THOSE AMAZING ISOPODS

No matter where you live—near the mountains of New England, the deserts of Arizona, or the rain forests of Washington—you’ll find fascinating little creatures that biologists call isopods. Any backyard treasure hunt will probably turn up isopods; what the treasure hunters may call Wood Lice, Roly-Polys, Sow Bugs or Pill Bugs. They’re found where it’s damp, invariably under things: rocks, rotting leaves, boards, bricks or in the deep rich soil of a compost pile.

Making a rock pile habitat for isopods and other small animals in your yard can prove to be just as satisfying as providing a nest box for Bluebirds. These land-dwelling crustaceans are relatives of lobster, shrimp and crabs. They breathe through gills, so they need extra moisture to live. Most isopods are pale gray, but sometimes you’ll find a white one that has just molted and is briefly wearing a “soft shell” (just like a molting crab does).

Isopods are harmless and can become a source of endless wonder. Touch a Roly-Poly or Pill Bug and it may roll up into a little ball. Rolled up, its soft underbelly is protected from attack by predators such as spiders and ants. Rolling up also blocks out air that can suffocate the small creature by drying out its gills.

In your backyard, isopods function much as earthworms do—chewing up rotting or injured plant material and enriching the soil with their excretions. Some isopods feed on other isopods and other small animals. One kind of isopod lives its whole life in ant nests, eating ant larvae.

When an isopod eats, it holds its food with the front pair or two of its seven pairs of legs. It can walk fast. The steps of one ocean-side kind of isopod have actually been counted; 16 steps per second—per foot. With all 14 feet going at once, a single isopod may plants 224 footsteps each second—a real thundering herd! (continued on next page)
Isopods see poorly and “smell” with their antennae. Because of their need for moisture, they have sensitive, humidity-seeking scanners. They also are equipped with uropods—two tail-like projections at the end of their bodies. Some isopods can form a tube with their uropods to pick up water and send it to their gills. Special rear-end glands can spray noxious chemicals at enemies intent on an isopod meal. This spray is harmless to people.

Isopod young are born somewhat in the manner of crabs and somewhat like kangaroos. Eggs hatch in a fluid-filled pouch, which is called a marsupium. From 10 to 50 isopods develop in this watery nursery until they’re ready to pop out and crawl away, just like isopods have been doing for millions of years.

—Reprinted from The Backyard Naturalist by Craig Tufts

Craig Tufts oversees the National Wildlife Federation’s Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program. To receive information about this program call 1-800-432-6564.

Beyond Digs

Thinking about starting a new natural area? You don’t have to wait for a native plant rescue day. Native plant nurseries carry seed and transplants of numerous species of prairie, woodland, wetland and other native plants.

Participating in a plant rescue is a great way to learn about plant communities. If you notice a natural area which will be excavated, contact your plant rescue coordinator!

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LYME DISEASE: HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

In the mid-1970's, in Old Lyme, Connecticut, a group of mothers noticed that their children were suffering from long bouts of recurrent fever and aching joints. Many of these children also had a rash before showing these symptoms. This rash was similar to Erythema Chronicum Migrans (ECM), which affected people in Europe.

By the 1980's Lyme Disease had spread through much of the east coast and midwest. The disease is caused by a corkscrew-shaped bacteria called a spirochete, which is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected Ixodes Ticks. Lyme Disease is still most prevalent on the east coast, but cases have been reported in 47 states. According to Mr. James Kazmeirczak of The State of Wisconsin Division of Health, Communicable Disease Section, there were 15,055 provisional cases of Lyme Disease reported in 1996 in the United States. Of these, 396 provisional cases were reported in Wisconsin. States reporting the greatest number of cases of the disease are Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey. The disease is also found in Europe and Asia.

Ixodes Ticks, vectors for the disease, are tiny. A mature Ixodes Tick, commonly known as a Deer Tick or Bear Tick, is about the size of a pinhead. Ixodes Tick nymphs are smaller. These ticks should not be confused with Dog Ticks, which are larger, easily seen ticks. Dog Ticks do not carry Lyme Disease. Animals that are hosts to the deer tick include White-footed Field Mice, birds, raccoons, deer, and domestic cats and dogs. With the dramatic increase in deer populations, these ticks have spread into areas formerly unaffected by Lyme Disease.

Ticks are found in a variety of places including woods, meadows, suburban and urban yards and parks. Ticks do not fly, jump or hop. They climb up on grasses and other plants and wait for a host. When an animal or human brushes against the grass, the tick climbs onto them. Once on a person, the tick climbs to find exposed skin. Ticks may feed on hosts for as long as 24 hours. During the feeding process, Ixodes Ticks may transmit Lyme Disease to their host.

Early symptoms of Lyme Disease may include a rash, flu-like symptoms and aching joints. Later, an infected person may have aching muscles, tendons, joints, swollen lymph nodes, severe headaches, balance problems, loss of memory and other problems. In late stages, the disease may cause painful arthritic joints, short-term memory loss, disorientation, intermittent paralysis and fatigue.

To protect yourself from exposure to Lyme Disease, you should take the following precautions:
1. Avoid tick infested areas, especially in June, July and August.
2. Wear light-colored clothing so that ticks can be seen against it.
3. Tuck pant legs into socks and shirts into pants. Brush clothes often.
4. Wear a hat to prevent hair from touching your collar.
5. Check pets for ticks after they have been outdoors. Brush their coats. Check with a veterinarian regarding use of tick collars, sprays or powders.
6. Avoid brushing up against high grass or brush. Ticks are often found along paths that are frequented by deer and mice. Since deer often use fire lanes and paths that people use, these may be the most likely place that the ticks will be found.
7. Discourage deer from entering areas. Deer are one of the common carriers of the Ixodes Tick.

If you find a tick, remove it promptly without crushing it. Use a tweezers and grasp the tick close to the head. Do not squeeze the tick's body, or you may force the contents of the tick into the person you are trying to remove it from. Pull gently until the tick is removed. Immediately clean the area with soap, water and a disinfectant, such as peroxide.

If you think you may have Lyme Disease, contact your physician. Lyme Disease can be detected with a blood test. Treatment of the disease is with antibiotics. For more information, call the American Lyme Disease Foundation at (800) 876-5963.

—Bret Rappaport

GOOD NEWS FOR NATURE LOVERS

Prevention, the magazine of health, reports in its January 1997 issue that a Lyme Disease vaccine (Borrelia burgdorferi) is in the making. Two drug companies are currently testing vaccines. One of these vaccines, manufactured by SmithKline Beecham, is in the trial testing stage and may soon be available.

—Babette Kis

PESTICIDES BANNED

In 1991 the town of Hudson, Quebec, Canada essentially banned the cosmetic use of pesticides for landscaping. In 1994, citizen pressure resulted in 18 towns in the Montreal area passing bylaws restricting the use of pesticides outdoors. “Montreal area municipalities have shown that bylaws are popular and enforceable. How long will it take for the rest of the world to wake up?” Taken from “Wake up and Smell the Poison” by Dr. Merryl Hammond.

Each year in the United States, an estimated 17 million gallons of fuel are spilled during refueling of lawn mowers and other power equipment used by backyard gardeners. That's more fuel than was lost by the Exxon Valdez oil tanker!
SKIPPERS: *Endearing Flashes of Late Summer Gold*

If you had never seen a skipper, how would you picture one from its name? No stately glider like a swallowtail, this little dynamo flits from bush to flower. If you can't identify it as it zooms past, wait until it stops to sip nectar.

Look at a skipper up close for a clue to its fast, powerful flight. Its thick, muscular thorax allows the insect to start and stop quickly. Indeed, skippers appear to have short wings because their stocky bodies look out of proportion to the wings. Another reason for a skipper's fast, accurate flight may be the structure of its compound eye, which focuses light on each tiny retina. In *The Butterflies of North America*, James A. Scott suggests that this complexity gives the skipper an edge over other butterflies for speed and control.

Within the order Lepidoptera they're generally classified in their own superfamily (Hesperiidae), while all other butterflies fall in the superfamily Papilionoidea (the remaining 90 percent of lepidoptera are moths). What's so different about skippers that they inhabit a separate superfamily? Their stout hairy bodies are mothlike, yet they fly during the day. The larva forms a leaf shelter for safety; when ready to pupate, it doesn't wander restlessly in search of a spot to metamorphose. It simply attaches itself inside the leaf with silk, forming a loose cocoon.

Skippers' antenna are clubbed at the end like a butterfly's. But the tip of the club often extends in a boomerang-like hook called an apiculus. Then there's the matter of the wing posture while basking. Many skipper species hold the forewing at an angle to the hindwing, giving them the appearance of a folded paper airplane.

If you find skipper identification bewildering, you're in good company. Skippers occur almost everywhere (except Antarctica) but are most numerous in the tropics. In Peterson Field Guide to Eastern butterflies, Alexander B. Klots says, "Nobody thinks the worse of anyone for saying 'I don't know' when it comes to some of the skippers!"

Joe-Pye Weed brings elusive skippers. Several species of Eupatorium are available at nurseries. They're good wet prairie and wetland edge plants, but will do well in garden soil. In late summer they sport fuzzy flower heads of pinkish-purple (Joe-Pye Weed) or white (Boneset).

—Excerpted from Butterfly Gardeners' Quarterly, Fall 1996. Reprinted with permission of Claire Hagen Dole and Butterfly Gardeners' Quarterly, P.O. Box 30931 Seattle, WA 98103 You may subscribe to BGQ for $8 a year.

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**Interested in Butterflies?**

The Xerces Society, named after an extinct North American blue butterfly, is a conservation organization dedicated to the study of invertebrates. Membership is $25, and includes a subscription to the semiannual booklet *Wings* and discounts on the Xerces book *Butterfly Gardening: Creating Summer Magic in Your Garden*. The Society holds summer butterfly counts in areas throughout the world. For membership information, write The Xerces Society, 10 S.W. Ash Street, Portland, OR 97204. Phone: (503) 222-2788.

**The Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Program**

In order to continue Lorrie's life work with students of all ages, Wild Ones established the Seeds for Education fund in 1996. Annual grants are given to deserving institutions of learning that plant outdoor classrooms of native plants. All contributions to the endowment fund are targeted for such work and are tax deductible. Please consider a contribution for this worthy endeavor. Make checks payable to Seeds for Education Fund. Donations and inquiries should be mailed to P.O. Box 23576, Milwaukee, WI 53223-0576.

**GRANTS AWARDED**

Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education 1996/1997 Grants have been awarded to six deserving schools in the Midwest.
The Front Forty...

Curt and I have planted many trees in our yard over the past few years. The trees have been anywhere from 12 inches to 12 feet tall. We have learned a lot about planting those trees; some of that knowledge came after the fact. Here are some of the things we learned when planting a balled and burlapped tree.

Trees, like any other plant, have different needs such as soil type, moisture and light conditions. Once you have selected the proper tree for the site, you are ready to start the actual planting process.

When you dig the hole, remember the old saying "A dollar hole for a quarter plant". When the hole is deep enough, take a shovel and go around the sides, jabbing the soil to roughen it up. This is more important when you have heavy clay soil, since the smooth sides can act like a huge inground urn, making it more difficult for the lateral roots to grow outward.

At this point, it is nice if you have a helper so you can lift the tree (always lift a B&B tree by the ropes at the base, never by the trunk) down into the hole to check for depth. If this is not possible, use the shovel handle to measure the depth of the ball and the hole, making sure you measure the ball only up to the trunk flare (where the trunk and roots come together). If the hole is too deep, put some of the soil back in. If it is just the right size, take your shovel and rough up the bottom (after lifting the tree out). Now, pour water into the bottom of the hole until it is soupy. When the water has drained off, leaving you with a sloppy-type mud, you can put the tree in again. Move the tree around in the hole for best viewing. Once you have the tree where you want it, begin the backfilling. At the halfway point, take more water and go through the soupy to sloppy routine again. Cut the ropes holding the burlap at the trunk and cut slashes in the burlap. Check that the flared-out base of the tree will not be buried when the backfilling is completed. Finish backfilling and once again, with the water, do the soupy to sloppy thing. If this all sounds rather silly, it really isn't. You are actually removing the air pockets in the soil. Doing it this way does less damage to the roots than stomping the soil down with your feet and is much more thorough. Place mulch around the tree, leaving a space of about three inches from the flared-out trunk to prevent any moisture damage. The tree needs to be watered at least three to four times a week during the first few weeks and receive at least one inch of water once a week well into fall the first year. When watering, find it is better to have the hose at the widest water arc and aim up at the leaves rather than at the ground. This will water the entire drip-line of the tree and clean off any damaging insects on the leaves.

—Judy Crane

Food for Thought:

Starting a Natural Landscape is like making a meatloaf: everyone has a different recipe, but they all turn out very satisfying in the end.

—JC

Editor's note: Some root balls are wrapped with plastic or poly burlap. This material must be removed before or during planting. This plastic does not decompose and may restrict the plant's water intake and root growth.
**WILD GERANIUM**

(Geranium maculatum)

**Family:** Geraniaceae (Geranium)

**Other Names:** Shameface, Alum Root, Rock Weed, Dove's Foot, Cranesbill, American Kino-Root, Chocolate Flower, Sailor's Knot, Storkbill, Crowfoot.

**Habitat:** Woods, thickets and meadows.

**Description:** Above a pair of deeply 5-lobed leaves, arises a loose cluster of 2 to 5 lavender flowers. The flowers are 1 in. wide, with 5 rounded petals, 5 pointed sepals, 10 stamens, and 1 pistil. The leaves are 4 to 5 in. wide, gray-green and cut into deeply-toothed lobes, while the basal leaves have long stalks. The fruit is an elongated, beaked capsule.

**Flowering:** April to June  
**Height:** 1 to 2 ft.

**Comments:** The language of the Geranium is constancy and availability. If you send it to your lover, it says “I desire to please!” The very popular potted plant that is available from most garden centers in spring and summer is the same family, but of a different species. The Wild Geranium is a perennial native to eastern North America.

There is a mechanism in its seed pod that is like a compressed spring. The full power of this tiny catapult usually goes unnoticed, but if you were to walk past a ripened capsule, you might feel a little “ping” against your skin. The capsule has been known to shoot its seeds 30 ft. or more like a miniature machine gun.

According to my research papers, Wild Geranium is one of the host plant for the larvae of the Purple Archips Moth (Archips purpurana) and Large Maple Spanworm Moth (Prochoerodes transversata).

**Medicinal Use:** Wild Geranium has long been known as a strong astringent. The part used is the knobby rhizome, dried and made into a chocolate-colored powder. This was used as a mild infusion for sore throats and ulcerated mouths. The high tannin content of the root was the secret ingredient. A tea brewed from the leaves was a treatment for dysentery and the powdered root was used to help the blood coagulate and to prevent hemorrhages. The root was used, externally, as a folk cancer remedy. The Indian definition for the plant is “one root,” which they used for a sore mouth.

**Name Origin:** Both the common and genus names are based on the fact that the fruit resembles a crane’s beak. The word, Geranium, is Greek for “crane.” The species name, maculatum (mak-you-LAY-tum), means “spotted” and is descriptive of the leaves as they get older. The family name, Geraniaceae, is pronounced, ger-ray-nee AY-see-ee).

**Author's Note:** When I see these delicate and pretty flowers blooming in spring, I'm really awe-struck by their simple beauty. They are especially attractive in clumps with a few sedges and grasses mixed with them.

I often have the feeling that I would like to gather the flowers and save them where they will never wilt or die. The only way I’ve found to accomplish this impossible feat, is through photography. (I'm a terrible artist.) This affords me the opportunity of bringing out the slide on a cold winter day and treating my eyes to the beauty I observed on that warm spring morning, when the air was fresh, the wind was slight, and I wanted that vision to never leave my sight. For a few moments, at least, its like being in the Garden of Eden with no worries, cares or responsibilities. The tremendous problems of the world are washed away and forgotten. Somehow, the subtle hues of the blossoms and the soothing green leaves erase all negative thoughts and restore the mind to a sense of sanity. That’s why it is so important to preserve the habitat of our wild flora. Where else can we go to escape the pressures society places upon us?

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Plymouth, WI
HOW INSECTS WORK

Insects are invertebrates (in-Vur-teh-BRAY-TEES) that have six legs and three main body parts: head, thorax and abdomen. Millions of insects are found throughout the world, from tropical to arctic areas. Some insects, like butterflies and moths, have four wings which are covered with scales and a coiled tube mouthpart. Beetles have hard, often colorful wings over their transparent wings and chewing mouthparts. Bees and wasps have four transparent wings and chewing mouthparts.

DO YOU KNOW THAT...
- Many butterflies and moths use their coiled tube mouth part, which is called a proboscis (pro-BAHS-iss) to sip nectar from Purple Coneflower, Butterflyweed, Blazing Stars and other flowers. The proboscis is like a very small, narrow straw.
- Grasshoppers and locusts can jump very high and far. A grasshopper leg has five parts: the foot, wrist-like joint, lower leg, the elbow-like joint, and the upper leg, which is connected to the insect's body. Their hind legs are levers.
- Some butterflies and moths have iridescent scales on their wings. If you look at their wings from one direction, they are one color. If you look at them from another direction, they are a different color.

THINGS TO DO

Have an adult help you do these experiments.

1. Learn how a butterfly's proboscis works. You will need two pieces of thin, clear acetate, each about six inches long and two inches wide. Clear acetate is usually available at art stores. Roll one piece of acetate into a cylinder with a diameter of about a quarter of an inch. Tape the seam of the acetate “straw” with transparent tape to keep it together. Fill a clear glass with water and a couple drops of food coloring. Use a spoon to mix the food coloring. Put your straw in the water and measure how high the water goes up the straw. Take the second piece of acetate and make a straw that is smaller in diameter than your first one. Tape it together and put it in the colored water. Does the water go farther up the smaller or larger diameter straw? How high do you think it would go up if the straw was as small as a butterfly's proboscis?

2. Compare a grasshopper's leg to the way your hand and arm look when you are doing a pushup. Is your arm a lever? A grasshopper is a good jumper. Do you think a grasshopper could jump farther if its legs were longer?

3. A butterfly’s iridescent wings are made up of tiny, shingle-like scales. You can make your own model of a butterfly’s iridescent scales by folding and painting a piece of paper so that it looks like the Folded Paper illustration. Move your model of butterfly scales so that you see only green. Then move it so that you can see only red. Make another piece of folded paper. Paint the paper with your two favorite colors, using the same pattern you did with your first model.

SCHEDULED FOR DESTRUCTION:
PRAIRIE PLANTS ON A BOULEVARD AND A FOREST ON COUNTY LAND

In the past, during times of war, ignorant, bickering men have destroyed libraries and artistic treasures of almost inconceivable wealth. However, all were man-made, and it is possible, that with time and knowledge, these libraries and art could be assembled again. When ignorant, bigoted people burn black churches we are all ashamed and angry, but we can rebuild most parts of them. This is not so for the birds and butterflies of prairies. When they’re gone, it will be forever. With only one-half of one percent of our relic prairies left, we need emergency action and the help of all knowledgeable people to save them.

There is a sliver of planted prairie flowers in a boulevard pulsing between lines of polluting cars on East Bradley Road in Milwaukee which supports several species of native butterflies and insects. Last summer it was also a thrilling aesthetic surprise for the people who recognize Orange Milkweed, Blue Spiderwort, Rosy Gayfeather, Black-eyed Susans, pink and purple asters and our famous goldenrods (none of which cause hay fever!). The City of Milwaukee Forestry Department raised these plants in the city greenhouses and did this glorious planting. However, they made one error. They selected a street bordered on one side with abandoned farmland and its early succession of alien weeds. To the uneducated eye, it appears as if these same weeds have spread to the middle of the adjacent street. As a consequence, ignorance ignited ignorance, and the supervisor for this district threatened to cut off funding if these “weeds” were not removed. Most were. Only the two largest islands, located at the intersection of Bradley Road and 124th Street, remain.

Perhaps these supervisors can be forgiven for such a hurtful, destructive blunder, but never can we forgive the county supervisors if they allow the Wauwatasia woodlands on the county grounds to be demolished. Walk there today, and smell the pungent air of the decomposing leaves. Sow Bugs are eating the tough, thread-like veins of last summer’s vegetation. Earthworms are pulling partially decomposed leaves down into their burrows where they will secrete enzymes to digest them. Oak and beech leaves are the last to go, so they are the ones which form crisp, beautiful curls around and under the spring ephemerals.

Not even our best scientists know all of the various life forms under those leaves that make juicy nutrients available for the towering trees above us. There are macroscopic and microscopic insects and other invertebrates, bacteria, fungi and other minute organisms that take part in this nutrient recycling process. All over our country, little pockets of tiny, yet-to-be-discovered life forms are being destroyed. These are not replaceable! The Milwaukee County supervisors know not what they do, nor even seem to care!

In just a few days, the spring bird migration will begin. Avian survivors of storms, glass windows, cats, polluted air and water will arrive at these woods which is their ancestral roosting, feeding and, perhaps, nesting ground. The Fox Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Towhees and thrushes will flutter down in grateful appreciation. They will scratch the ground, throwing old leaves about in their search for seeds. Listen! Their songs and calls have come down through the ages. Such music doesn’t come to young trees planted in green lawns. Children at Whitefish Bay Middle School may see a few of these species because they are planting a small, condensed woodland with thick layers of rotting leaves as the only ground cover. But there will be no old dead snags to attract woodpeckers, nuthatches and Brown creepers, who require such pantries of food in decaying wood in order to survive.

Who made this wood that man can’t replicate? Was it a Creator, a God, who knit together such dizzying diversity and such awe inspiring beauty? Or did it all just evolve over millions and millions of years, as fossil records seem to indicate? Either way, it does not matter. It is greater than a library, a school, a museum, a church. These small patches of old forests are truly temples for all time for all of us. They are not to be traded for condominiums or money or for anything else. Never! Never!

—Lorrie Otto

Some prairie plants at the Bradley Road boulevards will be transplanted to Thoreau Middle School this spring.
—Editor

Milwaukee, Wisconsin members—please call or write your county supervisor and demand that the sale of the county grounds oak woodland and savannah be halted. These lands contain many mature trees and serve as an essential buffer zone, protecting the high quality remnant oak woodland to the west. This land should be used as a resource for everyone’s education, not to relieve budget constraints. WRITE your supervisor at 901 N. 9th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233, or CALL your supervisor at the number listed in the Milwaukee Ameritech White Pages, County Government, page 9.
—Wendy Walcott
Many vacationers bring back souvenirs to distribute to family and friends when they arrive home. I was 13 years old and the boy next door had just returned from Missouri. He came over to surprise me with the best souvenir I'd ever received—a container with a wonderful Praying Mantis (European Mantis, Mantis religiosa). I'd seen mantids in books, but never in real life. Peering into the bulging eyes of this more than four-inch-long creature was so exciting. I was ecstatic—they'd brought this neat insect all the way from Missouri to Paddock Lake, Wisconsin just for me.

I decided to name him Petrick. Over the remaining summer months, I diligently cared for my pet, spending hours catching grasshoppers and crickets with my butterfly net. Petrick's appetite was enormous. He preferred grasshopper to all other insects I caught, which was fortunate for me, because these grasshoppers were abundant in the small fields between our houses. Petrick's table manners were intriguing—he relished his meals, which he ate "top down".

At times I felt Petrick needed freedom, so I would let him sit in the field for long stretches of time. He never ventured more than a few yards from where I left him. After I decided he had enough freedom, I placed him in captivity again.

At the end of the summer, Petrick laid an egg mass on his perching stick. I then realized I had misnamed my pet. Perhaps the name Patrice would have been more appropriate. When Petrick expired, I placed her in our basement freezer (My parents were always very tolerant). I waited with great anticipation for little Petricks and Patrices to emerge in the spring, but it never happened. Even so, I couldn't part with the stick that held the clinging egg mass—I saved it for years.

I learned a lot about responsibility, life and death from this and other insect and animal escapades. I think it would be great if all children could have the same rewarding experiences taking care of one of nature's special creatures.

—Kathy Meyer, Green Bay.

**MANTID FACTS**

The Praying Mantis is classified in the order Oothoptera along with grasshoppers, crickets, walkingsticks and katydids. It's called a Praying Mantis because it usually holds its front legs in a praying position. Native to cooler climates of Europe, it was introduced into the Rochester, New York area about 1899 and has since spread throughout the eastern United States.

The mantis preys on other insects, including its own kind. They also prey upon small tree frogs. A full grown Praying Mantis measures two to five inches in length. Their green or brown color provides camouflage from birds that would prey upon them. Their forelegs have sharp spines and hooks, which they use to grasp and hold their prey.

Females lay egg masses on trees and shrubs in the fall. The egg mass, which looks like brown foam, contains several hundred eggs, which hatch in the spring. These egg masses are easy to find in the winter, when all the foliage is gone. The young mantids emerge looking like small yellow adults. As they mature, they change in color to green and brown.

—Kathy Meyer, Green Bay

Editor's note: Praying Mantids, along with Green Lacewings and Ladybugs, are commonly sold to gardeners as predator insects. Ladybugs and Green Lacewings typically eat smaller insect prey, such as aphids and other soft-bodied insects. Preying Mantids eat larger prey, including crickets, grasshoppers, katydids, butterflies, moths, caterpillars, flies and bees. If you find a collection of butterfly or day-flying moth wings in your wildflower area, you may want to look for a nearby Praying Mantis. If you find one, you may wish to relocate it to your vegetable garden or a grassy area, where it will prey upon garden pests such as grasshoppers and crickets.
It is unfortunate that the mention of one of our historically greatest trees may bring forth thought of Dutch Elm Disease, which has destroyed many of its members in North America. The American Elm, a stately shade tree, still bears mention because it was the most widely grown tree in our cities and suburbs for many years. It can live to a ripe old age when not affected by Dutch Elm Disease. In fact, the largest elm in existence, growing along the Oregon Trail near Louisville, Kansas was measured to be 100 feet in height and almost 100 feet wide.

Characteristics: Elms once towered over the streets of many Midwestern and Eastern communities. Long regarded as an ideal shade tree, its branches form a shapely vase or fan shape as it matures. In times past, elms provided favorite places for picnickers to lean against! The trunk and enjoy their lunch. Beautiful tooth-edged medium-green leaves turn gold in fall and often rain down on a frosty fall morning. The elm’s multiple branches offer visual interest after all of the leaves are gone.

This Plant Needs: Elm species are very tolerant of a wide range of light and moisture conditions. They have been found growing in forests, suburban and urban areas, in sunny dry areas to wet shady areas. In the forest, elms return nutrients to the soil in the form of spent leaves. American Elms are found growing from Zone 2 south to Florida and Texas. When planting, it is suggested that you insulate this species from other elms to reduce the chance of your tree contracting Dutch Elm Disease.

Who Benefits:
While some people immediately connect these trees with Dutch Elm Disease, I can’t help but think of the Northern Oriole (formerly known as the Baltimore Oriole) when I see an American Elm. These trees are the number-one choice for oriole nesting sites, when they are available. Orioles often choose lower branches or branches than hang downward in which to construct their remarkable hanging nests. These birds seem to prefer elms growing in rows or groups or trees near road sides or paths. Orioles feed on caterpillars and other insects that eat elm leaves. Hawk, owl and crow nests can often be found in the upper-most crown of large elm trees. Numerous insect-eating birds, such as vireos, warblers and catsbirds, nest in elms and search among their branches for food. Research is currently being conducted to determine why some individual elms are resistant to disease. Countless birds, insects and people are hoping the answers are found soon. Somehow, the landscape doesn’t seem the same since Dutch Elm Disease has reduced these once-common shade trees to a fraction of their former numbers.

—Steve Mahler

For the birds is written by Steve Mahler, owner of The Wild Bird Center, Menomonee Falls, Wis. Steve welcomes your comments and suggestions at (414) 255-9955.

WEED VICTORY A judge has held that the Cameron, Louisiana, Police Jury does not have the authority to apply that parish’s weed ordinance to property owned by the Baton Rouge Audubon Society, reports the Lake Charles, Louisiana, American Press. Four neighbors claimed that Audubon land “contributed to increased populations of skunks, snakes, rats, mice, roaches, mosquitoes and even wild hogs.” But Audubon president Charles Fryling said the plants were “carefully selected” to provide food and shelter for birds. The Police Jury says they will appeal. “We’ve got enough problems in America without being kept from doing our job”, said Juror Brent Nunez.

—Reprinted from Grassroots Environmental Effectiveness Network, A project of Defenders of Wildlife.
**Wild Ones** members are people who want to learn about native plants. These people come from a variety of gardening backgrounds to learn new ideas and then take—transplant—these ideas back into their yards. We also need to transplant our ideas about the importance of growing native plants to other people outside of our interest group. We need to teach others about the importance of preserving natural areas and returning yards, lawns, fields and other areas to their original state.

This will not be easy. We cannot force others to learn to understand about the benefits of natural native landscaping any more than we can transplant a plant into an environment unsuitable for its cultural needs. We cannot insist on a one-hundred-percent return of our yards and land to native plants and animals. To successfully transplant our ideas to others, we must advocate the use of native plants within the context of conventional landscaping.

As president of the Sun Prairie Garden Club, I take part in an education exhibit of native plants at the district’s flower show. At the show, I am able to educate members from other clubs about native plants. I do this by showing them the beauty of native flowers in a garden setting and sharing seeds with them. In some instances, people are surprised to learn that they are already growing native plants in their gardens. I am also surprised to learn how many other gardeners share my approach to using native plants in their gardens.

Another project that helps educate garden club members about native plant communities is a park project that is in our area. We are applying for a grant to obtain seeds for a dry prairie setting in the park. This will be the first planting in the park that will become an educational tool for town residents and for the local schools and youth organizations. In addition, we have had two Boy Scout Eagle projects in the park. For their first project, the scouts constructed trails through the lower woods to provide viewing of spring ephemerals; for their second project they removed non-native and weedy trees and bushes in the upper woods. While the project is not complete yet, we are beginning to see the return of a savannah-like setting where there was only underbrush. The garden club members and the scouts who have worked here are beginning to learn about native plant restorations. By working here, some of them have changed their ways of thinking about native landscape.

We need to keep working to help people see the value of native plants. Not everyone wants to turn their entire yard to a prairie or woodland. We must make room for those in Wild Ones who only want to plant natives with the rest of their perennials. Someday, some of them may decide to exchange their perennial gardens for native plant gardens or native plant communities. Whether or not this happens, it must be a person’s individual decision, something they are comfortable with. By encouraging people, showing them the diversity, the delights, the history of native plants, we hope to encourage more to restore native plants to their environment.

— Diane Powelka Madison Chapter

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**For Further Reading about Insects...**

*Insects of the Great Lakes Region* Gary A. Dunn 1966. Informative text and over 200 black and white illustrations help both beginner and advanced entomologists recognize many significant insects in this region. Useful appendices.


*Insect Books for Children...*


**Video...**


—MaryAnn Maki

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Each sign costs $18 (plus $3 shipping and handling). Checks for $21 should be made payable to Wild Ones. Mark the envelope “Sign” and mail to Wild Ones, P.O. Box 23576, Milwaukee, WI 53223-0576. Signs will be sent by first-class mail. Signs will be sent promptly if in stock. You will be notified only if there will be a significant delay.

Bulk orders will be accepted from chapters only. For bulk orders, remit $20 per sign to the same address. Bulk orders will be sent to one address.
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-root’ 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.

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 corporation 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.

The meeting place

NOTE: The January-February issue of this newsletter was replaced with the Wild Ones Handbook. Additional copies are available for $7 each. Send check payable to Wild Ones to our P.O. Box; marked Handbook on envelope.

ILLINOIS

LAKE-TO-PRAIRIE CHAPTER
May 13—Annette Alexander takes us through a 5-year conversion of her suburban yard. Location: Prairie Crossing’s Byron Colby Community Barn, Grayslake, 7:15 p.m.
June 14—Field trip to Liberty Prairie Reserve, Libertyville, IL. Meet at Prairie Crossing’s Byron Colby Community Barn at 10:00 a.m.

GREATER DUPAGE CHAPTER
Chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at the College of DuPage, unless otherwise noted. Call Pat Armstrong for info, (708) 983-8404.

IOWA

COLUMBUS CHAPTER
Meetings are held in Rm. 118, Howlett Hall on Agriculture Campus/Ohio State University, unless otherwise noted. Call Joyce Stephens (614) 771-9273 for information.

KANSAS


GREEN BAY CHAPTER
Meetings held at Green Bay Botanical Garden, 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

OHIO

COLUMBUS CHAPTER
Meetings are held in Rm. 116, Howlett Hall on Agriculture Campus/Ohio State University, unless otherwise noted. Call Joyce Stephens (614) 771-9273 for information.

OKLAHOMA

Meetings are held on the last Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m., Oklahoma State University, Colvin Center, Room 118, unless otherwise noted.

MADISON CHAPTER
Meetings held at McKay Center in UW Arboretum, 6:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

MICHIGAN

Call Dave Bormann for more information (313) 994-4834.

MILWAUKEE—NORTH CHAPTER
Meetings held at Schlitz Audubon Center, second Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m., unless otherwise noted.

MILWAUKEE—WEHR CHAPTER
Meetings held at Wehr Nature Center, second Saturday of the month, 1:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

MONTANA

FOX VALLEY AREA CHAPTER
Meetings are held at the Fox Valley Technical College Regional Fire Training Center, 1470 Tullar Road, Neenah at 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

MENOMONEE FALLS chapter
Meetings held at Wehr Nature Center, second Saturday of the month, 1:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

MISSOURI

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NATURE CALENDAR

When and Where

Event

Mosquito larva emerge as adults from ponds and puddles
Swallows, toads, frogs, dragonflies and bats catch and eat mosquitos
After several warm days
Shamrock spiderlets make silken parachutes and float to their new homes
In fields, gardens and prairies
Wooly Bear caterpillars emerge as Isabella Moths
Shooting Stars bloom.
Bobolinks return
Nights, after rain, when the ground has warmed.
Earthworms come out
Young Meadow Voles and mice leave their nests.
Fox pups catch small rodents
Around Summer Solstice
First Bumblebee Moths are out

Next Issue: Natural Landscaping Facts and Folklore


Attention Wild Ones

Have you discovered something interesting about your natural landscape? Do you have a time-saving tip for growing or planting? Do you know of an interesting seasonal event that takes place in coming months? If you do, please write.

Deadlines for sending typed articles or illustrations are as follows:

| Jan./Feb. | Nov. 7 | July/Aug. | May 7 |
| Mar./April | Jan. 7 | Sept./Oct. | July 7 |
| May/June | March 7 | Nov./Dec. | Sept. 7 |

All articles should be sent to: Babette Kis, 6048 N. 114th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53225.

If material is to be returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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