplete a non-renewable natural resource and destroy a wild ecosystem. - Wendy Walcott (*Bogs of the Northwest* by Charles W. Johnson from University Press of New England, 1985, is a reference. Various mixes of local compost may be obtained from Certified Products in New Berlin, Kinworks in Kenosha, and Liesner, among others. Bayside Garden Center carries it. My thanks to all these businesses for the help in preparing this article.)



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by Janice Stiefel

The Inside Story

WILD BLACK CHERRY

(*Prunus serotina*)

Family: Rosaceae (Rose)

Other Names: Virginian Prune, Cabinet Cherry, Rum Cherry, Whiskey Cherry, and Wild Cherry.

Habitat: Dry woods and fence rows.

Description: A small to large tree whose mature trunk has a rough, dark outer bark, often exposing red-brown underbark where cracked. Reddish bark is characteristic of smaller branches. The bark is marked with short horizontal lines. Leaves are 2-6 in. long, narrow and blunt-toothed. They nearly always have a midrib and are prominently fringed beneath with white to brown hair. Only *Prunus serotina*, *Prunus virginiana* (Choke) and *Prunus padus* (European) have white blossoms and fruits in **long** clusters with spur branches lacking. The buds are less than 3/16 in., hairless; bud scales are pointed.

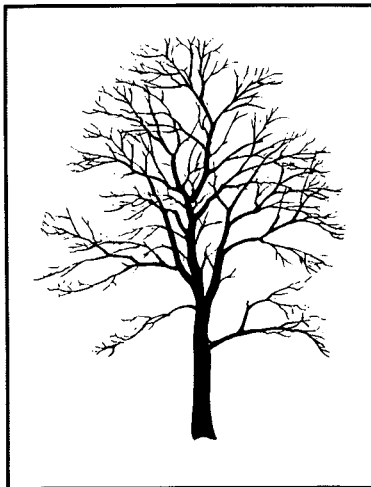
Height: 60-80 ft.

Flowering: May to June

Comments: This is one of the largest species of cherry trees and is of value for lumber and as food for humans and wildlife. The wood is hard and close-grained, making it ideal for furniture and interior finishing. In 1748, botanist and student of Linnaeus, Peter Kalm, wrote, "The wood of the Wild Black Cherry tree is very good and looks exceedingly well; it has a yellow colour, and the older the furniture is, which is made of it, the better it looks. But it is already scarce, for people cut it everywhere without replanting. . . We lodged with a gunsmith. . . The best and most expensive stocks for his muskets were made of Wild Black Cherry, and next to these he valued most those of Red Maple. They scarcely use any other wood for this purpose."

The cherries are bitter but are often used for jelly. The bark has been used as a flavoring. Its fruits are consumed by a great number of songbirds, Ruffed and Sharp-tail Grouse, Prairie Chickens, Bobwhites, Pheasants, Raccoons, Black Bears, Red Foxes, Whitetail Deer, Cottontail Rabbits, and Gray Squirrels. The butterflies, moths and miscellaneous insects using it as a host plant are innumerable. (Now I understand why the cherries never make it to maturity and, in some cases, the green cherries don't appear either.) Undoubtedly, there are species of insects and animals using this tree that have yet to be identified and documented.

Fresh Wild Black Cherry leaves are toxic to animals, particularly when wilting, for it is then that they contain the largest amount of cyanide. The berries are not poisonous but eating large amount at one time can be dangerous.



Medicinal Use: In 1785 it was reported that an infusion or tincture of the inner bark of Wild Black Cherry was successfully used in the treatment of jaundice. The fruit was infused in rum and brandy for the sake of giving them an agreeable flavor. In 1894, *Household Guide of Toronto* said, "Wild Cherry is good for general weakness, poor digestion, lack of appetite, nervousness and coughs. It is also considered an excellent remedy for the first stages of consumption or palpitation of the heart. The parts used in medicine are the berries and inner bark of the roots and branches. . ."

Today Wild Black Cherry is mainly used in cough medicine for its mild sedative properties and pleasant taste. It is no longer used medicinally, as more "effective" medicines have replaced it. The tree is currently listed in the U.S. Pharmacopæia as a pharmaceutical aid, a flavoring agent. It is a good vehicle for more potent, nasty-tasting drugs, but it has also been replaced in many medicines by saccharin and NutraSweet, which are sweeter, easier to use, and more consistent.

Name Origin: The Genus Name, *Prunus* (proo'nus), is from the Greek word, prounos, "an ancient name for the Plum Tree." The Species Name, *serotina* (ser-rot'i-na), means "late-ripening," in that the fruit does not ripen until late summer.

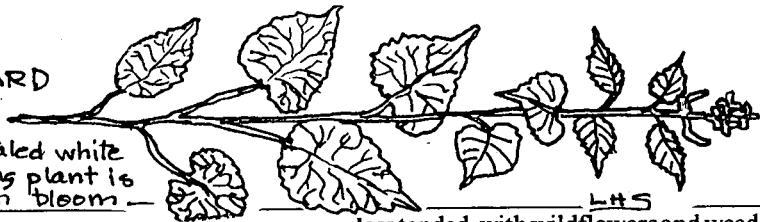
Author's Note: We have several of these trees which appeared naturally on our property north of Plymouth. Over the years, I have observed the many species of butterflies and moths that use them as a "host" plant for their caterpillars. From my records alone, this tree has been listed as a host for the following insects: Viceroy, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Red-Spotted Purple and Spring Azure butterflies; Linden Looper, Luna, Large Lace Border, Cecropia, White Furcula, and Fall Webworm moths. In addition, I have two mystery pupae waiting for the weather to warm up, so they can emerge and reveal their identity. They, too, dined on the Wild Black Cherry leaves in their caterpillar stage. As I organized my data from summer caterpillar research, I was very impressed by the role this, less than grand, tree plays in the propagation of our butterflies and moths. In fact, my husband and I were so impressed that we just bought two Wild Black Cherry trees for the forty acres of land we recently purchased in Door County. We noticed that this species was missing and wanted to make sure it was available for future generations of critters in that little corner of the world.

© 1994 Janice Stiefel



GARLIC MUSTARD ALERT!

4-petaled white
flowering plant is
1' to 2' in bloom



Bits and Pieces . . .

Greg Gaar was hailed as Johnny Appleseed when he voluntarily planted pine trees in his neighborhood in 1979. Now he is being fined nearly \$11,000 for trying to kill these same trees by the city of San Francisco which was alerted by neighbor complaints. Gaar now realizes that he mistakenly planted foreign trees which were throwing shade, debris, and harmful chemicals over native buttercups and lupine below. - *San Francisco Examiner*

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"Did you know that an hour of vigorous gardening burns 400-600 calories? That's as much as an hour of bicycling. So not only will you have a beautiful garden, but you won't look so bad yourself." - information from the back of a cereal box

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"Would the world come to an end if the last prairie white-fringed orchid vanished from the Wisconsin landscape? Probably not. But as more and more rare flora like the white-fringed orchid die out worldwide, those losses undermine the biological stability on which human life depends. That's an urgent argument for much more aggressive strategies to save species.

A new study gives lie to the notion that biological diversity doesn't matter much, as long as there are a few species left to carry on essential functions such as pollination and decomposition of waste.

In research on prairie tracts, scientists from the University of Minnesota and the University of Montreal found that the plots with the greatest diversity of plants were much more likely than those with fewer species to withstand severe drought, disease, insect infestations and other stresses. Tougher species apparently stepped up growth to compensate for the weakness of others.

Other scientists have found that environments especially rich in species are the ones best able to absorb carbon dioxide, which is one of the gases implicated in global warming.

As one researcher put it, diversity is 'nature's insurance policy against catastrophes.' - *The Milwaukee Journal*

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"On a July morning, about a dozen ... volunteers strode into Somme Prairie Grove, armed with saws, hatches and scythes. Two of them removed tall golden-rod, an invasive plant that tends to overtake some restoration sites. Others bent to the task of pulling exotic garlic mustard and white sweet clover. Inspired by this work, volunteer Jim Cutler composed the following couplet: 'Obscene in fetid clustered/ Defiant stood the garlic mustard.' - *Nature Conservancy*

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"The lawns of American cemeteries are immaculately maintained, nature kept firmly under human control. In contrast, English churchyards are often

less tended, with wildflowers and weeds always threatening to take over. I help tend a local churchyard in England, and I know that if I am too assiduous in uprooting weeds, the character of the place will be destroyed and there will be complaints." - Tony Walter, *Landscape*

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"Being close to nature may be a built-in emotional need, some scientists have proposed. Can humans be truly human and truly fulfilled in a world of glass and concrete set apart from nature?"

No, says a new biophilia hypothesis that scientists are interested in testing. "The term was coined in 1984 book of the same name by Dr. Edward O. Wilson, an evolutionary biologist.

As the book shows, there is some evidence in the propositions's favor, and it is true it has serious implications not only for urban dwellers but also for the natural world. For while biophilia is important to the human psyche, scientists who are investigating it say, the characteristic becomes fragile in an urban setting. Like many another genetically based trait, they say, whether it is fully expressed depends on learned responses; in this case, the degree to which people experience nature in their youth. Increasingly, it is being experienced by urban youths weakly or not at all, leading to indifference or even hostility to nature.

Adherents of the hypothesis fear that this indifference and dislike encourage a ballooning destruction and degradation of the natural world. The shrinkage of nature in turn...is gradually limiting opportunities to connect with a well-spring of psychological well-being." - *The New York Times*

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Continuing complaints of a Racine woman have lead to Wisconsin's first prosecution of a lawn care company for failure to provide notice of pesticide applications on neighbors' lawns. JoAnn Anderson describes herself as extremely sensitive to chemicals used to control weeds and insects. - *The Milwaukee Journal* (Related pesticide article appears on page 10.)

Wildflower Show 1994

June 5th, 1994

10am to 4pm

Milwaukee Public Museum

Special Slide Program

Unloved Plants: The Weeds

First Floor Lecture Hall

45 - 60 Minutes

1:30pm

Dr. Peter Salamun

Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Meet The Experts

All Day

Plant Sale

All Day

Plant Display & Photo Winners

All Day

Botanical Trivia

All Day

Treasure Hunt

10am - 3:30pm

Lobby - Browse the booths of the *Botanical Club of Wisconsin*, *DNR*, *Butterfly Gardening*, *Prairie Nursery*, *Chiwaukee Prairie People*, *The Nature Conservancy & Wildflower Photography*
Second Floor - Uihlein Hall, Meet *The Wild Ones*, *Prairie Enthusiasts* and learn of *Weeds (alien plants)* of Wisconsin.

Lobby - Four nurseries present beautiful selections to naturalize your landscape.

Second Floor - Uihlein Hall, A living guide book to Wisconsin's flora, and inspiration for your entry in next year's show.

Second Floor - Uihlein Hall, Are you "Botanically Correct?" Find out in this quick, fun self-test.

Pick up your FREE entry at the **Lobby** Botanical Club Booth, then go to the **Second Floor** to answer easy clues that may win you a **plant prize!**

Children's Activities

Button Making

All Day

Face Painting

All Day

Hands-on Fun

10am - 3pm

Storytelling

12:30pm

Film

3:00pm

Lobby - Design your very own botanical badge!

Lobby - Become a "Flower Child" - or put a butterfly on your nose.

Ground Floor - Wizard Wing, Activities include *Why Are Plants Pink?*, *Bee's Business & Seeds On The Move*.

Second Floor - Eastern Forest (Near Black Bears)

First Floor - Streets Nickleodeon

1994 Wildflower Photographic Competition

Calling all Wildflower Photographers!
The seventh annual wildflower photographic competition is underway.
Subject matter must be native or naturalized plants
found in Wisconsin.

CATEGORIES

Macro Photography

(Category I)

Extreme close-ups showing only part of a plant. Examples include the throat of a flower, texture of bark or venation of leaves. Such photos would not necessarily allow one to identify the type of plant. The images may be representational or abstract.

Plant Close-ups

(Category II)

Photos in which a portion or the entire plant fills the frame. These photos might show the entire flower or cluster of flowers, a twig with fruits or a whole plant in flower and would allow one to identify the plant.

Plants In The Landscape

(Category III)

Photos generally showing more than one plant such as a field of ox-eye daisies or a view inside a forest. If the focus is a single plant, it would be a shot showing the plant in its habitat. An example of this would be a lone tree standing in a field.

ENTRY RULES

Only color slides will be accepted. Each contestant is allowed up to three slides per category, or a maximum of nine if all categories are entered. Slides must be standard 35mm cardboard or plastic mounts suitable for use in a slide projector. You may crop or retouch the slides as you desire.

On the side from which you wish to have the slide viewed, PRINT (1) a title for the slide (2) category entered (if uncertain, preliminary judges will determine) and (3) a dot in the lower left corner. On the back of the slide print your name.

Slides should be placed in standard 35mm plastic slide sleeves, available at any camera shop. The sleeves may be folded and packaged with a piece of stiff cardboard in a standard business-size envelope. The museum is not responsible for lost or damaged entries. All entries will be returned.

PRIZES

The winning photos will be displayed at the seventh annual Wildflower Show. Seven cash awards will be presented for overall best of show, first prize in each category and second prize in each category.

ENTRY FEE

A non-refundable fee of \$2.00 per slide must accompany the entries. Please make checks payable to the Botanical Club of Wisconsin.

DEADLINE

Entries must be postmarked by Monday, May 16, 1994. You may hand deliver your entry to the museum's security desk in the front lobby (9am-5pm each day) or mail to:

WILDFLOWER SHOW 1994

Botany Section
Milwaukee Public Museum
800 West Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233

1994 WILDFLOWER PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Category(s) entered _____

Number of slides _____

Entry fee enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to:
Botanical Club of Wisconsin

Name _____

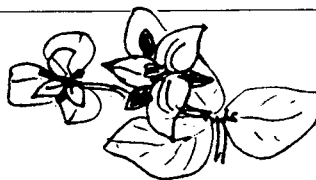
Address _____

City /State / Zip _____

Home phone _____ Business phone _____

☐ YES, Send me information about membership in the Botanical Club of Wisconsin

the FRONT FORTY



Now is a good time to begin . . .

If you don't know where or how to start your own natural, native landscaping project, *think small!* Start a project of just forty square feet in your front yard. Use native woodland, prairie and/or wetland plants appropriate your soil and light conditions. Create a flowing shape, whether it's roughly 5' x 8' or 4' x 10' or 7' diameter, etc. If you have a "problem" area, use it to create an inviting area for birds and butterflies - it may well become your favorite spot.

Keep a diary (and don't forget plan drawings and slides) of your "front forty". We'd love to keep up on your progress and learn about reactions from family, friends, neighbors, and wildlife.

Food for thought: "If every yard in a thousand home community had forty square feet of native habitat there would be 40,000 square feet saved for the environment." - Judy Crane

Note: For information containing design ideas, recommended native plants, and other helpful tips to begin your FRONT FORTY, send a long, self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Front Forty, P.O. Box 23576, Milwaukee, WI 53223-0576.

If you live within Milwaukee's city limits, we'd especially like to know your location so we can track how many wildflower yards are blooming in our urban area. Call 351-0644 and leave a message with your name, address, phone and brief description of your yard and date native landscaping was started.

New titles of interest at Schlitz Audubon Bookstore:

Hedgemaids and Fairy Candles - The Lives and Lore of North American Wildflowers (\$21.95) gives a well-researched and rich background on hundreds of beloved wildflowers. Highly recommended. This is a great gift book.

Pioneering with Wildflowers (\$12.95) by George D. Aiken is a 1933 classic back in print. It reveals secrets and techniques the author painstakingly developed to raise 250 species of native wildflowers. Most, but not all plants are appropriate to the upper Midwest. Remember the book was written before we knew the problems with purple loosestrife.

Groundwork - A Gardener's Ecology (\$18.95) Gardeners are in a good position to become the new environmentalists according to Roger Swain, author of *Groundwork*. By focusing on the foundations of gardening, he shows us how our most basic choices - what we choose to grow, when we water, whether we return nutrients to the soil, how we deal with residues - all have an impact on the environment.

Books listed above are available at Schlitz Audubon Center. Stop by or call 414/352-2880.



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Sharp-lobed
Hepatica

(Woodlands, from page 3)

I love to learn all I can about my plants so I have a sizeable library. In addition to the important information on general habitat preferences and propagation techniques, I'm fascinated by the folklore, medicinal uses and all the other interesting material that is available. A new book by Jack Sanders titled *Hedgemaids and Fairy Candles*, makes a wonderful read. My oldest book by Alice Lounsbery, was published in 1899. Her descriptions are delightful as I'm sure you would agree from this one example of Jack-in-the-pulpit: "Spring has hardly thrown her green mantle over her shoulder when the quaint preacher rises in his pulpit, and in language soft and solemn speaks to the rustling elves and spirit of the woodland".

I love the surprises which greet me every spring like the tiny bloodroot poking out from beneath a rock - the seed carried there perhaps by an ant

seeking the seed's sweet juice. Or, the lacy leafed Dutchman's breeches with its comical flowers blooming in a most unlikely location. I can only speculate how a seed or one of the tiny corms found their way to this odd spot but that is the joy of it! I have grown *Penstemon smalli* in my prairie garden for many years. It has attractive, long lasting mauve and white blooms growing to about 40 cm. In my readings, I noted that it sometimes grows on woodland edges so I moved a number of plants to such a location. The soil was considerably richer than the prairie and it received light, high shade. To my delight and amazement, my penstemons doubled in size and bloomed profusely if to say, "mow this is more like it, Jim!"

I recently came across a statement by Dr. Lyall Watson in his book *Supernature*. (For those who enjoy exploring, as Watson describes: 'those things that we understand as normal occurrences and those that are completely paranormal and defy explanation', his books are a must read.) He believes: "...there is a continuous communication not only between living things and their environment, but among all things living in that environment. An intricate web of interaction connects all life into one vast self maintaining system. Each part is related to every other part and we are all part of the whole..."

This appeals to me. If I understand him, it means that I am one with my gardens and all the elements that comprise them. Each rock, each tiny piece of moss are part of me and I of them. We are connected in a way I do not understand but I certainly feel it in my being. - Jim French of the *Canadian Wildflower Society*

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Weed Ordinance Workshop for community leaders held

A day-long meeting held recently at the North Shore Library attracted municipal administrators from 30 southeastern Wisconsin communities. Chicago Attorney Bret Rappaport outlined the history of weed laws and battles over them, as well as solutions. Don Vorpahl used slides to explain natural landscaping. Panel members Rebecca Rush, David Kopitzke, Carol Browning, M.D., Molly Murray, Marv Wolf, and Lorrie Otto gave a variety of examples of successful natural landscaping projects. Rochelle Whiteman, Carol Chew, Chris Reichert, Margo Fuchs, Jane Carpenter, Martyn Dibben, and Mark Feider were among those who planned the workshop. Support came from Wild Ones, Milwaukee Audubon, West Bend Mutual Insurance Company, Unitarian Church North, Wisconsin DNR and DOT, Prairie Nursery, and Schlitz Audubon Bookstore. Several future activities have been suggested.

Mequon residents take notice


If you are interested in natural landscaping, urge passage of the kinder, gentler, six-foot roadside maintenance policy proposed by Paul Krause (242-0560) and Bruce Duncan (375-1892). It is being reviewed by the Public Works Committee -- Dan Abendroth (242-6730) and Robert Ashmore, Jr. (243-9176) and a new appointee.

Mequon's current policy is to mow 8 feet from the road's edge or further if the operator feels it is necessary or up to 14 feet, if the landowner requests. This policy effectively denudes roadsides of all vegetation. City officials cite safety and snow removal as justification.

Call John Garms (241-3100) of Public Works for more information. Helpers are needed to inventory roadside vegetation.

Spring
Beauty



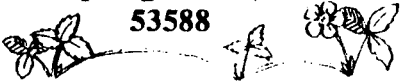


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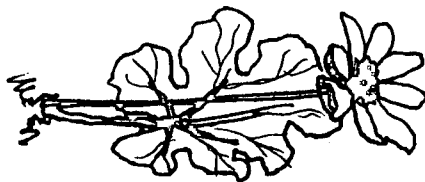
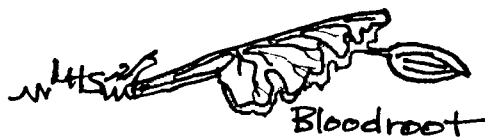
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Letter campaign planned to demand changes in state's pesticide laws

Several environmental organizations are coordinating a summer-long, statewide letter-writing campaign to the Governor and the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. We intend to flood their offices with letters demanding that our state's pesticide regulations be changed to protect us, not the lawn and chemical companies. **WATCH FOR INFORMATION ON WRITING LETTERS IN THE JULY/AUGUST ISSUE OF *THE OUTSIDE STORY*.** If you can help with mailing, phoning, or would like to make a donation to defray postage and printing, please call Citizens for a Better Environment, 414/271-7280.

To report a pesticide emergency, spill, or violation of the pesticide rule, call the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's 24-hour complaint line at 608/266-2295. Call this number if

you are on the advance notification registry and experience any problems with it (such as not receiving 12 hours advance notice, or not being told of the chemical to be applied.) For information on the pesticide rule and registry, call 608/266-LAWN.

The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection may soon make a minor modification to Wisconsin's pesticide rules. The change will allow municipalities the option of adopting ordinances requiring homeowners to post signs after landscape pesticide application. Such a sporadic approach will result in little or no protection of citizens from the hazards of lawn pesticides. The letter campaign mentioned above is intended to make the DATCP address real inadequacies in Wisconsin's pesticide regulations.

For further information, call Lori Schwingshagl at 414/271-7280.

Methods of propagating native shrubs and trees explained

It was a pleasure to have Michael Yanny inform us about growing and propagating native trees and shrubs at our March meeting. Collecting seeds can be tricky. For example, ripened witch hazel seed pods (*Hamamelis virginiana*) must be collected just before they crack open and disperse. Tip cuttings are easier in June when the top six to eight inches, including the growth tip, can be cut. Dust with rooting hormone and plant in an airy mix.

Plants such as gray dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*) that grow out by means of suckers can be dug out and divided at the roots. One of his favorites, Leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*) grows in moist woods and tolerates dense shade. Seeds must be collected about the first week in June, depending on weather conditions.

If you can keep squirrels and bluejays from the acorns of the Chinkapin Oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*), dig one-year-old seedlings. Prune 75 per cent of the root and replant. They will develop hair roots above the cutting making transplanting more successful.

A general rule is to plant seeds at a depth of 2 1/2 times seed diameter for those which germinate the first year. Add extra mulch to "second-year" emerging seeds, such as viburnums.

Propagating from seeds, cuttings, and division takes patience, but the gratification one gets from growing your own can't be matched. For greater success, plant many seeds so you're sure to have some plants. Select plants of different sizes and locate them in the way nature would mix and match. - Jan Koel

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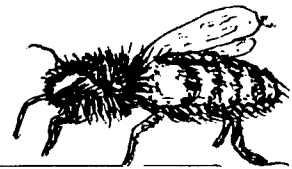
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Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers, Ltd. is a non-profit organization with a mission to educate and share information with members and community at the "plants-roots" level and to promote biodiversity and environmentally sound practices. We are a diverse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

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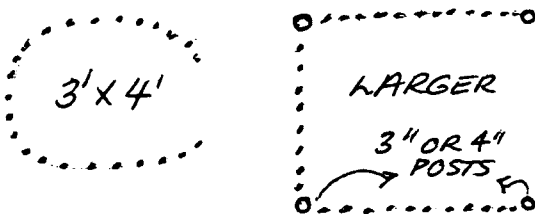


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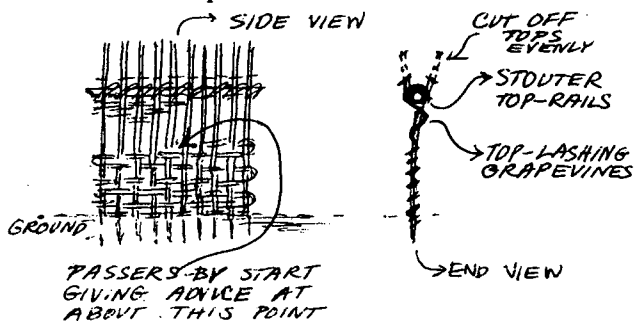
May: VEGETABLE GARDENS will blend better into natural yards when paths curve and wander, steppers are of native stone, and garden ornaments are field-trip found objects. Repeat flowers from your prairie to attract honeybees.

COMPOST ENCLOSURES can be created from on-site materials. Tom Cranley, a Madison area landscaper, was clearing part of a vacant lot for vegetables, when he realized the 1" ash saplings he was cutting would make good uprights for a compost area. The 6-foot lengths were pushed into the ground in a basic "C" shape, 6 to 8" apart. Then he started weaving horizontally, with lengths of grapevine pulled from nearby evergreens.

COMPOST ENCLOSURES



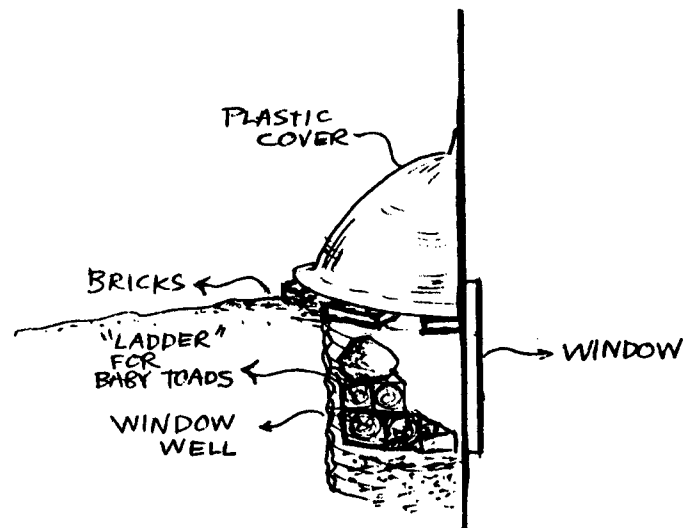
Larger branches were used to strengthen the very top, and then more grapevines were lashed over the top. Weavers & basket-makers will probably come up with interesting variations. If you want a gate, incorporate some cedar posts.



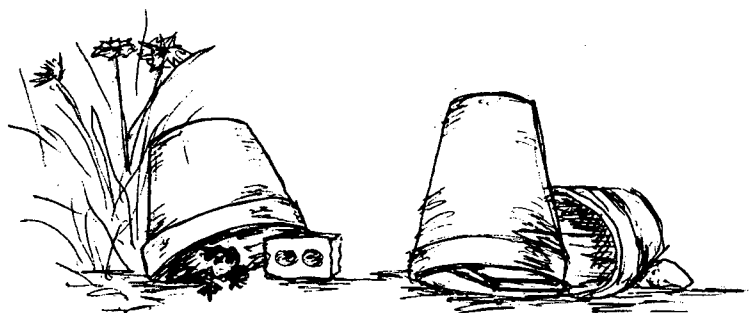
GROWERS & RETAILERS of native seeds & plants need to hear our reactions to their catalogs, labeling information, and product quality. Before you've forgotten sources, jot down your evaluations and pass them on. Some growers actively solicit photos for next year's catalog. Still ordering? Write, don't call them, at this busy time of year.

MEMORIAL DAY has become Visit-a Prairie Day for many of us. Once you associate that weekend with peak spring prairie bloom, you may begin to wish all cemeteries were like the one southwest of Milwaukee which is deliberately kept in its remnant prairie state.

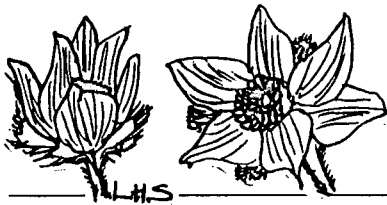
June: WINDOW WELLS seem to attract those highly desirable amphibians, toads. The adults usually don't have much trouble getting in and out. Pile up a few boards, bricks, or boulders, so the baby toads can get out. Plastic window well covers (needed to divert heavy rains), will still function if propped up on a half dozen bricks, to provide for toad traffic.



TOADS SEEK SHADE in clay pots turned on their sides, according to our grandparents. A '94 garden catalog features a special toad pot--a regular clay pot, with a special toad entrance formed on its lip!



HAVE YOU EVER made your own pots or plant containers? The April-May issue of *The Herb Companion* has an article on making "Rough, Tough Planters." The mix, called Hypertufa, consists of portland cement, vermiculite or perlite, sifted peat moss, and Fibermesh, and apparently can be cast in a variety of "natural" forms, such as in a tree cavity, maybe a shelf-fungus? If you try this and come up with a way to actually incorporate natural materials, we'd love to see photos. - Barb Glassel



Risque flower

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, May 14: PLANT SALES at Indian Hill School, River Hills and Wehr Nature Center. This time the Milwaukee Chapter will meet at the school (not Schlitz Audubon Center) which is located near I-43 on Brown Deer Road.

Saturday, June 11: HELP ME DAY. We'll meet to decide what yards to visit. Bring questions for problem-solving with Mandy Ploch.

Saturday, July 9: Carpooling to tour restorations. Come along to get lots of ideas for your own projects.

Green Bay Chapter: Call 414/434-6309 for more information.

Saturday, May 7: ANNUAL WILDFLOWER DIG AND PLANT RESCUE. Additional details will be sent to Green Bay Wild Ones members.

Wednesday, May 11, 6 - 8:30 p.m. SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK at UW-Green Bay Cofrin Arboretum. Call 414/465-2102 to register. Fee \$3.

Wednesday, June 8: We will meet at members' yards to see a variety of native landscaping projects.

Northern Illinois Chapter: (Building K, Room 157 College of DuPage, 22nd Street, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137.)

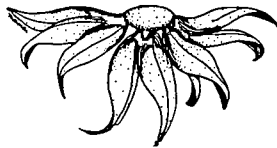
Thursday, May 19 at 7 p.m. (Building SRC, Room 1046 in cafeteria) Judy Perkins talks about WETLANDS FOR WILDLIFE and shows how to add a

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!



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The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

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