

Official publication of  
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A VOICE FOR THE NATURAL LANDSCAPING MOVEMENT

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# Wild Ones®

## Journal

### WOODLAND GARDENS

By walking through a friend's woodland garden, a natural area which resembles the sort you would like to create, or a local park, you will find clues to the natural patterns of growth of the plants you wish to incorporate in your landscape.

Do the plants grow singly, a few here and there, or in a mass? Do they grow in patches or waves? Do they grow here and there in clumps of three or five, adding interest and character to the landscape?

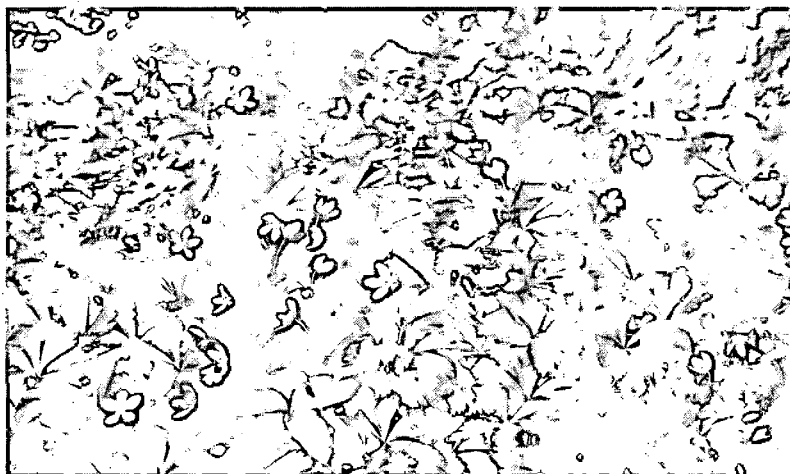
The particular micro-habitat of the plant should also be observed. Are the plants growing at the bottom of a hill, on a north-facing hill, a south-facing hill, or at the top of the hill? Is the soil mainly gravel, rich black soil,

or loam? Does the plant have breathing space; does the air move freely around it? How much shade covers it?

"The best laid schemes....," as the poet Robert Burns reminded us, "gang aft agley" [*go awry*]. So, too, Nature often plays tricks on us. For four or five years, a slope may be home to beautiful Wild Geraniums.

Then a few plants of Columbine creep in and the hill is soon a riot of red and yellow. A few years later, the hill may again be covered with Wild Geranium, Trillium, and Solomon's Plum. The succession tends to repeat itself. What is beautiful this year diminishes, and new beauties reveal themselves.

(continued on next page)



*Anemones colonize in woodland areas, spreading by both rhizome and seed.*

## **WOODLAND GARDENS** (continued from front page)

While there is a lot to learn, trying to emulate Nature and perhaps hitting upon the right combination (even though we don't understand it) may be the best prescription.

There are many effects which can be produced in a wooded area: colorful backgrounds, flowers in large patches, small clumps giving emphasis and character, quiet green areas and fern gardens, flowers interspersed in a lawn, vines screening the unsightly, and features which add *fun* to the landscape. Following are planting suggestions for creating such effects.

[Planning A Natural Yard was prepared for the Wildflower Preservation and Propagation Committee of the McHenry County Defenders, 132 Cass St., Woodstock, IL 60098. The 55-page book can be ordered for \$7 (plus \$3 S&H).]

### **Woodland plants that grow in patches or waves**

Cut-leaved Toothwort (*Dentaria laciniata*)  
Crinkleroot (*Dentaria diphylla*)  
Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*)  
Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon meadii*)  
Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)  
Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)  
Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)  
Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*)  
Woodland Sunflower (*Helianthus divaricatus*)  
Sharp-lobed Hepatica (*Hepatica acutiloba*)  
Round-lobed Hepatica (*Hepatica americana*)  
Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)  
Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)  
Jacob's Ladder (*Polemonium reptans*)  
Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum canaliculatum*)  
Feathery Solomon's Plume (*Smilacina racemosa*)  
Starry Solomon's Plume (*Smilacina stellata*)

### **Woodland vines**

Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)  
Thicket Creeper (*Parthenocissus inserta*)  
Upright Carrion (*Smilax eckrhata*)  
Common Carrion (*Smilax lasioneura*)  
Clematis (*Clematis virginiana*)  
Trumpet Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)  
American Bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*)

### **Woodland plants that add lots of character**

Red Baneberry (*Actaea rubra*)  
White Baneberry (*Actaea pachypoda*)  
Leek (*Allium tricoccum*)  
Wood Anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*)  
Rue Anemone (*Anemonella thalictroides*)  
Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema atrorubens*)  
Green Dragon (*Arisaema dracontium*)  
Drummond's Aster (*Aster sagittifolius drummondii*)  
Big-leaved Aster (*Aster macrophyllus*)  
Tall Bellflower (*Campanula americana*)  
Black Cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)  
Woodland Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)  
Elm-leaved Goldenrod (*Solidago ulmifolia*)  
Blue-stemmed Goldenrod (*Solidago caesia*)  
Zig-Zag Goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*)  
Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*)  
Celandine Poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*)

### **Woodland plants to add a colorful background**

Violets (*Viola* sp.)  
Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)  
Tall Anemone (*Anemone virginica*)  
Woodland Joe-Pye-Weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*)  
Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)

### **Woodland plants for a quiet green area**

Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*)  
Early Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum dioicum*)  
Penn Sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*)  
Bottle Brush Grass (*Hystrix patula*)  
**Ferns:** Bladder Fern (*Cystopteris bulbifera*), Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), Fragile Fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), Interrupted Fern (*Osmunda claytonia*), Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), Spinulose Wood Fern (*Dryopteris spinulosa*)

### **Woodland plants for conifer gardens** (pH 5-6)

Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*)  
Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*)  
Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*)  
Canadian Lily-of-the-valley (*Maianthemum canadense*)  
American Yew (*Taxus canadensis*)

### **Woodland plants that can be interspersed in lawn**

Early Buttercup (*Ranunculus fascicularis*)  
Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)  
Trout Lily (*Erythronium albidum*)

"When the well's dry, we know the worth of water."

—Benjamin Franklin

## **Digging Deeper**

The 'well' that is Janice Stiefel's plant database will one day run dry. Janice has warned me there are only so many "Inside Stories" left after eight years. Because our ranks have multiplied dramatically since her column's inception, we can rerun the earlier installments most of us missed. Janice also has material about a number of naturalized plants. Heavens! Non-natives? Well, we

need to be able to distinguish these in the landscape and understand how they came to be here. With that knowledge we can choose to confine a couple to the herb garden and weed out the rest.

**1998 is the end of term** for our nine at-large directors. All seats will be up for election in November, and ballots will be included in the *Journal*. Directors are responsible for management direction of the organization, which involves four quarterly meetings in various locations. If you're interested in serving, please contact Bret Rappaport for more info, (312) 845-5116. —Joy Buslaff

I'm still looking for your submissions to "The Landscape That Was" column.

Aunt Leigh: What did you do today, Cassidy?

Cassidy: We went to the Magic Forest.

Aunt Leigh: Where's that?

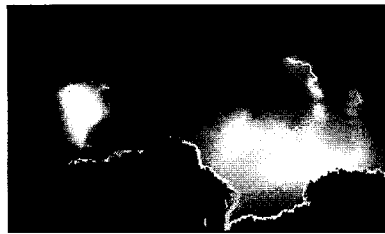
Cassidy: At the Magic Forest!

With a scruff of beard, well-worn flannel shirt and a firm handshake 85-year-old Art Lonergan welcomed us to his nursery in east central Wisconsin. Our purpose that sun-filled Sunday was to pick up a couple dozen Tamarack trees (*Larix laricina*). A unique native, they're the only northern conifer east of the Rockies to shed their needles in the fall. The most cold-hardy native tree, they're able to survive -79°F and, among conifers, have some of the strongest wood. Tied in swaths of burlap, the three- to six-foot trees were loaded into the van. Lonergan offered us some flowers from his 15-acre nursery down the road and invited us on a field trip to pick out ones we wanted.

Wild Ones cautions against buying plants that appear stolen from the wild, but Lonergan's is a natural nursery. So, in plastic grocery bags and such, I found chunks of earth, a wildflower or two sprouting from the clump, complete with some moss or leaf litter—maybe a worm or grub and microbes. Lonergan's Nursery is not a regiment of rigid rows; trees in a line disappearing into the horizon. Lonergan's Nursery is a Beech-Maple forest ecosystem where for decades Lonergan has *selectively* dug saplings and forbs, always leaving an ample supply to regenerate.

As we traveled down the dirt road toward the forest, Lonergan explained how the nursery lies on an ancient shoreline of Lake Michigan. As a result, the silicates in the forest soil were not leached out as they are from soils elsewhere. Lonergan also went on about

## LONERGAN'S MAGIC FOREST



the beneficial effects that negative ions have on vegetation growth. His theory has some scientific backing. According to John Curtis' *Vegetation of Wisconsin*, the ecological landmark treatise, there are ecologic ten-

sion zones that run along the line where the North Woods Province meets the Southern Prairie/Savanna Province. **For yet unexplained reasons, lightning tends to occur more frequently along this tension zone, increasing the presence of negative ions.** It is these ions, along with the soil rich in silicates, Lonergan contends, that promote the healthy plant growth in his forest.

The varied topography of the forest hosts a well-balanced and sustainable ecosystem rich in diversity. There are, of course, Beech trees (*Fagus grandifolia*) and Sugar Maples (*Acer saccharum*) of staggering size. The species are in constant battle, each seeking to dominate. According to Sternberg and Wilson's *Landscaping With Native Trees*, the two species have distinct reproductive strategies that ensure the co-existence of both, without the domination by either:

While Maple produce great quantities of seedlings, some of which invariably survive, Beech cannot be so dependent on seedlings, because most of its seeds are eaten by wildlife. So, once it becomes established, Beech develop suckers from a vast system of surface roots. Many supposed Beech seedlings in a forest are connected by such a root system. They have a significant competitive advantage over true seedlings and are able to dominate drier sites than the Maple. Entire Beech groves have grown from the roots of a single tree.

Lonergan confirmed that each fall the forest floor is swarmed by migrating birds to feast on the beechnuts.

(continued on next page)

## YOU ARE HERE...

Wild Ones is the oldest national natural landscaping organization. And we just keep getting bigger! With *Journal* distribution topping 1,700, we thought you'd like to see our current demographics.

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## CONGRATULATIONS, LORRIE!

Lorrie Otto was recently awarded the National Wildlife Federation's prestigious National Conservation Achievement Award in Washington, D.C.

The Wild Leek (Allium tricoccum) sends up its umbel of white flowers long after its onion-scented leaves have withered.



(continued from previous page)

Studies show they're a primary food for over 30 wild-life species and, in season, can make up half of a black bear's diet. One year, Lonerger cites, no birds came. The next, hundreds of Beech seedlings sprang up.

A prosperous understory includes Gray Dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*), Leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*) and smaller Beech and Maple. The forest floor is a mosaic of spring wildflowers—White Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) with leaves the size of pancakes, and Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) as far as the eye can see. Nascent Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) were beginning to emerge as we walked through the forest.

Jeremy, our nine-year old, headed off to the wetland to do some 'pond mucking' with his pond mucking net that his grandmother gave him for his birthday. Conor (8) and his younger sister, Chandler (5), headed off the other way to explore and play hide-n-seek. I traipsed down the hill with a shovel to search for plants. Lonerger, my wife and three-year-old daughter, Cassidy, strolled toward an upland area covered with a sea of Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) and numerous sedge species. Lonerger explained the plant succession he has observed over the decades. A pair of Scarlet Tanagers perched on a nearby branch while a Pileated Woodpecker tapped away at a tree trunk.

Lonerger asked us to take some transplants home for our budding natural landscape. He reminded me to get a lot of soil from around the plant. At the bottom of the hill and off into the underbrush, I came upon a sea of bright yellow and rich light green—Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) interspersed with sedges and ferns.

There was no alien Buckthorn; there was no Honeysuckle; there was no Garlic Mustard; there was no deer damage. Why? Lonerger explained that a well-balanced forest is not hospitable to exotics because the native plants out-compete them. As for the absence of deer, "hooved locust,"\* Lonerger has a

\*This is a metaphor attributed to naturalist John Muir who, in pleading for the preservation of the Yosemite Valley at the turn of the century, decried the use of the fragile ecosystem as a pasture for sheep. He called these sheep "hooved locust" as they destroyed the valley floor ecosystem. The destruction visited on our continent's forests by overpopulating deer has a similar effect.

homespun remedy. He taps the maples and drains the sap to make his syrup. He then leaves the buckets under the taps to fill with sap. Over time, flies, mosquitoes and other insects fall into the sap and expire. The smelly syrup, Lonerger contends, keeps away the deer.

It was time to go—in more ways than one. Cassidy heard Nature's call and asked where she could find the restroom. Lonerger paused, looked down at the cinnamon-haired tot and pointed to two large Beech trees, "Over there are the restrooms. One is the boy's, one's the girl's. I don't know which is which. Pick one."

We left Lonerger's Nursery that day with a carful of forbs and trees for our yard. It is a scene that has played out over and over again in decades past. **Many pioneer natural landscapers who we now count among the deans of the Natural Landscape Movement gathered their first plants from Lonerger's Nursery.** Lorrie Otto, Rochelle Whiteman and Milt Ettenheim all got their plants here in the early '60s. Their yards now grace pages of countless gardening books and periodicals, and serve as standards for what many of us are trying to achieve in our yards.

Academia has also turned to Lonerger, who has a 1933 horticulture degree from University of Wisconsin-Madison. In the mid-1960s, just out of graduate school from the same university, a young Darrel Morrison went to Lonerger for natives to plant in a Madison park Morrison had designed. Lonerger donated the plants. In the years that followed, Lonerger took college students through the woods to study intricacies of microclimates, and to learn why a certain species grew in deep shade, in depressions, or on the top of a ridge. In reflecting on his work with Lonerger three decades ago, Dr. Morrison, now with the University of Georgia and an honorary director of Wild Ones, commented, **"Art knows so much because he's out there with the plants. The schools don't teach all that he knows, and we could use more people with his kind of practical, self-taught education."**

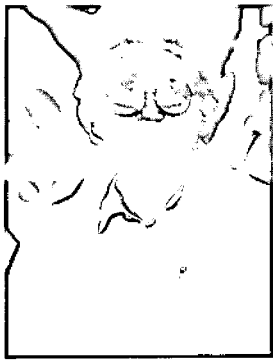
Back at home, as I spaded in the Blue Cohosh, Gray Dogwood, Trillium, Wild Ginger and other boulder-size chunks of forb-filled forest floor, I reflected on the wisdom in the stubbled and worn face of Art Lonerger, the generosity of one who shares his plants, time and knowledge with others and a special place Cassidy calls the **Magic Forest**. —Bret Rappaport

## 1998 GRANT RECIPIENTS

4

We're happy to announce six 1998 Lorrie Otto Seeds For Education grant recipients! Receiving \$300 each plus seeds/plants from Seeds For Education Partners are the **Wetland for North Elementary School in Sycamore, Ill., and Plymouth Schools' Glacial Prairie in Wisconsin.** Both projects received unanimously high ratings from all judges. Also awarded \$300 each are **The Retreat at Syble Hopp School in De Pere, Wis., a prairie**

**and outdoor classroom for developmentally disabled students, and the Wisconsin Woodland Garden Project at the Green Bay Botanical Garden.** Awarded \$200 each are a prairie expansion and diversification, plus courtyard woodland, at **Arrowhead High School in Hartland, Wis., and the Prairie Patch Project for fourth graders in Libertyville, Ill.** It's exciting to see plans for outdoor classrooms integrated with the school curriculum, and we look forward to progress reports. [See page 9]



## DOT WADE

**I**t all began in a small town in southern New Jersey where Dot was born in 1914. Her father took her for woodland walks. Her mother made her a partner in flower gardening and allowed Dot to have her own wildflower garden. Using her mother's 1887 edition of *Gray's Lessons in Botany* helped Dot name the flowers. Reed's *Flower Guide* was given to Dot at age 10; at 15 she received *Handbook of Nature Study* by Comstock. Vacations in the 1920s on the Jersey coast, to Florida, Vermont and New Hampshire exposed Dot to the multitude of wonders of the natural world. Her high school dream was to have a wildflower nursery—the dream became a reality when Dot was almost 60.

In 1932 Dot went to UW-Madison for its large botany department. While a senior, she met her future husband in Dr. Norman Fassett's class "Spring Flora of Wisconsin." Doug was a graduate student under Aldo Leopold. **Since childhood Dot had an appreciation for the environment; Doug began her awareness about concerns for the environment. Leopold attracted people of world fame in the environmental field; Doug and Dot were a part of this exciting time.** It was then they met Bill Vogt and later read his *Road to Survival* on the perils of overpopulation. In 1962 *Silent Spring* awakened the world to the destruction of the balance of nature by our use of lethal chemicals. Today Dot's biggest fear about the environment is the consequences of the population explosion. She states, "There isn't a single problem in this world that isn't caused by too many people inhabiting our planet."

In 1951 the Ecological Society of America had a committee which broke away and founded The Nature Conservancy; Doug was a charter member with Dot at his side. The Conservancy has been an important focus in Dot's life, as a member, donor and volunteer.

In 1964 Doug became professor of Outdoor Education at Northern Illinois' Taft Campus, Oregon, Ill. Wherever they lived, their hobby was studying the natives. With Doug's love of birds and Dot's of the flora, they made a great team.

In 1966 the sound of Upland Sandpipers stopped them as they were driving down Lowden Road south of Oregon, Ill. They spied a flower they'd never seen before—Downy Yellow Painted Cup (*Castilleja sessiliflora*)—within an excellent prairie, rich in native grassland birds and plants. The Prairie Gentian and Hill's Thistle were beautiful. On a 1977 hike the Wades found the federally threatened *Lespedeza leptostachya*—this prairie is now protected by The Nature Conservancy and known to be the home of the largest population of this rare bush clover in Illinois. Dot always carried Bob Betz's 1965 edition of *Prairie Plants of the Chicago Region* to identify the native plants. While with Betz on his cemetery studies, Dot learned which plants would be good in a nursery situation.

## Shooting stars



The Wades attended the First North American Prairie Conference, held at Knox College in Galesburg, Ill., in 1968. At the Second Conference, in Madison in 1970, they heard Jim Zimmerman's plea to start local nurseries. Bob Smith was first with Prairie Nursery in Westfield, Wis. The Wades were second when they began Windrift Nursery in 1972. Ray Schulenberg helped and inspired them while most thought they were crazy to be growing those 'weeds.' The Wades could not have been prouder when their son, Alan, began his native Prairie Moon Nursery in Winona, Minn., in 1982.

At the Third Conference, in 1972 in Kansas, the Wades met Tim Keller from Sterling, Ill. Back home they introduced him to the prairie they had discovered along Lowden Road. For years the three of them took everyone to the area, hoping to find a buyer who would save it from development. In 1986 The Nature Conservancy initiated protection of the area when it purchased the core of what was to become Nachusa Grasslands, 15 minutes before an auction that would have resulted in the land becoming a subdivision. The Colwell Track, acquired in 1987, now has "Doug's Knob" and "Dot's Knob." That was also the year Dot lost Doug after 51 years of a remarkable marriage. Today The Conservancy has about 1,000 acres preserved in Nachusa Grasslands.

The Wade's Frank Lloyd Wright-style home on five acres is Dot's private sanctuary with its woods and prairie, and a view down the hillside of the Rock River Valley. Her wish is that the success of organizations such as Wild Ones continue to snowball because, "I want all those who come after me to also have wild places to cherish."

—**Fran Lowman**  
Fran Lowman interviewed Dot for this feature. Both are active members of the Rock River Valley Chapter in Illinois.

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# The landscape that was

This text was written by J.W. Wing for *Chapman's History of Washtenaw County, Michigan, 1881* (Volume 2, pp. 823-824). Our thanks to John Knott of the Michigan Chapter for bringing this to our attention.

In this township, and about midway between the city of Ann Arbor and the village of Dexter, is situated the beautiful and picturesque little valley of Honey Creek. On either side its banks are natural meadows that look very bright and beautiful in the summer time, and where large quantities of hay are annually secured for the wintering of stock. Beyond the natural meadows, the land is very productive, especially on the northwest side of the stream. On the southeast side the land is sandy, and was originally covered with Yellow and Black Oak timber, but on the northwest side of the stream the soil is a deep, rich, gravelly, loam, and was originally comparatively free from timber, but there were many fine specimens of Burr-oak and White Oak to be found.

172  
YEARS  
AGO

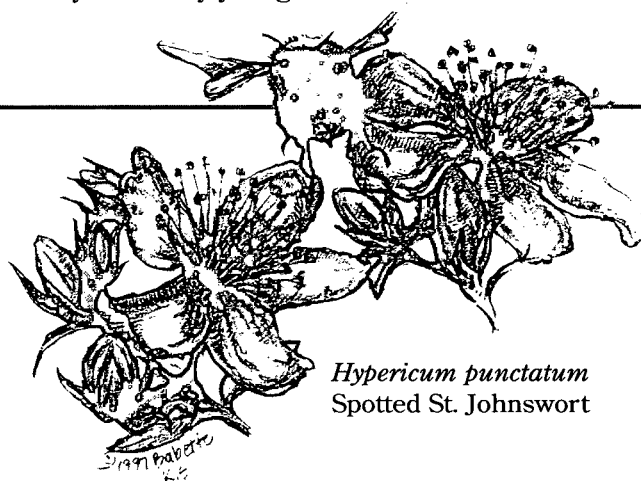
[Note: Streams often acted as barriers to fire. Since prevailing winds in the area were from the northwest, it was common for the northwest banks to be grassland and the southeast banks to be wooded.]

The stream itself is not large, but very beautiful. It is fed by numerous large springs, nearly all of which are in the township of Scio, and the water is so clear that the smallest fish can be distinctly seen as it glides over its pebbly bottom. It being fed by large springs so near at hand it seldom ever freezes over in winter, and is so cold in summer that it is used by the haymakers to quench their thirst while they are securing the crops that grow upon its banks. For many years after the first settlement of this county it was quite common to find in this little stream large fish that had found their way up from the Huron

River, but when the Central Railroad was built it was found necessary to place a large embankment at the mouth of this stream, and it greatly obstructed the free passage of large fish to its source, and now we seldom find any in its waters that weigh more than a pound or two. This stream derived its name from the large number of bees and bee-trees that were found in its immediate vicinity, when it was first settled by the whites.

The plains for several miles up and down the stream on either side before they were disturbed by man were one vast flower bed during the summer season, which made a happy hunting ground and a fine field for labor for these little industrious and far-seeing creatures, and it is said upon good authority that single trees were found in that locality by the early settlers, from which were taken more than 300 pound of honey; and those containing from 100 to 150 were quite common. These acquisitions to the stores of the pioneers were of great benefit to them, for fruit was scarce and sugar dear; but nature seemed to have prepared this portion of the State, and especially this little valley, for the settlement of civilized man in a pre-eminent degree. The natural meadow furnished hay for their stock; the deer that roamed plentifully over the plains, and the fish that were numerous in the streams furnished them with provisions; cranberries were obtained from the native meadows and honey from the flower beds was stored away in the trees of the forest, apparently waiting their coming.

The land in this valley was mostly located by the pioneers in the year 1826-'7. They have nearly all passed away. There are a few yet remaining—J.W. Wing, Geo. A. Peters, Robert Popkins, and Mrs. Samuel Holmes, all of whom removed to this locality with their parents when they were very young.



*Hypericum punctatum*  
Spotted St. Johnswort

"That which is not good for the beehive, cannot be good for the bees."  
—Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Roman emperor 161-180

TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT, there are numerous native members of *Hypericum*—*canadense*, *denticulatum*, *ellipticum*, *mutilum*, *punctatum*, *pyramidatum*, *spathulatum*, and *virginicum*—also known as Canada, Coppery, Pale, Dwarf, Spotted, Great, Shrubby, and Marsh St. Johnswort. But it is the European transplant that is so often found in the field, in the media, and in the medical literature. See opposite page...

**Family:** Hypericaceae (St. Johnswort)

**Other Names:** God's Wonder Plant, Devil's Scourge, Grace of God, Rosin Rose, Amber Touch-and-Heal, Terrestrial Sun, Hundred Holes, St. John's Blood, Mary's-Sweat, Herb of St. John, Goldenwood, Goat Weed, Klamath Weed, Balm-of-the-Warrior's-Wound, and more.

**Habitat:** Dry pastures, roadsides and neglected fields; a weed difficult to eradicate. In open situations, on semi-dry soil of various sorts, but particularly calcareous (limestone) soils.

**Description:** Broad, branched terminal clusters of brilliant yellow  $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-inch-wide flowers adorn this plant. There are five petals with minute

black dots along their edges, and three sets of numerous stamens, with three styles. The opposite, elliptic (rounded equally at both ends) leaves are 1 to 2 inches long, numerous with see-through dots. The fruit is an egg-shaped, brown capsule. **Height:** 1 to 2½ feet. **Flowering:** June to September

**Comments:** St. Johnswort is NATURALIZED in the Americas. It was INTRODUCED FROM EUROPE, where it was widely appreciated as an herb. The many names give clues as to its uses. The plant tops produce a dark yellow dye and an alcoholic extract of the flower dyes silk and wool a violet-red. It does not color cotton. The plant also contains an antibiotic which has been patented as a possible food preservative.

People considered the plant as holy and believed it would protect them from the devil. It was gathered and hung on doors and windows in medieval England to ward off thunder and evil spirits.

**Medicinal Use:** This plant has been used in herbal healing for over 2,000 years, for its ability to speed the healing of burns and wounds (especially those with severed nerve tissue). An ointment or tincture of the flowers was most useful for skin eruptions, scratches, and insect bites. Recently scientists have gathered some evidence on the herb's possible effectiveness as an immune system stimulant

which could benefit AIDS patients. It has also been listed in several alternative medicine manuals as an effective anti-depressant, in place of Prozac. Like Prozac, St. Johnswort affects serotonin metabolism and alters brain chemistry, but very subtly. One side effect of consuming the plant is a possible photosensitivity to the sun if taken in large amounts. If it is consumed in combination with certain drugs and food, other side effects are possible. Do your own research before jumping on the bandwagon.

There are several native St. Johnswort species but, as far as I know, Common St. Johnswort is the only one used medicinally.

## COMMON ST. JOHNSWORT (*Hypericum perforatum*)

**A weed with a history ... and a possible future**

### Name Origin:

According to Linnaeus, the genus name, *Hypericum* (hy-PER-i-kum), is from the Greek

words *yper*, meaning "upper," and *eikon*, meaning "an image." The species name, *perforatum* (per-fore-RAY-tum), is due to the leaves which seem to be perforated with small translucent dots.

The yellow flowers turn red when crushed, because of the release of the red fluorescent pigment hypericine. This was a major factor in the development of the legend surrounding the herb—red signifying blood. Since St. John was beheaded and the herb is in full bloom on St. John's Day, June 24, it became known as *herba Sancti Iohannis* and later as St. Johnswort or the Herb of St. John.

**Author's Note:** Generally, this plant is hated by farmers, because it spreads rapidly with its creeping stem. We have several stands of it on our property, but it certainly doesn't take over. It has never appeared as a weed in our garden.

I love having all these history lessons and legends growing on our land. It keeps me in touch with our ancestors who had to find their own medicinal cures in nature. They didn't have a drugstore to patronize. Their knowledge of the plants growing around them was astounding. Perhaps, some of this wisdom is returning, however. St. Johnswort's virtue as a treatment for depression was recently discussed on the Oprah Winfrey Show and has also been mentioned on other prime time newscasts and talk shows. With the mad rush for St. Johnswort, maybe the farmers will diversify and plant the weed they've been trying to eliminate all these years. Wouldn't that be an ironic twist for the history books? ☺

© 1998 Janice Stiefel, Plymouth, Wis.





I have to admit that I've never had an Elderberry in my yard, and I don't have a good explanation why. Elderberries are profuse in the flowers and berries they produce. They are fast growers and require little care.

For new homeowners trying to build a habitat for wildlife, elderberries can be the perfect solution. The flowers can add fragrance to the air and the birds and insects attracted can add color and diversity to the yard.

**Characteristics:** Elderberries become dense shrubs, bearing numerous flowers in spring, and provide good nesting cover throughout the summer and abundant fruit in the fall. Height attained generally ranges from 6 to 12 feet, and width is often approximately equal to the height. Dense green leaves grace this plant in spring through fall while winter provides a look at the interesting, tightly clustered branch base leading to arching branches.

**This plant enjoys:** Full sun to full shade will suit this shrub just fine. Elderberries are also quite satisfied in moist conditions. In fact, Elderberries are one of our most tolerant shrubs in regard to wet conditions. They also do fine in periods of drought. Planting zones from 3 to 5 can be home to Elderberries. They are quite short-lived, with some snow and ice damage to

be expected almost annually. However, these shrubs spread rapidly, so new growth should always outpace any losses.

**Who benefits:** Upwards of 80 species of birds and other wildlife have been documented utilizing Elderberries. The flowers welcome orioles, cedar waxwings, catbirds, and hummingbirds enjoy the nectar in spring. Cardinals, catbirds, robins and native sparrows can be found nesting in the branches. Fall migrants abound on the ripening fruit. Spectacular visitors include warblers (in their less colorful fall outfits), thrashers, towhees, thrushes, and even my favorite woodpecker, the spectacular red-headed variety.

**Companion plants:** Companions shrubs for wildlife would include dogwoods, Ninebark, Winterberry, and hawthorns. Trees suggested could include willows and River Birch. By providing this variety of trees and shrubs, your yard will become a favorite nesting spot for our nesting birds and a regular stopping point for Midwestern migrants. 🐦

—Steve Mahler

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

## ELDERBERRY (*Sambucus canadensis*)



## The front forty

### INVASIVES IN A CAN

Recently I was at a meeting on natural landscaping and someone brought up the question of *Meadow In A Can* (those non-native wildflowers that give our own such a bad name). They wanted to know if it was really so bad, and isn't it better than a grass lawn. I was too shocked to answer at the time, but some others touched briefly on how discouraged people can become when they try something like that and it fails. The meeting then continued and I missed my chance to reply. I will attempt to rectify that matter now.

One of the plants that comes from these packages is Dames Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*). It greatly resembles our native Phlox, the most apparent difference being five petals on the

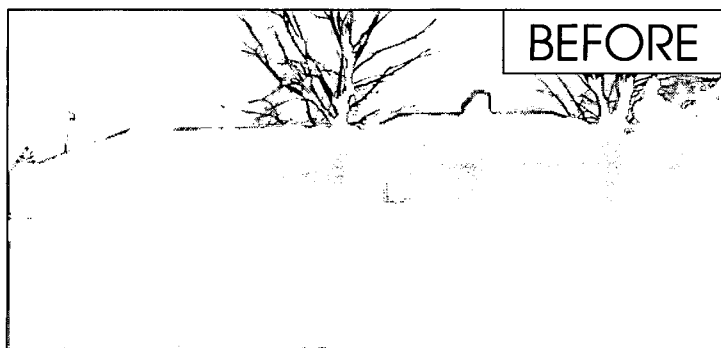
Phlox and four on the Dames Rocket. This plant is now on the DNR list of invasive plants in most Midwestern states.

Many of the seeds in these quick-to-sprout packages of non-native wildflowers are species that we already see growing along roadsides, in waste areas and in old fields. Most didn't come from these wildflower packets but were garden escapees from years past. Which just goes to show how aggressive they are. The most common of all is Queen Anne's Lace (*Daucus carota*). Yes, I know that many butterflies (and humans) love it, but what if the very fact that it occupies space is all that it takes to keep some natives from occupying that same area. 🐦

—Judy Crane





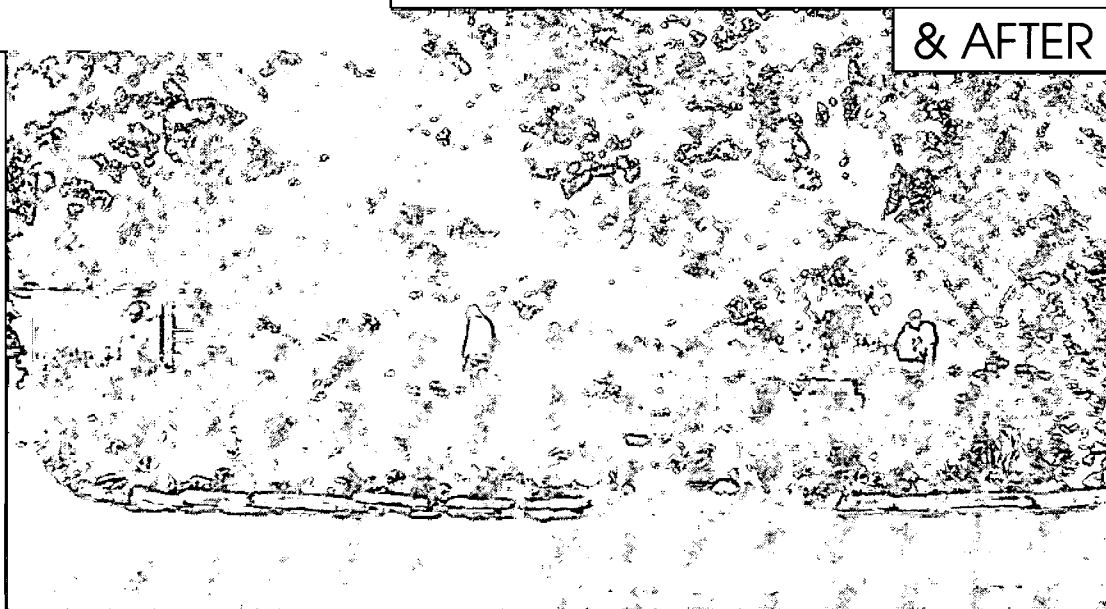


## The "Afterlife"

*"A wild garden puts your tenure in perspective."  
—Sydney Eddison, quoted in Judy Glattstein's Waterscaping*

If it weren't for the garage door on the left, you wouldn't know this was the same place. Pat Brust's prairie garden evolved over eight years. Nestled in the heart of it are a pair of Leopold benches and a stump table on which to rest a lemonade.

Are you attending our yard tours and meetings? If not, you're missing out on some nifty sights—and insights!



## Classrooms without walls

*"We must experience the natural world personally daily."  
—Don Vorpahl, landscape designer*

## BUHR PARK CHILDREN'S WET MEADOW PROJECT

Dear Friends at Wild Ones,

We very much appreciate the grant from the Lorrie Otto Seeds For Education Fund. You were the first to put that kind of trust in our project and I'm sure it gave us credibility in applying for other grants. We did [later] receive substantial funding from a local foundation ... Thanks again for the seed money.

*[The Buhr Park project in Ann Arbor, Mich., received a 1997 Seeds For Education grant. The project is documented at <http://comnet.org/local/orgs/meadow>. Following are excerpts from their progress report and press articles.]*

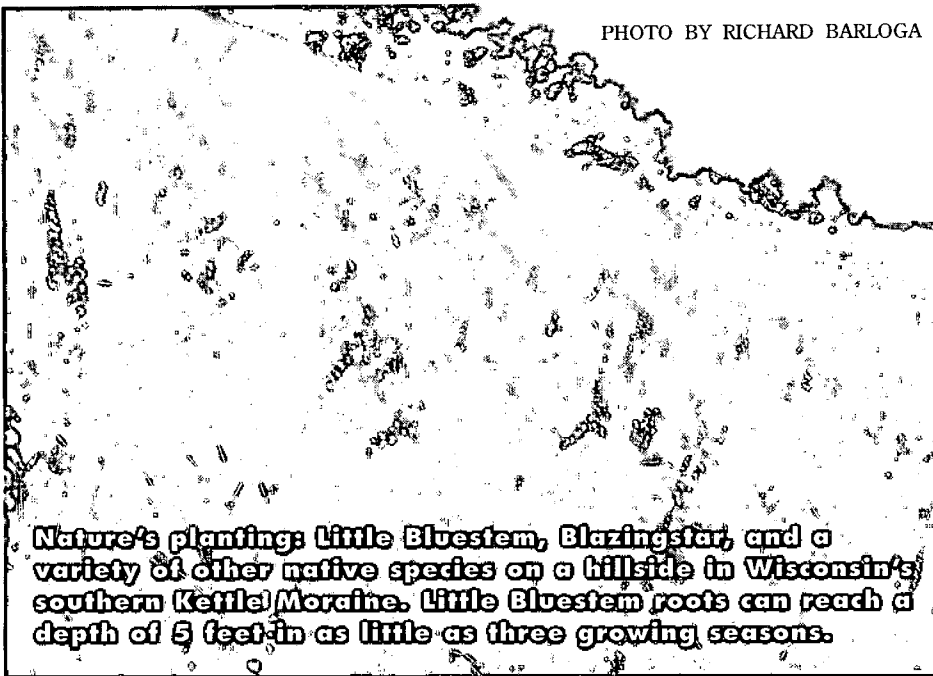
Sarah Kurz (8), one of the self-dubbed 'super swampers,' just before helping plant the meadow this fall: "It was amazing. When it really happens, it's like, wow!" Becca Ritter-Charles (10): "I'm sure we're going to have butterflies. We're planting butterfly weed!" An adult leader, clutching a sedge plant as his 5-year-old daughter Zoya dug a hole in the muck with her hands: "I've always wanted to do something like this. But I couldn't do it alone. It takes a cooperative effort ... It will be interesting to bring my daughter here years from now and say we helped plant this."

The project grew from children's concerns about the environment—children from nearby Blossom Home Preschool

and surrounding neighborhoods, led by educator Jeannine Palms. From observations and measurements, the children noticed how Mallet's Creek was harmed by excessive stormwater runoff, and noticed soil erosion and other drainage problems at Buhr Park. They came up with a solution that will improve both the park and the creek. The wet meadow ecosystem will provide a habitat for native plants and animals, an attractive educational site for children, neighbors, and other visitors, and an environmental filter for stormwater runoff from the park grounds. Children started the idea and have been important in planning and publicizing the project, in building the meadow, and will help to care for it.

In September 1997, more than 65 children, youth, and adults transplanted about 1,600 plants, thousands more wet meadow seeds, and a cover crop of oats in the recently excavated wet meadow site. The following Saturday volunteers planted native prairie plants and seeds that will act as a buffer zone around the wet meadow. Rains helped the plants become established, and the oat seeds sprouted, providing erosion protection through fall and winter. Coming next are interpretive signs to explain the wet meadow to park visitors, continuing stewardship of the wet meadow, and more. Seed money, indeed. *za*

—Nancy Aten



**Nature's planting: Little Bluestem, Blazingstar, and a variety of other native species on a hillside in Wisconsin's southern Kettle Moraine. Little Bluestem roots can reach a depth of 5 feet in as little as three growing seasons.**

## NATIVE PLANTS ON SLOPING GROUND

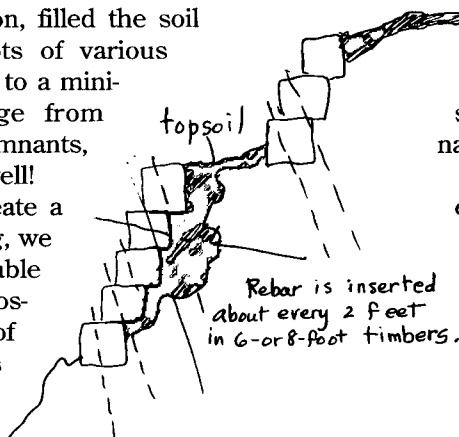
The hillsides and ravines of our part of the world have been covered by plants since the last glacier retreated some 10,000 years ago, leaving piles of sand and gravel or slabs of wet clay breaking into the last puddles—today's Great Lakes. The plant communities on these slopes have not always been the same. They slowly changed (and are still changing) to adjust to changing soil conditions, available moisture, and the balance of power among species. In general, topsoils on hills are thinner and more easily disturbed, drainage is less well controlled, and subsoils are less stable than in flat areas; indigenous plant communities adjusted to these conditions, as well as to any human management such as frequent burning. Whatever conditions they found, native plants covered steep hills and banks with vegetation, filled the soil over time with roots of various design, kept erosion to a minimum, and, to judge from our few precious remnants, looked beautiful as well!

In trying to recreate a natural bank planting, we need to provide as stable an environment as possible. The amount of intervention depends on the amount of dis-

turbance and the degree of slope we are left with after clearing, grading or natural slippage. **In extreme situations, we should try to terrace in as natural a way as possible.** In grading cuts where subsoil has been exposed, for instance, some way must be found to retain some topsoil. Many young rooted plants will settle and thrive in wet clay, but seeds must have topsoil to germinate. One answer is to build slightly sloped retaining walls of timbers, drilled and held in place with rebar, the steel rods that are used to reinforce poured concrete. The topsoil settles behind the timber, the taller plants mask the walls, and, given time, the deeper roots help hold the whole arrangement together. Loose, sandy soil would make such a project even more challenging. Even native plants

cannot be expected to hold a bank by themselves where bare soil would persist in nature.

On smaller projects, or when the slope is not quite so extreme, an organic mulch may be laid down and plants put in through it, as



closely spaced as budget or availability allows. The mulch will minimize erosion until the plants can spread their leaves and roots to cover the soil. Plants with shallow roots spread quickly; those with deeper roots may take years to develop their soil-holding power, but they should be installed right at the start.

### EXAMPLE #1—IN SHADE

For our choice of species we look to nature: What is native in your area for the habitat you are planting? And nature teaches us that 'diversity is stability'—*E pluribus unum ecosystem*—many species together form a planting that will be stable over time because many niches are filled, both above and below the surface.

Just such a bank planting was installed by Lorrie Otto in 1987, when the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center needed to add classroom space. The ground was excavated, and by late summer the new windows looked out on a steep bank, heavily shaded, and covered with a sheet of black plastic! Lorrie and a friend cut holes in the plastic on one-foot centers and planted Wild Strawberries (*Fragaria virginiana*), Wild Grape (*Vitis riparia*) and Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), all transplanted from her yard, and all native to the woods surrounding the project. The strawberries took, and by the end of the next summer, most of the plastic could be removed. A carpet of fast-spreading, shallow-rooted natives was protecting the bank from erosion and weeds.

The real proof of this planting came 10 years later, however. The bank, being steep and inaccessible, had been left to itself—exactly the goal of a wild restoration. The strawberries had retreated to the flat terrace at the foot of the bank. The Virginia Creeper had come into its own, sending a tangle of roots into the red clay, and tolerating the shade better than the strawberries. The grape was still around, but had not grown. Instead, there were a few Choke Cherries, pioneer woody plants. (Trees and shrubs are the deep roots of the woodland.) Native goldenrod was filling a lot of space just below the soil surface. The animals

"Frequently, half—and often much more—of every plant in grassland is invisible. This is the part in the soil. It is the most permanent part and changes but little from season to season. Conversely, the parts above ground—the image we recall as prairie—cease growth and die with the approach of winter, and for half the year, the living prairie is underground."—J.E. Weaver, *Prairie Plants and Their Environment*

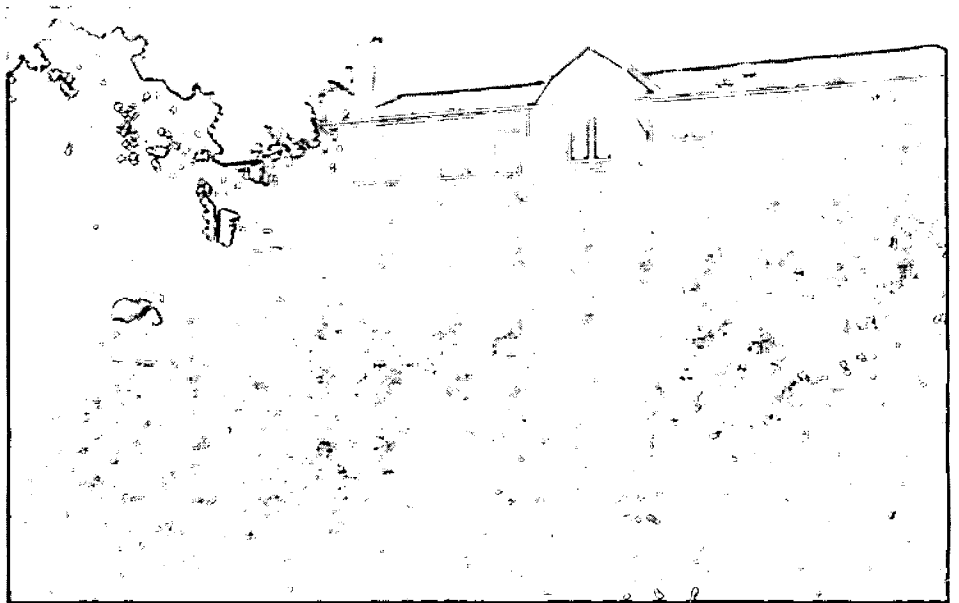
had provided some natural terracing with their small burrows, and mosses helped heal the scars. At least one Sweet Cicely (*Osmorhiza claytonii*) had seeded itself. Brambles were there, but not excessive. A few grass plants had taken root, probably not native. In short, a young successional mix of plants was providing habitat and protecting soil. Weeds had mostly been kept out; no one species was dominant. This was a sound, do-it-yourself answer to a difficult problem. If woodland flowers and grasses had been added in the beginning, the present diversity might be even greater and the esthetic result more varied through the seasons. On the other hand, if a typical non-native shade-tolerant groundcover had been installed, the bank might well have become a solid patch of Dame's Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) or Gill-over-the-ground (*Glechoma hederacea*), both invasive weeds.

## EXAMPLE #2—IN SUN

**Starting seed on an erosion-prone site presents some special problems.** The property in the picture above was too steep for mowing, and the owners wanted to maintain their view without trees. The topsoil had been set aside during construction, and respread after the final grading. Timing is important: Wild seed was put down immediately after grading, on the unstable soil. A non-native nurse crop provided quick germination, beating out the weed seeds in the soil. A nurse crop can be composed of agricultural species (i.e., annual rye/flax/oats/buckwheat or winter wheat/rye) that will not winter over and compete with tiny native seedlings. Mats of organic fibers were unrolled over the seeding and sprinkled to help them adhere to the bare ground. (The material is shredded straw processed with biodegradable glue. It is weed-free. The cost is justified by the need to pro-

tect the investment in seed, the profile of the hillside and the building itself.)

If your slope has simply been cut or cleared rather than graded, it's important not to disturb the soil with tilling. The non-native vegetation must be



BOTH PHOTOS BY RANDY POWERS

eliminated before seeds can take root, but this is best done with a glyphosate weed killer. The thatch should then be cleared away to allow the seeds to contact the soil, but the dead roots should be left to hold and enrich the soil.

The first year this prairie on the hill saw only nurse crop, but by the third year the pioneer prairie plants were thick, and the longer-term perennial forbs and grasses had gotten their start. Of the 56 species included in the original mix, 42 have now bloomed. A good start for a balanced restoration! This planting was done by our seed company, and then the owner worked hard for the first three years to bring the prairie in. The company provided hands-on help and experienced advice to keep the natural plant succession moving in the right direction. Every planting needs slightly different, site-specific strategies to discourage weeds and encourage natives. Now,

the weeds are controlled by the natives, and the species in the original seed mix have distributed themselves according to habitat, with those that like it wetter coming in more frequently at the bottom of the hill. Different root structures, particularly of grasses, have begun to stabilize and build soil, since "vegetation returns more to the soil than it takes from it" (J.E. Weaver). Again, the secret is to plant a great variety of species right at the start. Whether you plan to use seeds or plants, do it yourself or get expert help, the advice for steep sites is the same as for any native planting: **Study your native remnants, stabilize the soil, and beg, buy or raise as many different species suited to your site as possible.**

—Wendy Walcott and  
Randy Powers, proprietor of  
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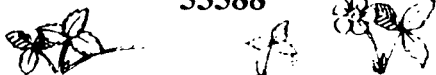
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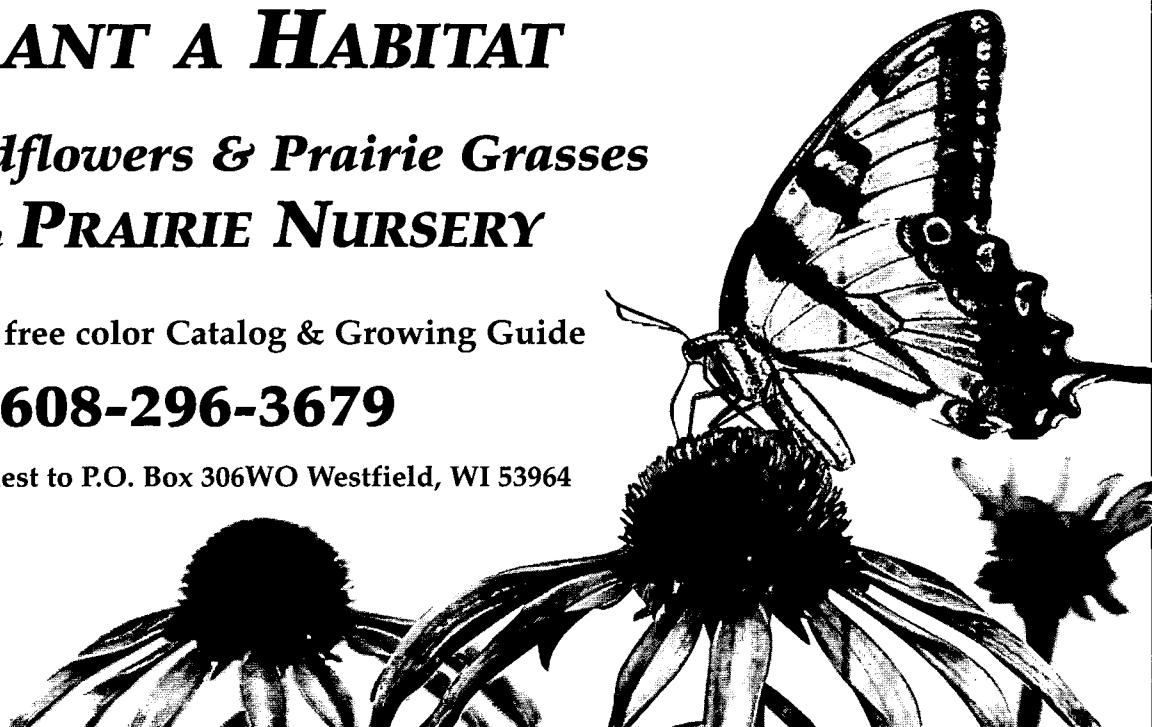
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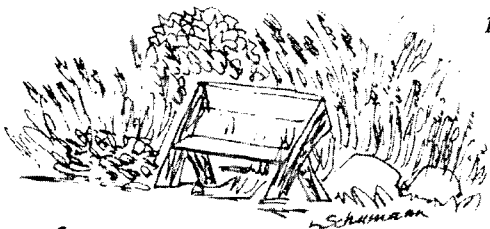


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## CHAPTER NEWS

In February the new Menomonee River Area Chapter spent two afternoons cutting Buckthorn at Lime Kiln Park. About 20 members turned out to enjoy the sunny weather, get to know each other better and have the satisfaction of improving this lovely park. In the future they plan to continue their assault on Buckthorn, Garlic Mustard, Honeysuckle ... and then they hope to introduce desirable native plants to make the park a real showplace. "We're glad to have this opportunity to

work with the Village Parks Department and are looking forward to doing more for our community in the future," report Dave and Chris Abresch.



## The meeting place

### ILLINOIS

#### LAKE-TO-PRAIRIE CHAPTER

Programs are held Tuesdays at 7:15 p.m. in the Byron Colby Community Barn at Prairie Crossing, Grayslake (Rt. 45 just south of Ill. 120). Visitors welcome. Call Karin Wisiol for info, (847) 548-1650.

MAY 12—Birdscaping Your Backyard. Steve Mahler, owner of The Wild Bird Center, Menomonee Falls, Wis., will focus on how to attract birds to your landscape.

#### GREATER DuPAGE CHAPTER

Call (630) 415-IDIG for current info.

#### ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER

Meet at various locations. Call Jarrett Prairie Center, Byron Forest Preserve, 7993 N. River Rd., Byron, at (815) 234-8535 for info.

MAY 21—Walk with naturalist Don Miller to view woodland flowers. Fran Lowman shares slides of woodland perennials. Severson Dells Environmental Center, 6:30 p.m.

JUNE 18—Plant sale at Ender's Greenhouse, 6:30 p.m. Owner Anne Meyer will speak about her planting methods and the addition of 50 new species.

### KANSAS

Chapter meets monthly. Call Michael S. Almon for info, (913) 832-1300.

### KENTUCKY

#### FRANKFORT CHAPTER

For meeting times and locations call Katie Clark at (502) 226-4766 or e-mail [herb@kih.net](mailto:herb@kih.net).

MAY 11—Planting at walking/running trail at Lakeview Park. Planting natives into no-mow zones.

JUNE—Call Katie for info.

### MICHIGAN

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month. Call Dave Borneman for info, (734) 994-4834.

### OHIO

#### COLUMBUS CHAPTER

Meetings are held the second Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at Inniswood Metro Gardens, Innis House, 940 Hempstead Rd, Westerville, unless otherwise noted. Call Martha Preston for info, (614) 263-9468.

### OKLAHOMA

#### OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

Meetings are held on the last Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. at the Stillwater Public Library, Rm 138, unless otherwise noted.

### WISCONSIN

#### FOX VALLEY AREA CHAPTER

Meetings are held at UW-Extension office, 625 E. Cnty Rd. Y, Oshkosh, 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

MAY 16—Spring Wildflower & Yard Tour featuring Heckrodt Wetland Reserve, Menasha; Memorial Park, Neenah; members' yards. Watch chapter newsletter for details.

JUNE 13—The Lupines Are Blooming. Tour Waupaca-area properties host to the endangered Karner Blue butterfly, help do a butterfly count. Carpool from K-Mart lots: 8:30/Oshkosh, 8:45/Appleton. Bring lunch.

#### GREEN BAY CHAPTER

Meetings are held at the Green Bay Botanical Gardens, 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Call Julie Macier for info, (920) 465-4759.

MAY—Plant rescue. Date and location to be announced.

JUNE 3—Christa MacAuliffe School, 2071 Holl Dr., 7 p.m. Tour Planet Htrae, our Lorrie Otto Seed for Education award winner, with Principal Mike Reinhert.

#### MADISON CHAPTER

Meetings are held the last Thursday of the month at Arboretum McKay Center, 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Public is welcome. Call Joe Powelka for more info, (608) 837-6308.

**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.

MAY 23—10 a.m. Bench building: Construct your own Aldo Leopold bench at the Powelkas'. Bring a sack lunch and sit by the pond. Fee: cost of materials.

JUNE 25—"Help Me Day." Assist three members to naturalize their yards by offering design suggestions and pick up some hints for your own.

### MENOMONEE RIVER AREA CHAPTER

Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Center, W152 N8684 Margaret Rd., Menomonee Falls. Call Judy Crane for info, (414) 251-2185.

MAY 20—6:30 p.m. It's outdoors for a "happy walk" through Schoen Laufen Park in Germantown with Curt Crane as our guide to spring ephemerals. Meet at park, east of Maple Road and Lilac Road.

JUNE 17—6:30 p.m. Dave and Chris Abresch host a tour of their yard. N64 W19425 Mill Road. Call Chris or Dave if you need further directions, 252-3012.

JUNE 20—9 a.m.-noon at Farmers Market, Main Street in Menomonee Falls. Native plant sale, plants from Randy Powers' Prairie Future Seed. Call Judy for more info.

### MILWAUKEE—NORTH CHAPTER

Meetings are held at the Schlitz Audubon Center, 1111 E. Brown Deer Rd., Bayside, second Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m., unless otherwise noted. Call voice mail message center at (414) 299-9888.

MAY 9—Meet at Indian Hills School on Brown Deer Rd. Rescue dig and plant sale. Call Mary Lou Findley to be added to the Rescue Phone Tree, (414) 966-2260.

JUNE 13—"Show Me Day." Directions will be given to area sites. Bring notebooks and cameras as this is intended to be a more interactive experience than a yard tour.

### MILWAUKEE—WEHR CHAPTER

Meetings are held at the Wehr Nature Center, second Saturday of the month, 1:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Call voice mail message center at (414) 299-9888.

MAY 9—We'll visit the recently saved Ancient Oaks property in New Berlin and the yard of Jim and Sandy Blake.

JUNE 13—Annual "Help Me Day."

Entertain a friend you've too long ignored and  
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invitation or give your friend a call.

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# Happy Summer Solstice

JUNE 21

*The Sun and the Stars mark the seasons,  
Although little cares the gray Moon,  
As we skirt the Celestial Equator,  
Each December and again in late June.*

*Wishes cannot postpone the stars' shifting,  
And neither, old friend, can we.  
Won't you visit before more time passes,  
With my flowers and birds and me?*



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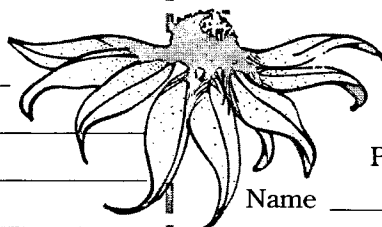
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