

The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

Vol. 8, No. 5

September - October 1995

One Dollar

Madison group gets new chapter going

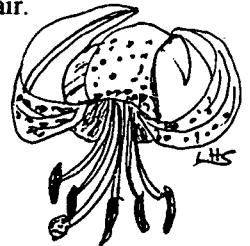
The Madison chapter recently elected their first officers. Laura J. Brown is the new president, Joe Powelka is vice president, Lorelei Allen is secretary, and Jan Kinar is treasurer. Tom Bernthal and Peggy Lison are in charge of plant rescue.

The group plans to meet at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum's McKay Center. More details of their program plans are listed in this issue.

First national officers selected

This summer marked the first meeting of the new national board for Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers, Ltd. The group gathered in August to elect their national officers. Bret Rappaport, a Chicago environmental attorney, was chosen as the new president. Mandy Ploch, president of the Milwaukee North chapter became the new vice president. Josh Skolnik, founder of the Rock River chapter in Illinois, will serve as secretary and Dorothy Boyer who has been serving as treasurer of the Milwaukee chapter will serve in that capacity with the national group. Judy Crane continues as membership chair.

The board discussed such topics as dues structure, copyright issues, and an annual recognition dinner. Rochelle and Paul Whiteman hosted the event at their Glendale, Wisconsin, home. A natural landscaping tour was held the next day.



Michigan
City

Here are tips for starting your prairie plants from fall seeds

Seed-gathering time is here. For new members who are gathering and exchanging native seeds for the first time, we're reprinting information to help you start prairie seeds, whether you have a city yard or acreage.

Site preparation

The first step is to remove existing weeds or other vegetation so prairie seeds will have a good start. Use a short duration herbicide or the methods described.

In small areas, use opaque materials (newspapers or cardboard) to smother existing vegetation and top with layers of leaves and sand.

Larger areas can be cultivated with conventional farm machinery. Fall plowing is the first step in removing stubborn weeds from heavy soils. Disk to a depth of four to five inches in the spring. After that, use a springtooth harrow or digger to remove quack grass, if needed, and bring roots to the surface where drying will kill them. Shallow (two inch) cultivation every two weeks until fall during the first growing

season eliminates freshly germinated weed seedlings. Finally, drag to leave a clod-free bed. Sandy, gravelly soils or previously cropped fields without heavy perennial weeds may only need several diskings prior to sowing seeds, rather than plowing and season-long cultivation. Check to see if long-lasting herbicides such as Atrazine have been used on site which would affect prairie planting.

Fall seeding

An advantage of fall planting is that a high percentage of forb seed will germinate. The natural "wintering-over" of fall planted seed helps break down germination inhibitors, such as thick seed coverings. Planting time in the upper Midwest begins in mid-October. Native grass seed sown earlier than this time may germinate in as soon as ten days in warm weather and then winter kill.

Frost seeding

Seed may be hand sown on soil surface during winter months as well. Look for snow-free patches in your yard. Old gopher mounds, bare

spots under burned brush piles, and other disturbed areas are good sites. This method works best with small seed and is effective for adding new species to established areas in the first few years. Fall burning before sowing seed allows greater frost action.

The combination of cold weather and frozen moisture provides natural stratification conditions. Wild plant seed often requires a period of one to four months dormancy when the seed is alive but inactive.

Fall and frost plantings don't need seed bed packing or watering as snow and rain firm the soil and provide moisture before germination begins.

Sowing seed

When sowing seed by hand it is important to achieve even distribution. Mix seed with vermiculite, sand, or sawdust so the light color makes the planting area more visible and the bulk helps in even spreading. Sow seed mixture evenly by hand in two directions for good soil contact. Scatter seed slowly and be sure not to run out before covering the site.

(Fall/winter seeding, page 8)

Urban Nature Center leads way to keep and restore green city

Loss of habitat is a severe problem to ever-increasing numbers of plant and animal species. The cause is unchecked population growth of one species, *Homo sapiens*, and the increasing area per person we use for our housing, workplace, and transportation needs.

There are many ways to help slow or reverse this process. Support of The Nature Conservancy through donations or work on projects is one way. Restoring habitats on your property is another. Living in densely populated areas (cities) and working to make urban life safe, interesting, and healthy is still another method.

Many U.S. cities contain larger green spaces than comparable cities in Europe or Asia. These spaces are often along rivers and can serve as corridors for wildlife. Our Milwaukee park system is extensive and beautiful. Yet, its capacity for wildlife habitat has not been realized since most park areas are mowed.

Located along the Milwaukee River near UWM, the Riverside Urban Environmental Center is a new community resource offering programs geared to city residents. For example, Lorrie Otto lead a "Little Wild Yards in the City" tour

featuring small lots where native plants have again found a home and replace pesticide-treated lawns. As a result of this event, a "Little Wild Yard Group" has formed. Another group, The Burdock Brigade, eradicates invasive non-natives such as burdock and garlic mustard.

We hope that many more groups like those at Riverside Center will spring up to work on a network of wild areas in private yards and public places such as parks. By inter-meshing habitats of many native

plant and animal species with our own urban habitat we not only support wildlife, but also make our cities more livable. — Else Ankel

[Call 414/964-8505, to find out more about these and other center programs. Else also suggests contacting The Trust for Public Land, 666 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20003, or calling 202/543-7552 to learn more about the Green Cities Initiative.]

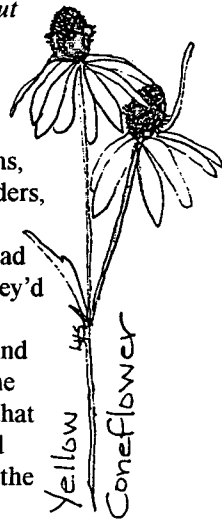
Mailbox

Dear Editor: In the past hour I have retrieved my first official Wild Ones newsletter from the mailbox and read the better part of it aloud to myself (and my dog). I had to speak the words because they were too powerful and poetic to just pass quickly through the mind. The words, stir, disturb, and depending on whether one is having a 'glass half full' or 'glass half empty' kind of day, encourage or frighten the reader who understands the ways of plants. *The Outside Story* is a well-blended package of information and inspiration. Please pass my compliments to all who contributed to the issue.

I've been prairie-wise since my college days (c. 1975), thanks to Associate Professor of Biology Marlin Johnson (then my teacher and now my friend) who manages the UW-Waukesha Field Station prairie. But I'm still working toward that backyard prairie (maybe seed in the ground by next spring?). Lately I've been musing over the notion that humans keep removing themselves from the eco-equation. As much as we credit plants for attracting pollination insects or birds, or with other adaptations for survival, I think we haven't given much recognition to their power to attracting homo sapiens' eye and palate. And thus, we have become their servants—carrying

them across mountains and oceans, mailing them through catalog orders, shoveling and sharing them with others of our kind. If the plants had their own newsletter, I suspect they'd comment about how the human species has within it both noble and weed-like instincts, and that in the long run, it might be a life form that eradicates itself but leaves behind plants it elected to have colonize the earth's surface.

I must relate one story that so clearly demonstrates the power of a mind set that it makes me laugh. I have dear friends who are so thoughtful in their political choices that they once told me they were seriously considering following the actions of others in the Libertarian Party in electing not to pay taxes they could not morally support, even with the certain threat of imprisonment. These conscientious people live in a conventional subdivision. Recently, the husband (who was schooled in natural sciences) succumbed to using a weed-n-feed product on his lawn as his neighbors do—not because he wanted to (he told me in his 'confessional' tone), but because he thought they were looking at his yard with a condemning glance. Apparently, subtle public opinion is more influencing than fear of the IRS. What you and I and others do to promote native plants with shovels and words is powerful.—Joy Buslaff



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Send for Native Plant List
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Native Plants

Familiarize yourself with a half-dozen varied native grasses

Vigorous native grasses once blanketed the Midwestern Prairie. They built some of the richest soil in the world and held upright over a hundred different kinds of wildflowers (forbs). Shown below are six robust and adaptive grasses known for their colorful fall and winter appearance as well as ease of care. They are also excellent for wildlife habitat and serve as a reminder to those of us who live in the Midwest of our rich, natural heritage.

Descriptions are listed from left to right as shown in the drawings below:

1. **Switchgrass** (*Panicum virgatum*) turns light yellow in the fall. Growing from large, tough rhizomes, it's tolerant of a variety of soils. It forms individual clumps on poor soil and tight clumps on fertile ground. Since this dominate species can become aggressive, seed or plant with competition. A thick stand makes an excellent winter wildlife cover which resists being knocked down by ice and snow. Grows three to five feet high.

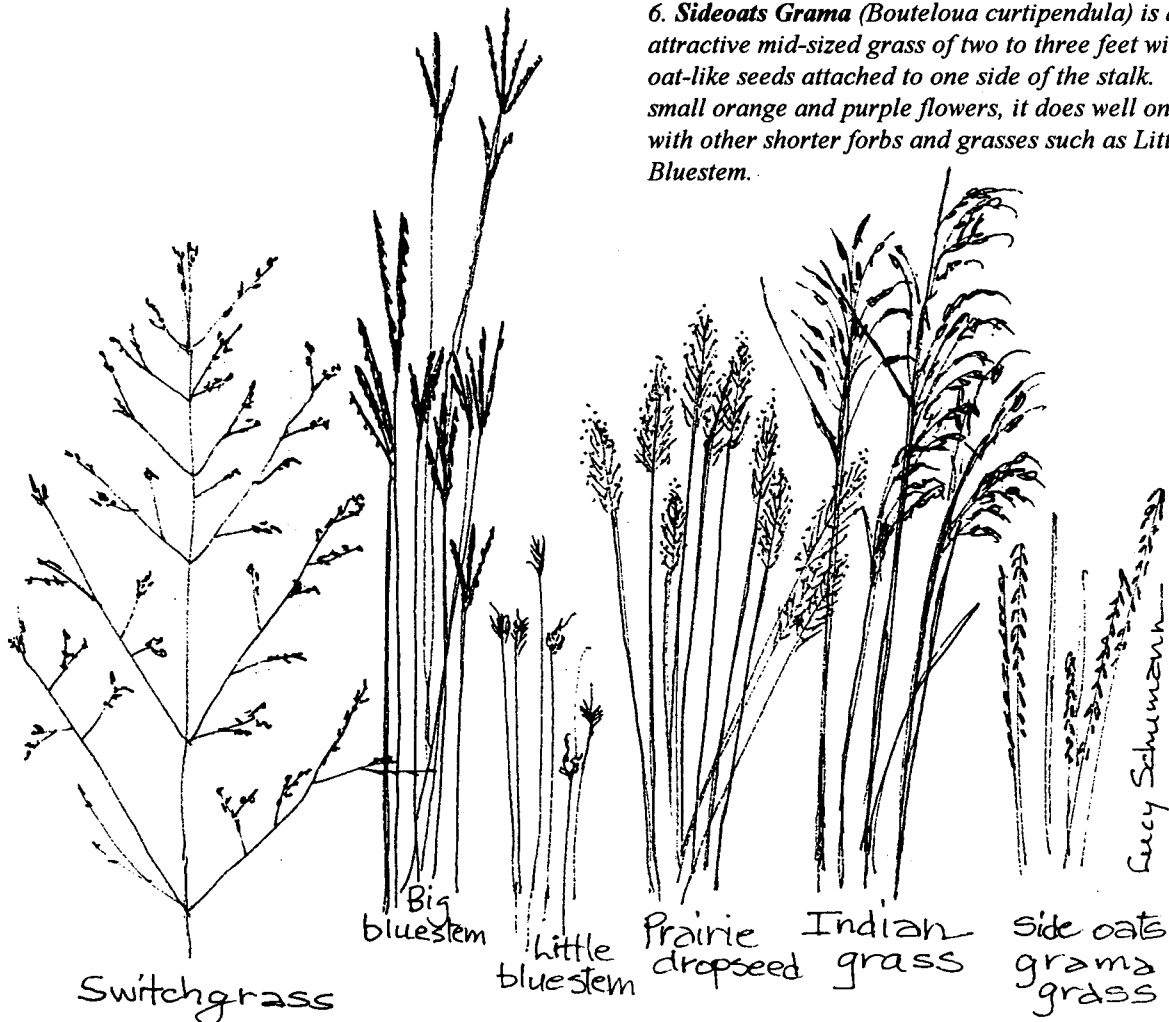
2. **Big Bluestem** (*Andropogon gerardi*) is the prince of native grasses. It was a major component of the tallgrass prairie and largely responsible for the formation of the famous prairie sod. Growing three to eight feet tall or more tall, it thrives on a tremendous range of soils.

3. **Little Bluestem** (*Andropogon scoparius*) has a color range from blue-green early in the season to bright red with fluffy silvery-white seedstalks to warm bronze color after the first frost. It is often used in prairie plantings because its two to three foot height doesn't overpower wildflowers. Grows best on medium and dry soils.

4. **Prairie Dropseed** (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) is a handsome, delicate plant which grows one to two feet and produces a fountain of emerald green leaves.

5. **Indiangrass** (*Sorghastrum nutans*) displays silky, golden brown seedheads in the fall. Earlier in the season its color ranges from green, grey-green, to blue-green. This second most important grass of the tallgrass prairie reaches a height of about three feet.

6. **Sideoats Grama** (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) is an attractive mid-sized grass of two to three feet with golden oat-like seeds attached to one side of the stalk. Noted for small orange and purple flowers, it does well on dry soils with other shorter forbs and grasses such as Little Bluestem.



Sweet Flag

(*Acorus calamus*)

Family: Araceae (Arum)

Other Names: Pine Root, Pepper Root, Sweet Cinnamon, Calamus, Flag-Root, Myrtle-Flag, Myrtle-Sedge, Myrtle-Grass, Sweet-Myrtle, Sedge-Grass, Sedge-Cane, Sedge-Root, Sedge-Rush, Sea-Sedge, Beewort, Muskrat Root, Simple Penetrator, Mongolian Poison, Tartar Poison.

Habitat: Swamps, marshes, riverbanks, and small streams.

Description: The plant emerges from the water with a 2-edged stalk. It has an outward-jutting club-like spadix bearing tiny, greenish-yellow flowers. Flowers are clustered in diamond-shaped patterns on a spadix which is 2-3½ in. long—typical spathe is lacking. The leaves are 1-4 ft. long, stiff, light green, and sword-like.

Height: leaves above water 1-4 ft.

Flowering: May to August

Comments: Sweet Flag reproduces by underground rootstalks that have a sweet odor and flavor. They were once used for making candy. In 1919 it was recorded that: "these rhizomes are to be seen on sale on the street corners of Boston and are frequently chewed to sweeten the breath." When bruised, all parts of the plant are fragrant. *Acorus calamus* was an ancient herb of the East and is also mentioned in the Bible in the book of Exodus. As a perfume additive, it is similar to Orris Root and was even used as a substitute for cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger. The young leaf buds were used in salads.

Warriors among the Teton-Dakota Indians, chewed the rhizome to a paste which they rubbed on their faces to prevent excitement and fear when confronted with an enemy. The plant is noxious to insects and may be used against moths and worms. Leather can be tanned by the whole plant.

Medicinal Use: At one time, Sweet Flag was considered so valuable as a treatment for stomach pains, as a digestive aid and for toothaches that it was used as a medium of exchange. The Cree Indians of Canada are reputed to have chewed the root to achieve strong visual hallucinations. Historically, it has been used as a preventative for falling hair and to improve the hair and scalp. The roots were

steamed to clear the air when sickness from cholera, typhus, flu, etc. were present. It was thought to 'kill' sickness. While traveling, when disease was likely to attack a person, chewing a piece of the root was claimed to keep sickness away.

Name Origin: The Genus Name, *Acorus* (ak'or-us), is the Latin name of an aromatic plant. The Species Name, *calamus* (kal'a-mus), is from the Latin for "reed."

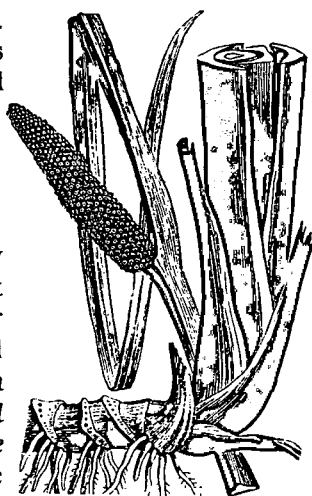
Author's Note: When I discovered Sweet Flag thriving along the pond edge on Sargento's Plymouth property, I never dreamed it had such a fascinating and interesting past.

It is native to the U.S., as well as Europe and Asia. The plant was first brought to Russia in the 11th Century when the Mongolians overcame the Russian territory. Tartars (Mongolians) believed that Sweet Flag, or Calamus, purified the water. When they planned on settling in a new territory, **Calamus was always planted near the watering place to ensure pure drinking water for their horses.** The Mongolians brought many new ideas and adaptations from China to Russia. At this time in history, China was on a very high cultural standard; herbal medicine was particularly in great esteem.

In 1574, the fresh plants of Calamus were sent to the Vienna Botanic Gardens, where Clausius, a famous botanist, gave much effort and attention to its cultivation. It was here that the first, and one of the most complete botanical descriptions was made and proudly displayed. A Polish doctor came to see the garden and ridiculed the famous scientist for his attention to such a common weed as Tartar Poison—bitterly known in Russia and Poland since the Mongolian invasion. This ridicule was so discouraging to the famous botanist that he gave Calamus to anybody who wanted a plant and soon the whole country was alive with Calamus. To this day, botanist Clausius is remembered for his sincere dedication to Calamus, but the name of the merciless doctor has long been forgotten.

It appears that there are several *subtle* messages in the history of this plant—from which we could all benefit!

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Plymouth, Wisconsin



Important Causes of Hayfever

People often wonder if native landscaping contributes to allergies. You'll see from the list below that wildflowers aren't the culprits, but rather trees, grasses, and some weeds, especially ragweed. If you don't know what ragweed looks like—check the drawings on the back of this page. The information on this and on the following page was collected from *That the Patient May Know* by Harry F. Dowling, M.D. and Tom Jones, M.D. and *The International Textbook of Allergy* edited by J.M. Jamar, M.D. Annotations were written by Lorrie Otto.

Trees:

Birches (*Betula*)**
Hickories (*Carya*)**
Ashes (*Fraxinus*)**
Walnuts (*Juglans*)**
Oaks (*Quercus*)**

[Although many trees are important sources of allergenic pollens, none would suggest that woods be destroyed for that reason.]

Grasses:

Redtop grass (*Agrostis alba*)**
Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*)**
Orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*)**
Timothy (*Phleum pratense*)**
Kentucky blue grass (*Poa pratense*)***

[None of the grasses listed above is native to the United States. There are approximately 1,100 kinds of grasses growing naturally in this country.]

Many grasses bloom in May and June when ground-nesting birds need cover. To mow at that time destroys both cover and nests. Ironically, though it is against the law to shoot songbirds, it is not illegal to destroy their nests.

Mowing grasses from mid-July to frost is counter-productive for the following reasons:

- 1. Many grasses are in seed at this time. Thus mowing does nothing to remove pollen.*
- 2. Mowing eliminates a good filter that removes dust and other particulates which are health hazards that pose problems for the entire population.*
- 3. Cutting removes good food and cover for wildlife. This does not include rats which do not gather grass seeds, but depend on grain cribs, garbage, and pet food. Rats are not native to the U.S. They arrived in America with settlers and are dependent on people.*
- 4. Mowing maintains the landscape at weed level. It allows weeds to germinate and grow.*
- 5. Frequent mowing retards the growth of perennial wildflowers.]*

Weeds:

Pigweeds (*Amaranthus*)**
Ragweeds (*Ambrosia*)****
Goosefoot (*Chenopodium*)**

[These plants grow in disturbed areas only.]

** Locally important source *** Regionally important source **** Very important source

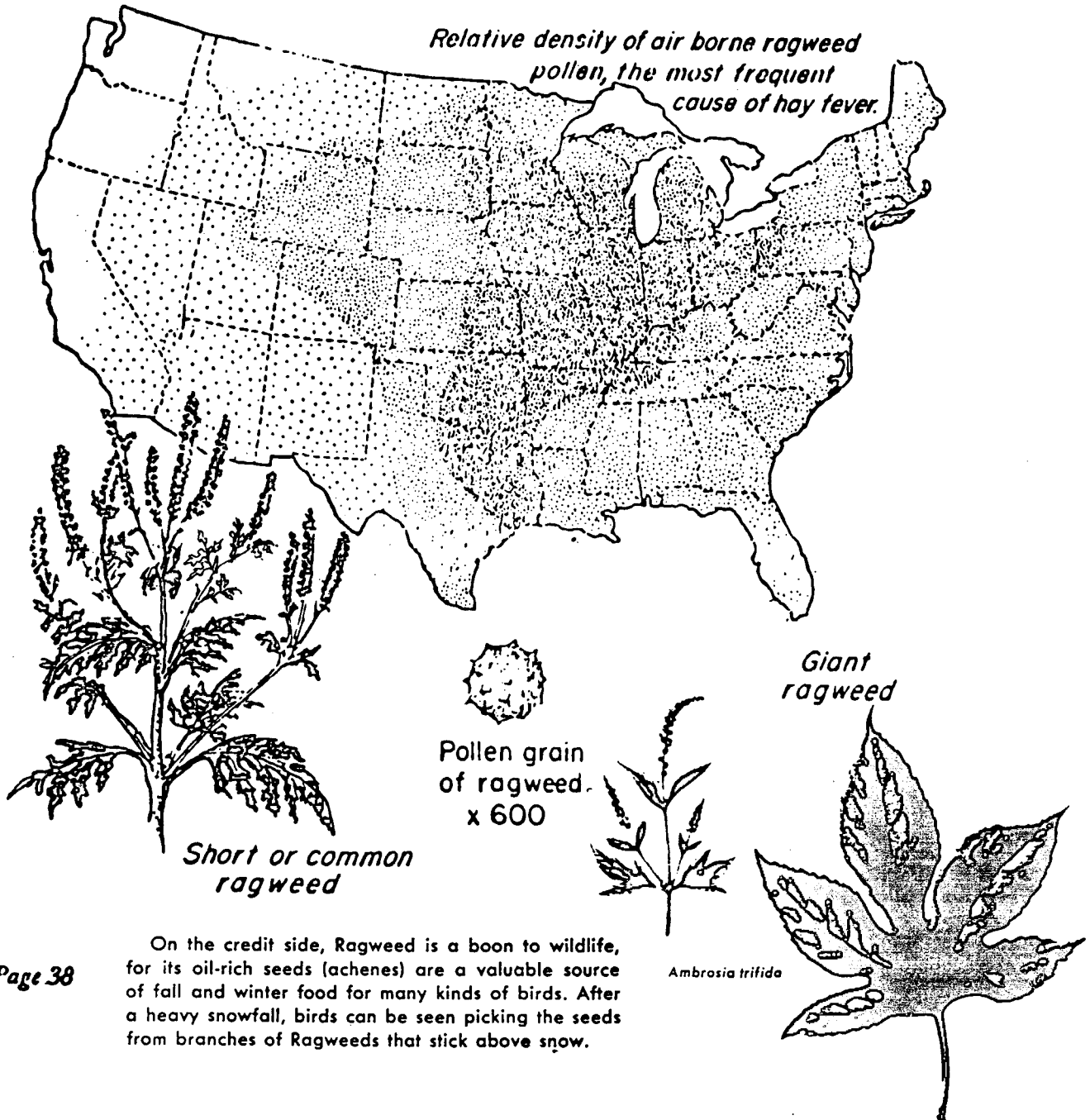
[Note: Plants with colored flowers, including white, are all insect-pollinated. Often white flowers are pollinated by moths at night.]

That the Patient May Know
 By Harry F. Dowling, M.D.
 and Tom Jones, M.D.
 (Saunders, 1959)

Pollens cause hay fever and asthma

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
		Trees									
			Grasses								
							Ragweed				

Chart showing seasons when pollen is in the air in most central and northern states. (In the south and in California, the tree and grass seasons start earlier and last longer.)



On the credit side, Ragweed is a boon to wildlife, for its oil-rich seeds (achenes) are a valuable source of fall and winter food for many kinds of birds. After a heavy snowfall, birds can be seen picking the seeds from branches of Ragweeds that stick above snow.

Family finds 'there's no place like home' for rare natural beauty

We so often travel far and wide to partake of nature's wonders. Perhaps, this is the result of what some have called "ecoporn." From childhood, we have been bombarded with images of majestic mountains, surf pounding on rocky seashores, and scarlet sunsets. We equate these calendar snapshots with what Nature is supposed to be, and we protect and appreciate such places.

It shouldn't be this way. When Dorothy taught us "there's no place like home" she wasn't talking about Nature, but her lesson applies.

In my youth, I hiked the Grand Canyon, climbed the Tetons, canoed the Boundary waters, and rafted down the Canadian Rockies' Kickinghorse River. Yet, not until last month did I stumble upon one of Nature's rarest ecosystem's—the Black Soil Oak Savannah—at Somme Woods. The irony is that it is located two miles from where I grew up and four miles from where I now live.

The retreating glaciers left a range of ecosystems starting with prairies to the south and boreal forests to the north. As the climate vacillated over the eons, the line between forest and prairie would creep north and back south. That transition zone eventually became the

ecosystem we call the Black Soil Savannah. It falls in an area that is now southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Unfortunately, what is left of a once vast expanse is a mere sliver of savannah—one such tiny slice is Somme Woods.

It was a Saturday afternoon when my three children and I pulled into the gravel parking area off State Route 43. The unassuming entrance belies the majesty that is within. To the south, lies a marsh edged with a century-old oak. Wild iris bloom and are reflected on the water's surface. Rattlesnake master and prairie dock were emerging from the nape of grasses.

Over a hill and around a clump of trees, a vast savannah expanse greets the visitor. A couple of gold finches chirped on their way by. Two white-tail deer bounded from the brush, startling cranes. A hawk, red-tailed most likely, circled overhead.

After relaxing a bit and letting the children wander wherever their spirits willed, we ventured into a stand of burr oak. The area is called Vestal Grove, after Illinois' first botanist. Rare forbs that exist in few other places grow in the shade of these trees. A delicate balance of shade/sunshine, moisture/wind, and soil combine to allow these plants to grow.

Back to the north and west lies an expansive sedge meadow of a dozen acres or more. A couple of red-winged blackbirds were characteristically perched on some cattails. The ground was too soft to walk across—so we didn't. On the way out, my son, Connor, found some bleached bones of a departed deer. We talked about what might have happened—old age or harsh winter.

We, as parents, need to help our children realize that the wonders of Nature are not limited to the glossy Kodachromed images of soaring snow-capped mountains or lush tropical forests. Wondrous bits and pieces of our natural heritage exist in every county of every state. We must learn to relish these places, to protect, and to preserve them. — Bret Rappaport

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Calendar

Columbus, Ohio Chapter:

Saturday, Sept. 9 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 116, Howlett Hall. Guy Denny will tell us about OHIO'S NATURAL HISTORY and the preservation of remnants of our natural heritage. Bring tools and gloves to work in the VanFossen Wildflower Garden at Chadwick Arboretum.

Saturday, Oct. 14: Meet at Bob Evans Restaurant, 7550 N. High St. (north of Hwy. 270 on Rte. 23) at 9:30 a.m. to TOUR the Prairie Nature Center of OSU-Marion Campus with Cedi Siller. Or join us at the Marion Campus, 465 Mt. Vernon Ave. at 10 a.m. Tour will last until 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 11 at 9:30 a.m.: Program TBA in Rm. 116, Howlett Hall.

Fox Valley, Wisconsin Chapter:

Saturday, Sept. 23: FIELD TRIP to Neil Diboll's Prairie Nursery.

Saturday, Oct. 14: SEED GATHERING at Bubolz Nature Center.

Thursday, Nov. 16: BATS will be Mike Brander's topic.

Green Bay, Wisconsin Chapter:

Saturday, Sept. 23 at 10 a.m.: Visit Jim Jerzak's five-year-old prairie for SEED COLLECTION. Take Hwy. 29 west, turn left at Cty. FF, prairie is 1/2 mile south of Hwy. 29.

Wednesday, Oct. 18 at 7 p.m.: Learn about GRASSES AND SEDGES from Paul Hartman. Meet at Ag. & Ext. Service Center, 1150 Bellevue St.

Wednesday, Nov. 8 at 7 p.m.: SEED EXCHANGE/business meeting, Share project photos Meet at Ag. Center, 1150 Bellevue St., Room 161.

Madison Chapter meets at 6:30 p.m. on last Thursdays at UW Arboretum's McKay Center.

Thursday, Sept. 28: SEED COLLECTING. Brian Bader will discuss methods and ethics.

Thursday, Oct. 26: WOODLAND SHRUBS for the home garden.

Thursday, Nov. 30: SEED STARTING DEMO/seed exchange/holiday party. Bring extra seeds, envelopes, and cookies to share!

Milwaukee North Chapter meets at 9:30 a.m. on second Saturdays at Schlitz Audubon Center, 1111 E. Brown Deer Rd., Bayside.

Milwaukee Wehr Chapter meets 1:30 p.m. on second Saturdays at Wehr Nature Center, 9701 W. College Ave., Franklin.

Saturday, Sept. 9: TOUR Ruth Stein's landscape along Lake Michigan in Grafton.

Saturday, Oct. 14: SEED GATHERING. After instructions, we'll drive to several locations.

Saturday, Nov. 11: Greg David shares his thoughts about SUSTAINABLE LIVING.

Northern Illinois Chapter meets at 7 p.m. on third Thursdays at College of DuPage. Call Pat Armstrong (708/983-8404) for details.

Friday, Sept. 8 at 7 p.m. TRIP to Nowicki's prairie & vegetable gardens.

Thursday, Sept. 21: Pat Armstrong's topic is WEEDS.

Sunday, Oct. 1 at 2 p.m.: SEED COLLECTING. Call 708/653-3958.

Thursday, Oct. 19: Al Bonanno will tell about the AT&T PRAIRIE.

Saturday, Nov. 18: SEED EXCHANGE & PARTY.

Rock River, Illinois Chapter meets at Jarrett Prairie Center in Byron Forest Preserve.

Saturday, Sept. 16 at 9 a.m.: Short meeting followed by SEED COLLECTING trip to a prairie remnant.

Saturday, Oct. 21 at 9 a.m.: PRAIRIE BURN and seed collecting.

Thursday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m.: Come to the ANNUAL MEETING/potluck/seed exchange.



Help us create a logo

We're looking for a new logo to fit our rapidly growing organization. If you have an idea, can make a sketch, or even produce a camera-ready design, please let us know by contacting a board member or sending your work our box number (listed near your mailing label).

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Group saves wild plants

The Northern Illinois Chapter participated in a fruitful plant-rescue in Downer's Grove during May and June. We found numerous plant species available in quantity. In spite of heavy rains, at least twenty members attended the first day's dig and found shooting star, Joe Pye weed, columbine, spring beauty, Jack-in-the-pulpit, toad shade trillium, wild blue phlox, wild hyacinth, toothwort, trout-lily, and other plants. So many beautiful ones remained after two days of gathering that we felt we had to add days to our rescue rather than leave these wonders to be mauled by bulldozers. And so we did. — Carol O'Neal

[If you know of development plans which will affect existing native plants, please contact your chapter president or rescue coordinator.]

Put your information online

The *On Wisconsin* section of Prodigy includes a space to post natural landscaping information. If you have news to share with the world, please send an ASCII formatted disk to: Heather Gergen, P.O. Box 661, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0661 (414/223-5199)



MEMBER WISCONSIN ARBORIST ASSOCIATION

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Rock River Valley, IL Contact:
Josh Skolnik 815/234-8535

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.

Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers, Ltd. was incorporated in 1990 in the State of Wisconsin, under the Wisconsin Non-Stock Corporation Act for educational and scientific purposes. Wild Ones is a non-profit, tax-exempt corpo-

ration under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is publicly supported as defined in Sections 170(b)(1)(iv) and 509(a). Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

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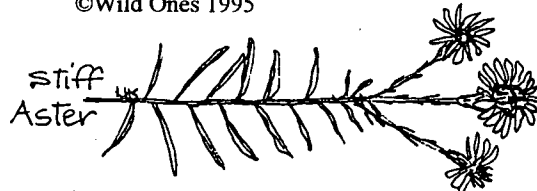
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(414/351-0644)

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Note: Many of our advertisers sell only seeds and plants native to Wisconsin and the surrounding area. Some sell seeds and plants native to the Midwest, but which may not be specific to your state or area. Some may also sell non-native species. In an effort to promote the use of native plants, Wild Ones suggests using care in selecting seeds and plants from nurseries selling non-native species.

Please check your mailing label for expiration date. Send a \$15 check (covers all in household) to address shown below. Notify us if you move so we can update your address, as bulk mail is not forwarded.

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(Fall/winter seeding, from page 1)

Dividing your planting area and seed mix into smaller sections is helpful. Areas of one acre or less can be marked off in four portions while larger areas can be divided into ten parts. Small spots missed can then be filled in as they show. Hand planting has an advantage over machine planting in that you can have more control over what species are sown in specific areas. Follow seeding with a light raking, except in winter when the ground is frozen or wet.

Most species can be mixed together and sown evenly. Grasses may be mixed in varying proportions for different areas. Aggressive forbs and grasses (*monarda*, *solidago*, *heliopsis*, *helianthus*, *ratibida*, *rudbeckia*, *panicum*, or *spartina*) are aesthetically pleasing when sown in back edges, patches, or drifts.

If using a mechanical seeder, depth should not be set more than 1/4 inch for forbs or 1/2 inch for most grasses. Following seeding use a tractor or truck to pull a farm drag with teeth adjusted to cut into soil

about two inches or use a square piece of chain link fence weighted with several cement blocks to rake.

Cover crops

Oats, annual rye, or winter wheat can be sown to prevent erosion. Plant a heavy cover crop alone before natives are seeded or use it to hold soil while slower natives are rooting. Since native seedlings are difficult to spot the first season, an easily identified cover crop is a good "security blanket." If it germinates and grows well, native seeds should also be fine, even if you can't see them. Missing cover areas show places to reseed.

Other planting tips

A native prairie is a complex natural ecosystem. Attempting to duplicate this environment which has evolved over tens of thousands of years is difficult, if not impossible. But by using care and with nature as a model, a beautiful, natural-looking landscape can be created. Patience and dedication are extremely important as it takes several years for prairie plantings to develop.

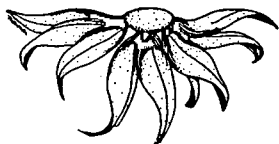
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