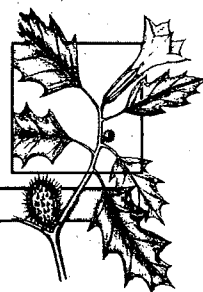




Official publication of
Wild Ones—Natural Landscapers, Ltd.
Wild Ones Journal is made possible in part by
the generous support of the Liberty Prairie Foundation



A VOICE FOR THE NATURAL LANDSCAPING MOVEMENT

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1998 • VOLUME 11, NO. 5

Wild Ones® Journal



PODS, AUTUMN'S ART

How wonderful it is to discover that it is not necessary to lose interest when flowers fade! Becoming aware of the seed containers with their new shapes, colors, and textures extends the opportunity to observe the growing cycle of wild plants.

To harvest pods at their peak beauty, take several trips to the areas to which you have access to acquaint yourself with the habit of the flower. Generally, the best time to pick is when the leaves begin to wither or have begun to drop and the stems are

turning brown—after maturity, but before frost. Colors will be at their brightest. If pods are left in the field too long, the colors become drab, faded, or mottled, and the pods can be torn by winds and rain. For example, the Prairie Dock flowerhead keeps its sculptured rosebud shape, and the dramatic leaf is a gorgeous leathery plume shape of burnished bronze if picked in mid-September or before it is nipped by frost. If weathered too long, however, the head becomes ragged, and the leaf turns spotty and a dull dark brown. The Whorled Milkweed pod loses its delicate fawn color, develops black spots, and is easily shredded by the wind.

The delightful part about collecting dried pods is that no involved process is needed to preserve the dried materials except picking at the proper time and careful storage of the collection in a dry place until the pods are ready to be used.

PICKING DO'S & DON'TS

• Learn the names of the protected wildflowers in your area and protect them. Do not pick a pod *if you cannot identify it.* (continued on next page)

PODS

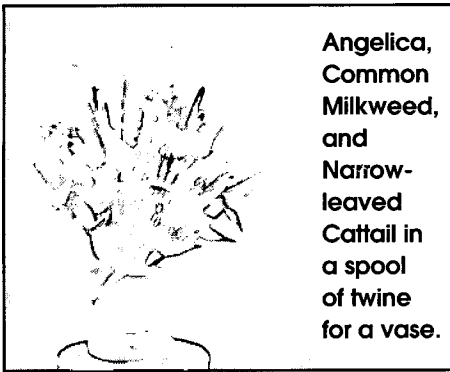
Wildflowers and Weeds in Their Final Beauty



A Visual Guide
FROM FLOWER... TO POD... TO DRIED ARRANGEMENT

BY JANE EMBERTSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAY M. CONRADER

Excerpted from *Pods: Wildflowers and Weeds in Their Final Beauty* by Jane Embertson



Angelica,
Common
Milkweed,
and
Narrow-
leaved
Cattail in
a spool
of twine
for a vase.

PODS (continued from front page)

- Be considerate of the owners of the land. Collecting should be restricted to areas where permission has been granted, or where plants are being destroyed by construction, road work, and so on.
- Pick larger bouquets of pods from among the coarser flowers, as they are usually in less danger of extinction than the delicate ones and often are better for decorative purposes.
- Do not dig up plants for transplanting to your home garden. If you must have a species, plant some of the seeds you collect or order plants from a wildflower nursery.
- Do not uproot plants when picking. Cut or break the stems carefully.
- Always leave some of each species intact for the birds and animals. *Never strip an area.*
- Pick pods after they have dried in the field, because that is usually when they are at their premium beauty and color and seeds have had a chance to drop.
- Shake out the remaining seeds from the pods as you pick them to

propagate for future picking. [*Wild Ones* members would want to reseed the native species, but not the non-natives.—Ed.] Shake fuzzy heads of dried flowers to avoid messy shedding and to obtain strawlike flowers, or spray with lacquer or hair spray if you want to add a soft, fluffy touch to your floral piece. Spray Yellow Goat's-beard with hair spray before it is picked to protect the fragile seedhead.

- Do not pick indiscriminately and wastefully.
- Strip off the dried leaves, and hang pods upside down in bunches in a cool, dry place, a barn or garage, to finish drying and to keep heads erect.
- Do not pick dull white or creamy waxlike berries from plants with leaves in groups of three. These are Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and Poison Sumac have similar berries. Learn to recognize them and leave them alone.
- Do what you can in your community to express the need to save our wild plants.

BACK AT HOME

Bouquets of dried wildflowers add visual warmth and beauty to the home. They can be as colorful as fresh flowers, and they last indefinitely. An almost endless assortment of size, shape, and texture of pods is available, which allows for creative self-expression in producing a wonderful variety of arrangements.

Collecting pods is a year-round

pastime. It almost becomes a game to be on the lookout for new pods and exciting accessories to include with the pods. Working with dried materials has the advantage of ready supplies at your fingertips from autumn to spring.

Not only are dried pods and flowers to be considered, but also dried leaves, ferns, twigs, driftwood, berries, and fruits. Anything that can be recycled from nature and is pleasing to the eye should be saved and used. •

Pods goes on to detail the use of about 160 different plants in dried arrangements. Somewhat surprisingly, this is one of my favorite plant identification guides. Every plant covered is shown in three color photographs: in flower, gone-to-seed, and in an arrangement. I don't know how they can sell all this for just \$18 a book. When Pods was originally published in 1979, identifying native and non-native species was less of a concern to most readers, and thus that is not distinguished within the text.

ACT NOW: This fine book is available in limited numbers. If we let the publisher know of our interest, the book might be available for future *Wild Ones*. Please express your support (*it will make a difference!*) by writing to:

Charles Scribner's Sons
MacMillan Publishing Co.
866 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

My thanks to Colleen Weiler for helping secure this reprint from Jane.—Ed.

NETTLE IN THE KETTLE

Last issue I recommended members wear gloves to protect their hands from a variety of plants. Iowa member Connie Jo Gilmore (see "The Afterlife," page 10) wrote to say she'd like to see Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*, an alien species) be given credit for its positive attributes, not just maligned for its minor barbs. She enclosed a soup recipe from the May/June 1998 issue of *Saveur* magazine. *Saveur* further describes Stinging Nettle's culinary uses elsewhere in the world and touts its vitamin content.

Janice Stiefel, "The Inside Story" columnist, would be

quick to point out that Stinging Nettle and the native Slender Nettle (*Urtica gracilis*, aka *U. procera*) are host plants to some species of butterflies. Janice sees virtue in virtually all plants. On page 5 she profiles a potential hero from the plant world, Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*). No, it's not native. Yes, it invades waste places. Yes, it's poisonous ... but just look at its potential uses.

My advice is: Confine the non-natives you value to a garden and reserve a broad swatch of land you can gesture to with pride and say, "That's pure Americana." If you're new to natural landscaping, just keep meeting with *Wild Ones* and reading. You'll develop a sense about which species deserve a place in your landscape. •

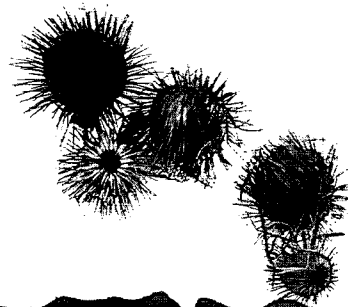
—Joy Buslaff

Long ago when I was a little girl, my aunt Rosalind held up a stalk of Burdock with a beautiful male Goldfinch trapped in the hooked burs. She said, "This is what happens to birds when they disobey God. They die!"

Since then neighbors and students have brought other ensnared creatures to me. Many of our intelligent, gentle, beneficial bats are trapped in this cruel way along with Goldfinches, Kinglets, Monarch butterflies and even a small raccoon whose fur was as matted as any horse's tail in a weedy field. Cows also can have tails too heavy with burs to even wriggle, let alone switch flies on hot summer days.

During my teenage years, farmers in Dane County, Wis., hired me to remove the Burdocks from their pastures. Each day while mother packed my lunch, my father would sharpen my shovel. Then off I would go with a bottle of drinking water and my little dog, Peggy. It was such an easy, satisfying job. Just one push of my sharp shovel and the root would be severed about 3 or 4 inches below its crown. These were biennials, flowering in their second and final year of growth. All of their energy had been used to send up the fruiting stalk, so consequently there was none left for resprouting. Those old taproots were left to decay and enrich the soil. If any burs had formed, I clipped them off and carried them home in my lunch bag to burn. In loose soil some of the roots can reach down as much as three feet. (Remember this if you are going to harvest first-year plants to make Japanese gobo.)

What I didn't know, nor did farmers Jacobsen, Stoeber and Dose, is that Burdock seed is viable



BURDOCK

(*Arctium lappa* and *A. minus*)

for 50 years. Where I killed the plants, I should have replaced them with Cupplants (*Silphium perfoliatum*) or one of our native, perennial sunflowers. No biennial seedlings could have competed with those long-lived, tall beauties. Finally, what a happy, healthy switch for the Goldfinches from deathtraps to their favorite foods! 🍀

—Lorrie Otto

memos from members

FROM JUDY MEREER...

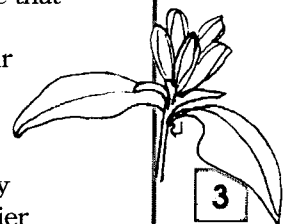
Due to geography and work hours, I am a member 'in absentia,' but so look forward to the *Journal's* arrival.

Your articles are timely, informative, chummy and presented so beautifully. The drawings are exquisite. Thank you all so much!

FROM JACK SALTES...

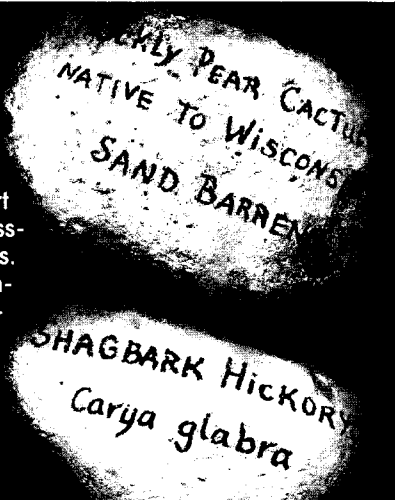
Thanks for a great feature article ("As Others See Us") by Helen Shaw. As I read and attend conferences it has become apparent to me that natural gardening and landscaping is the reconciliation between human culture (our thumb, so to speak) and the wildness and ecosystems (the green, so to speak) we strive to mimic in Nature. It's pleasing to see the biodiversity created through my efforts. Designed, yes ... wild??? A healthier ecosystem ... for sure. To me, it is a second nature.

When the blue Bottle Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) isn't decorating our page numbers, it can be found in wet places and meadows.



DRAWING
BY
LUCY
SCHUMANN

As this issue was coming together, Lorrie and I were talking about upcoming yard tours and how much effort is involved in addressing visitors' questions. As a habit of publishing, I've simply captioned many yard features with rocks. For the price of a marker you, too, can have a durable docent.—Ed.



STARTING SMALL

JoAnn M. Gillespie, Litt.D. is owner of Wetland and Native Landscaping, a division of Country Wetlands Nursery & Consulting, Muskego, Wis.

"Water is compulsive; it draws each of us to gaze transfixed in a becalmed state which few other things induce so forcibly."
—Mirabel Osler

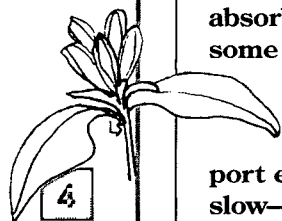


PHOTO BY JOANN GILLESPIE

The water feature in your native landscape allows you great freedom of design, form and function. It can be a bog garden loaded with carnivorous, acid-loving plants or a wet meadow with colorful forbs and swaying grasses and sedges. It might be that low spot on your lawn that's difficult to mow—you can turn that into a lovely flower garden of hydrophytic forbs or reeds and rushes. Or it could be a prairie pothole or two in the midst of your prairie, so birds and butterflies don't have to count solely on the Cupplant for a drink.

We could go on and on ... the possibilities are endless, but let's call a halt and decide what we want water to do in our landscape. Most members of the Wild Ones are do-it-yourselfers and enjoy the challenge of trying something new while becoming stewards of their land.

PUMPS & FILTERS

"I never use them," JoAnn responded immediately. "One of the functions of wetland plants is to uptake nutrients. When wetland plants uptake nutrients, they filter the water. The nutrients are then absorbed by the plants. The plants use some of them and pass off some into the air through the process of transpiration, therefore, they filter off the nutrients that would support excessive algae. Besides, lilies like slow—if not motionless—water. They can take a pump with very low velocity, but why use the pump at all if it isn't necessary."



PLANNING, as in all landscapes, should become the paramount issue. Let's choose a relatively small wetland pool as the first water feature in our landscape. Many questions must be answered. *Will the water garden be our focal point? What will our dimensions be?* It's always wise to make your water garden as large as possible so you can incorporate a variety of species. *Where will we place it to receive full sun most of the day? How accessible is a hose to fill it or to add to it when evaporation takes place. Can we channel water from a sump pump or downspout, or would the volume be too disturbing for a small-sized pool? What shape should the pool be?* Free-form shapes are more complimentary to a native water garden. Mother Nature doesn't deal much in circles and squares. *How will we construct this water garden, with a liner or pre-molded free-form pool?* The decision is yours.

Remember while digging your hole to allow a few inches for sand to cradle either your liner or preformed pool. Place either of the above in the hole and level it. Now create a 'lake bed' in the bottom of you pool. Deposit 3 to 6 inches of premixed potting soil and sand on the bottom of the pond. Prewash pebble gravel before broadcasting it over the surface of your lake bed. The pebbles will stabilize the soil and plant roots. The depth of your pool should be anywhere from 18 inches to 3 feet. Design a shelf along the edge of your pool about 8 inches deep (4 inches of soil/4 inches water) to hold emergent plants. Choose emergents that biofilter water and provide habitat as well as being aesthetically pleasing. Bur-reed (*Sparganium eurycarpum*), Sweet Flag (*Acorus calamus*), Arrowhead (*Sagittaria spp.*), Soft Rush (*Scirpus validus*), Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*) are a few of the species to do the job. Leave an area of open water in which to place a rock or log that extends above the surface so birds may drink or a turtle can sun itself. Wetland plants are prolific, so plant sparsely. If room permits, add a native water lily—white (*Nymphaea odorata*) or yellow (*Nuphar variegatum*). The area around the edge of you pool, especially where it overflows, creates a puddling place for butterflies and can be landscaped with moisture-loving shrubs, grasses and forbs.

As the birds come to drink and the frogs, turtles and dragonflies make their home in your wetland, take a minute to enjoy this ecosystem you have constructed. —JoAnn Gillespie



Family:

Solanaceae
(Nightshade)

Other Names:

Jamestown Weed,
Stramonium, Apple
of Peru, Stinkweed,
Thorn Apple,
Devil's Trumpet,
Angel's Trumpet.

Habitat: Waste
places, fields,
barnyards.

Description:

This is an ill-
scented, tall,
smooth, stout

plant with a green or purplish stem and trumpet-shaped white or violet flowers. The leaves can be up to 8 inches long, ovate and irregularly lobed. The fruit, which is 2 inches in diameter, is a prickly, egg-shaped capsule. **Height:** 1-5 feet. **Flowering:** July to October.

JIMSONWEED

(*Datura stramonium*)

Comments: It is native to the American tropics and shores of the Caspian Sea and was distributed throughout Europe by the end of the 1st Century A.D. It is naturalized in North America.

The large flowers open in late afternoon and evening and are visited by sphinx moths and hummingbirds, which bring about cross-pollination.

All parts of the plant are very poisonous. Cattle and sheep have been killed by grazing on it and children have been poisoned by eating the fruit. Touching the leaves or flowers may cause dermatitis in susceptible persons.

A 1994 news release from Ottawa, Canada, stated, "Teens looking to score a cheap high by smoking or eating parts of Jimsonweed are more likely to end up in the hospital or the morgue, an addiction agency is warning ... People can get high from smoking or eating the leaves, or preparing the leaves as tea and drinking it. But the most potent parts of the plant are the seeds, which are commonly eaten. The plant can cause bizarre behavior and result in coma or, in some cases, death," said Eva Janecek, the Addiction Research Foundation's head of pharmacy services.

Medicinal Use:

American Indians often took carefully measured amounts of the plant to facilitate the coming of visions that would help them "unravel the mysteries of the universe." It was used in soothing the pain of burned skin. Asthma victims also benefited from the plant. The leaves were smoked like tobacco, helping to relieve labored breathing. Jimsonweed has been used professionally as a treatment for spasms, asthma, and as a sedative. Atropine and other alkaloids in the plant have been used in eye diseases to dilate the pupils. It causes dry mouth, and depresses action of the bladder muscles. People with Parkinson's disease have received relief from this plant, under medical supervision. It has even been used in patches behind the ear for vertigo.

Care should be taken in handling this plant because it is extremely poisonous. Ingesting it can cause hallucinations and, possibly, death!

Name Origin: The common name, Jimsonweed, is a corruption of Jamestown Weed. It is so named because the plant was first found growing near that early New World settlement. The genus name, *Datura* (dah-TOOR-ra), is from the Arabic and Hindustani language and the meaning is unknown. The species name, *stramonium* (stra-MOE-ni-um), means swelling. The family name is pronounced, so-la-NAY-see-ee.

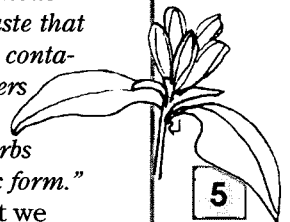
Author's Note: Learning that this plant is deadly to cattle, brought to mind that cowboy song, "Back in the Saddle Again ... Out where a friend is a friend, where the long-horned cattle 'feed' on the lowly Jimsonweed..." Now I wonder how much 'truth' we can expect from the words of a song. According to my research, there are three Jimsonweed species in North America and all have the same poisonous properties.

Another enlightening bit of information is the following from the Science Section of the March 7, 1988, issue of *Insight* magazine: "The poisonous Jimsonweed has a penchant for metals, a taste that could make it a natural for cleaning up soil contaminated with industrial waste, say researchers at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. They claim that the plant absorbs heavy metals and stores them in a non-toxic form."

My question is, if this is true, why aren't we making use of this cleanup system? Perhaps it's too simple and cheap. Society seems to gravitate to the complex and costly answers. ♪

© 1998 Janice Stiefel, Plymouth, Wis.

"To save
species is
to study
them
closely,
and to
learn
them
well is
to exploit
their
character-
istics in
novel
ways."
—E.O.
Wilson,
from
Diversity
of Life



On 17 April 1998, the Greater DuPage Chapter of the Wild Ones held their second annual spring potluck dinner and honored Raymond F. Schulenberg as an *Original Wild One*.

RAY SCHULENBERG

Raymond F. Schulenberg was born on a subsistence farm in Nebraska where only three kinds of prairie plants still survived on the entire 120 acres. At an early age he learned from his father what the original prairie had been like and actually saw how beautiful it was when he visited relatives in North Dakota at age seven. Even as a small boy he wanted to save wildlife and protect native plants.

All through grade and high school he worked on the family farm and actually put up prairie hay on three acres of the nearby land where his great-grandfather settled when prairie chickens boomed and Indians followed their trails through the tall grasses. He studied moths and butterflies in library books and even fenced off part of the farm along the creek as a wildlife refuge.

During his teenage years, Ray developed an intense feeling for native American cultures that were fast being destroyed. He received a B.A. in history from Hastings College and between jobs hitchhiked in all the 48 states, reading the landscape. He lived on various Indian reservations, and was ceremonially adopted by a Potawatomi-Iowa couple in Kansas.

He settled on 20 acres of the Iowa Reservation in southeastern Nebraska and began restoring it by transplanting prairie sods. Years later he bought 264 adjoining acres and donated it all to the Nature Conservancy to become the Rulo Bluffs Preserve.

Ray has been privileged to know a remnant of the original prairie and to share home life and spiritual ceremonies with native tribes. He has studied several Native American languages and wrote a book on the Indians of North Dakota

when he worked for the North Dakota State Historical Museum.

At age 31 he purchased his first car and explored all the counties of North Dakota. He came to the conclusion that saving native plant species was even more urgent than saving Indian cultures, and more feasible for him, so he went back to school to better prepare himself for the task. In 1955, he earned a B.S. in horticulture at Iowa State and joined the staff of the Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Ill., as assistant propagator.

Clarence Godshalk, arboretum director, assigned Ray the title of "Curator of Native Plants" in 1963 and the responsibility of establishing prairie on former farmland in the newly acquired west end of the arboretum. Thus the Morton Arboretum prairie restoration project came into existence under the sensitive guidance of Ray Schulenberg, son of the prairie, brother of the Potawatomi.

With the help of student summer workers and a few volunteers, Ray successfully grew, transplanted and weeded hundreds of thousands of prairie plants—some seasons caring for as many as 64,000 plants. Besides all the physical work, he tirelessly educated, quizzed and inspired his students in the identification of plants, both prairie plants and weeds, by their common name, Latin name, and family. And his knowledge of how to propagate these prairie plants contributed to Harold Rock's book, *Prairie Propagation Handbook*.

The Schulenberg Prairie at the Morton Arboretum is considered by many to be the best example of a man-created prairie, and the second, third and fourth generation of prairie enthusiasts and reconstructionists that Ray has trained (myself included) still carry on his vision today.

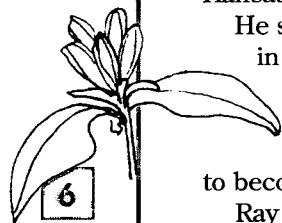
Ray says about himself: "Each of us just does what he can and it all may be for nothing. I think the planet is headed for destruction—a cataclysm that man will cause. I don't see anything to prevent it. But, I don't let that stop me from doing what I can."

And he has done plenty!

For great sensitivity toward indigenous plants and peoples, and for pioneering the science of prairie restoration, and inspiring countless others, we honor Ray Schulenberg as an *Original Wild One*! ☘

—Patricia K. Armstrong

"Magical country, full of memories and dreams, My youth lies in the crevices of your hills; Here in the silk of your grass by the edge of the meadows, Every flower and leaf has its memories of you." — Katharine Tynan Hinkson, from Collected Poems, 1930



The front forty

Curt and I have been really busy this summer identifying the plants in the new areas of the Front Forty and weeding out the bad guys. We also had 35 yards of woodchips delivered in order to create islands for the trees and shrubs. I'm hoping that by the time these chips break down my trees will finally be big enough to support a woodland garden.

The main reason for the big 'neat and tidy' around here is that we will be hosting our chapter yard tour (Menomonee River Area). All of us out here are really pleased with how quickly our chapter has grown. We started in September of '97 and by this September we

expect to be up to 100 members. When Jan Koel, Linda Pavlovich and I sat around my kitchen table last August planning for the very first meeting, we had no idea that it would turn out so great. All of our people have been really enthusiastic and supportive in getting our chapter off the ground. Whenever we pass around a clipboard for volunteers, whether it be for weeding out a local park, handing out fliers or heading up a committee, we are never disappointed by the number of people who sign up. At the rate we are going, I wouldn't be surprised if we had another chapter spin-off in a few years. 🌱

—Judy Crane

Food for thought: If you're interested in starting a chapter in your area, contact Wild Ones Administrative Director Donna VanBuecken at the national office (phone numbers on back cover). She'll send you a complete packet on getting started.

"Boy, is my face Cardinal Flower red! Thanks go to Bonnie Harper-Lore for correcting my reference to Buffalo grass (should have been Buffelgrass) in the July/August issue."—J.C.

Chapter news

The Fox Valley Area Chapter reports that Appleton, Wis., was in turmoil because of a challenge to its existing weed ordinance. Jan Nordin and several other local Wild Ones were able to reach an agreeable ordinance on weed control several years ago. Recently that ordinance was challenged by a property owner who wanted to maintain what she called a "**naturalized lawn**."

Probably because of lack of knowledge on the part of city staff, the villain in this dilemma became "**prairies**."

Thanks to many concerned citizens and this chapter's ordinance committee, the ordinance revision was delayed until a more livable ordinance could be developed that would address the real issue—**unkempt yards**.

The city's Community Development Department collected citizen comments (some voice mail dissertations ran five minutes long). All comments were then presented in writing to the Community Development Commission.

In the end, "We were successful," says member Donna VanBuecken, "thanks to Wild Ones, concerned citizens, Dick Nicolai of the DNR, and Todd Trueblood of the Appleton Memorial Park Arboretum and Gardens."

The City of Appleton has rewritten its weed ordinance to define a **neglected landscape** rather than trying to define acceptable prairies. This chapter maintains, "It pays to participate!" 🌱

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ...

I first heard about Buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*) last fall at the North American Weed Association Conference. A speaker, Thomas Van Devender, was maligning the grass, warning of its invasion of the Southwest. I suggested that Buffalo Grass was a western native grass that needed protection. We were both right! I had never heard of Buffelgrass and assumed he was deriding a precious prairie grass. Buffelgrass was introduced from South Africa as a revegetation answer to arid lands. According to the recent Arizona Sonora Museum Symposium on Invasive Species, Buffelgrass has already infested over one million acres of northern Mexican desert. The addition of this fine fuel to a desert community greatly increases fire spread. Buffelgrass is currently being studied by the USDA for pasture use! Apparently we did not learn our lesson from introducing Kudzu as an agricultural solution.

Bonnie L. Harper-Lore
Roadside Vegetation Coordinator
FHWA/USDOT

If you'd like to know more about the Southwest, Bonnie recommends the book The Desert Grassland edited by Michael P. McClaran and Thomas R. Van Devender, published in 1995 by the University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Rethinking the lawn



There was a time, back in the late 1950s and early '60s, when I was inclined to view the American lawn as part of a Communist plot. Thousands of square miles of valuable landscape, from Bangor to San Diego, were covered with useless swards of turf.

Millions of man-hours (and, more to the point, boy-hours) were squandered each year on its upkeep. Did that extravagant commitment of resources serve the national interest? Clearly not. Like the helpless GI in *The Manchurian Candidate*, so it seemed, the entire class of American suburbanites had all somehow been brainwashed to execute certain dronish tasks. Mow. Rake. Trim. Fertilize. Kill off the broadleaf invaders with poison. Mow again. It was ruinously stupid. Khrushchev, I figured, had to be chortling up his fat little sleeve.

I conceived and nurtured this theory during my own long boy-hours spent at the exhaust end of a Toro mower—hours that, I believed, would have been far better devoted to more meaningful, red-blooded pursuits (such as baseball, or throwing cherry bombs at hornets' nests, or breaking my nose on the handlebars of a bicycle) if only the cabalists in the Kremlin hadn't managed to perpetrate this wholesale diversion of democracy's young talent into the soulless drudgery of lawn care. Sputnik and then Yuri Gagarin had gone into space, after all, while America remained earthbound and I stained my Keds green with grass clippings. I was the only son among three children, and therefore the designated mowist. We lived on a half acre. Formerly farmland, and before that deciduous forest, amid the rolling hills and the humid breezes of southwestern Ohio, it was relentlessly verdurous.

WHY DO WE DO IT?

The numbers are sobering. Americans spend \$25 billion a year on the planting and maintenance of turf grass, including municipal and corporate lawns as well as residential ones. The residential component alone amounts to \$7 billion in retail trade—that's \$7 billion spent for mowers and weed whackers and leaf blowers and other powered machinery, for fertilizer and pesticides and hoses and sprinklers and rakes and clippers. Bermuda shorts and plastic flamingoes are tallied separately.

The grassy yards of American homeowners cover 20 million acres, roughly the same total area as Ireland. Unlike Ireland, though, a great portion of the American lawn acreage is inherently arid, or semi-arid, or otherwise climatically inhospitable to those species (mostly exotics from Europe) considered seemly for a well-manicured yard. One consequence of the bad climatic match is a need for intensive watering. Roughly 30 percent of urban water use on the East Coast, by one estimate, goes to lawn irrigation. On the West Coast, with its dry chaparral zone and its desert golf courses, the estimate is 60 percent. No doubt the preternaturally green lawns in Texas and New Mexico and Arizona, in Utah and Nevada, on the dry plains of eastern Montana and the Dakotas, are sucking away a similar share. Almost \$800 million worth of grass seed is sold each year. The annual take by professional lawn-care businesses is about \$3 billion.

These figures reveal that the American lawn ethic, far from being a Commie ruse, is actually in the best tradition of rapacious capitalism. Most of the data I've just cited come from a gently iconoclastic book titled *Redesigning the American Lawn*, compiled by F. Herbert Bormann and some colleagues and grad students at the schools of forestry and of art and architecture at Yale University. Bormann and company also report that lawn-happy customers account for 25 percent of the profits to the synthetic-fertilizer industry, and that we use up to 10 times more chemical pesticides per acre than do American farmers. These pesticides include herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, rodent poisons, whatever—any chemical designed to kill a certain type of living creature that's unwelcome on a lawn. And the essence of

"I like
a little
rebellion
now and
then.
It is like
a storm
in the
atmosphere."
—Thomas
Jefferson



The passages appearing above are excerpted from *Strawberries Under Ice*, Wild Thoughts from Wild Places by David Quammen. This new book is scheduled to be released by Scribner sometime this year.

a traditional lawn, of course, is that virtually all types of living creature—except the chosen species of narrow-bladed grass—are unwelcome. In one recent year, the lawn-pesticide market ran to \$700 million in sales, representing 67 million pounds of variously lethal chemicals purchased for application to American parks, greenways, golf courses, cemeteries, ball fields, and yards.

I've been cutting grass for the past 35 years, off and on, but now there's a voice within me saying, No mow.

It's the right time for a radical change, because lately my wife and I have begun planning to build a new house on the same lot where we presently live. We love the location; it's just the old house itself, ramshackle and tiny and mostly held up by bookshelves, that's no longer adequate. So we'll raze the building, or give it away to the Salvation Army if they can move it, then cause a more suitable home to be built on our little patch of land. And now that we're imagining into existence precisely the house that will fit our needs and convictions, we've also started rethinking the lawn.

We don't feel the necessity, here in Montana, of mimicking a tropical savanna or an English manor. Beyond that general truth, there are ecological and aesthetic particulars to be settled: what to jettison, what to keep, what to add. The two large Mountain-ash trees will stay, though building around them may entail extra costs. Mountain ash is a native species hereabouts, thriving robustly through the long snowy winters, the long snowy springs, the scorching dry summers followed by frozen autumns. The riotous hedge of lilacs will stay too; they don't demand special treatment and no earthly smell is more cheery than blossoming lilacs in early June. The spruce in the southwest corner will stay, and maybe the four smallish maples that we planted eight years ago in a gesture of nostalgia to my Ohio roots. The raspberries will be offered room to expand. The lawn itself will go. If any grassy vegetation finds its way into our final collage, I suspect, it will be native species of the region—Western Wheatgrass or Blue Grama, for instance. It will be welcome to grow tall and seedy, but it will have to get by on its own.

What else will we add? Sagebrush and Wild Rose and Prickly Pear might be nice. We don't play barefoot badminton out there anyway. A Ponderosa Pine, a Douglas Fir—or maybe a

Western Larch, so we can watch its needles turn yellow in the fall and sprinkle down like shredded saffron. I'd love a big Cottonwood, but this isn't a riparian neighborhood and I don't think we should commit to keeping its thirst slaked. Likewise with Alder and Water Birch. But there should certainly be a Chokecherry, so that I don't have to continue poaching fruit off the one across the alley. Anything that attracts bumblebees will be encouraged to blossom. We'll have crows and magpies if we have to hire them. And decorative statuary? Well, no plastic flamingoes for this ecosystem, but maybe a discreet cast-iron effigy of a grizzly bear. It'll have to be in miniature, though, because ours is a very small lot.

There will be no mowing. There will be no whacking of weeds—the very concept of “weed” will be thrown into question. There will be no semi-annual visits by the chemically armed enforcers from Nitro-Green. So far as possible, this will be a low-maintenance landscape as well as an ecologically sensible one.

There will be a new meaning given, too, to the notion of yard equipment. My wife may continue to plant wildflowers, but for that she needs little more than a trowel. As for the rest, I've got my own ideas. In place of the mower and the weed whacker and the sprinkler and the spray dispenser for pesticides, I see a folding aluminum lawn chair, an all-weather end table, a pair of sunglasses, a broad-brimmed hat, and a hard-back copy of *Leaves of Grass*. 🌱

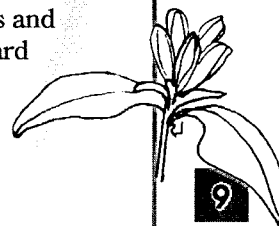
—David Quammen

“I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him.”—Abraham Lincoln

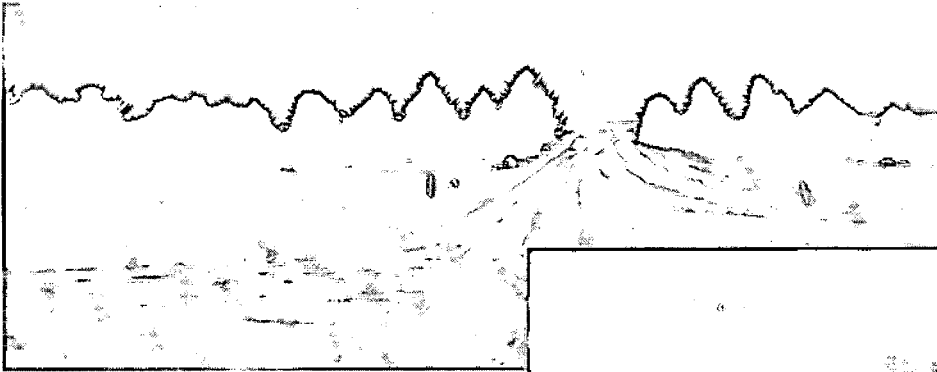
The Milwaukee Area Technical College
Horticulture Club News reports:

“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!”

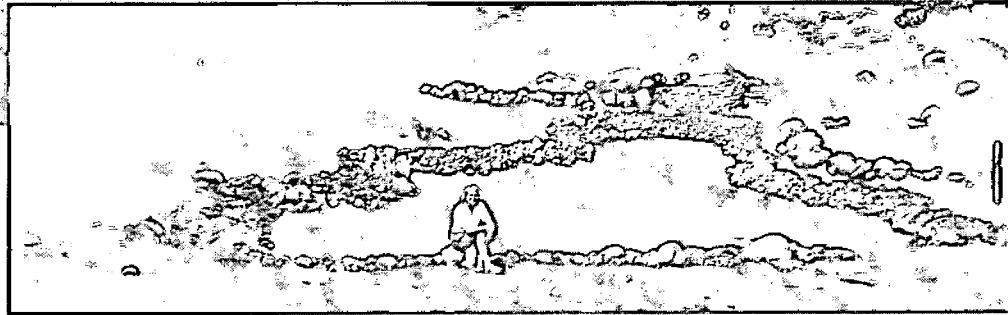
*“Give me a field
where the unmow'd grass grows ”*
—Walt Whitman



The "Afterlife"



BEFORE & AFTER



Here's a project for the hardy. Connie Jo Gilmore had 12 loads of rocks hauled to her Grove, Iowa, farm (the largest one's six tons). The contours of a low area were terraced with a bobcat, the stones were placed with a backhoe, and underground drain tiles were run from the house's downspouts to the site. Connie is a wildlife enthusiast and hopes to plant a habitat to attract Red-winged Blackbirds, Garter snakes, and toads.

*Thank you to Mark Charles
of Michigan for submitting
this historic text*

The landscape that was

Father Louis Hennepin, Description de la Louisiane, 1683. A Description of Louisiana by Father Hennepin, Recollect Missionary, John G. Shea, transl. 1880, quoted in *The Moving Frontier*, Louis B. Wright and Elaine W. Fowler, eds., 1972

**300
YEARS
AGO**

The Miamis hunt them [buffalo] at the end of autumn in the following manner:

When they see a herd they gather in great numbers and set fire to the grass everywhere around these animals, except some passage which they leave on purpose, and where they take post with their bows and arrows. The buffalo, seeking to escape the fire, are thus compelled to pass near these Indians, who sometimes kill as many as 120 in a day, all which they distribute according to the wants of the families; and these Indians, all triumphant over the massacre of so many animals, come to notify their women, who at once proceed to bring in the meat. Some of them at times take on their backs 300 pounds weight, and also throw their children on top of their load which does not seem to burden them more than a soldier's sword at his side....

10 The meat of these animals is very succulent.

They are very fat in autumn because all the summer they are up to their necks in the grass. These vast countries are so full of prairies that it seems this is the element and the country of the buffalo. There are at near intervals some woods where these animals retire

to ruminate, and to get out of the heat of the sun....

Many other kinds of animals are found in these vast plains of Louisiana; stags, deer, beaver, and otter are common there, geese, swans, pigeons, turkey-hens, parrots, partridges, and many other birds swarm there, the fishery is very abundant, and the fertility of the soil is extraordinary. There are boundless prairies interspersed with forests of tall trees, where there are all sorts of building timber, and among the rest excellent oak full like that in France and very different from that in Canada. The trees are of prodigious girth and height, and you could find the finest pieces in the world for shipbuilding which can be carried on upon the spot, and wood could be brought as ballast in the ships to build all the vessels of France, which would be a great saving to the State and would give the trees in our nearly exhausted forests time to grow again.

Several kinds of fruit trees are also to be seen in the forests and wild grapevines which produce clusters about a foot and a half long which ripen perfectly, and of which very good wine can be made. There are also to be seen fields covered with very good hemp, which grows there naturally to a height of six or seven feet. 20

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.

MEMBERSHIP TOTAL AS OF JUNE 1998: 1,998

"There is Indian time and white man's time. Indian time means never looking at the clock ... There is not even a word for time in our language."

—Mary Brave Bird, from Ohitika Woman, 1993



The meeting place

ILLINOIS

GREATER DUPAGE CHAPTER

Chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the College of DuPage, unless otherwise noted. Call (630) 415-IDIG for info.

SEPT 17—Meet in room M165A. Jack Shouba, wildflower teacher at Morton Arboretum, will help us to identify the parts of a flower and recognize some common flower families.

OCT. 15—Meet in room M165A. Portia Blume will introduce us to the DuPage Forest Preserve's methods of reestablishing native vegetation.

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.

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.

SEPT. 17—"Landscaping with Native Trees and Shrubs" presented by Pat Armstrong. 6:30 p.m.

OCT.—Dates to be announced for seed collecting from various locations.

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 herbs@kih.net.

MICHIGAN

AN ARBOR CHAPTER

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

MINNESOTA

OTTER TAIL CHAPTER

Meetings are held at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Call Tim Bodeen for info, (320) 739-9334.

SEPT. 22—Wild Ones plant swap.

OCT. 27—Guest speaker.

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.

OCT. 10—Planting a landscape for a Habitat for Humanity home.

OKLAHOMA

COYLE 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.

SEPT. 19—"Mushroom Tour." UWO mycologist Dr. Stephen Bentivenga will lead a tour. Carpool from Appleton K-Mart (8:30 a.m.) and Oshkosh K-Mart (9 a.m.)

OCT. 10—"Seed Collecting at Bubolz Nature Preserve," 9 a.m.-noon. Meet at Nature Center north of Appleton on Hwy. A.

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.

OCT. 10—10 a.m. Fall prairie seed collection at Jim Jersek's prairie.

NOV. 11—Video night, seed exchange, donations of seeds to local schools, election of officers.

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.

SEPT. 24—"Native Grasses, Sedges and Rushes." Learn the difference between these three cousins and how to identify varieties.

OCT. 29—"Landscaping for Birds." Which bushes, grasses and forbs attract birds to your yard throughout the year.

MENOMONEE RIVER AREA CHAPTER

Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. in Menomonee Falls. Call Judy Crane for info, (414) 251-2185.

SEPT. 16—Carpool to Indian Hills School to see natural foundation plantings. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at Piggly Wiggly at Main and Pilgrim or 6:50 p.m. at 1101 W. Brown Deer Rd.

OCT. 17—Seed collecting at Pat and Marie Spors-Murphy's home, 10 a.m. Take Hwy. 45 north to NN west (left) to Mayfield north (right) to 18th west 1/4 mile on right. 677-4950 for 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.

SEPT. 12—Tour of Randy Powers' Prairie Future Seed Company. Carpool from the nature center.

OCT. 10—Seed gathering from members' yards. Meet at the nature center for maps.

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.

SEPT. 12—Same program as North Chapter above. Carpool from Wehr.

OCT. 10—Seed gathering. Meet at Wehr for instructions.

MOVING

My husband and I bought a new home last year and had to say goodbye to our home of 29 years. My created prairie and woodland gardens were works of art for me ... my cared-for child, if you will. At our new home, it took some courage to begin the creation all over again. What happened to our gardens in West Bend, Wis.? The new owners informed me that they could not deal with having a prairie patch. They very kindly consented to allow Wild Ones to take the plants. I can see that the new owners will not long be able to allow the naturalness of the woodland garden: They were out there 'weeding' it and have added little statues of animals. These well-meaning people were not taught much about the natural world. ☸

—Bernice B. Popelka

The poem at right, entitled "For Bernice," was written by Judy Kolosso about Bernice's West Bend landscape.

I stopped by today to admire your yard.
How does one capture such splendor?
My first enchantment was with the garden—
hordes of mulberries purpled the walk,
raspberry, gooseberry, and elderberry bushes
proffered their gifts.
Great clumps of asparagus fern
graced the northeast corner,
grapes draped themselves shamelessly
over their moorings and beyond,
and a pear tree stood shyly on the edge
waiting for the sun to finish its work.
Three finches perched on the stone birdhouse
proclaiming to be sole proprietors now.
Turning to the prairie
I stood in stunned reverence.
The stepping stones now hidden,
I stayed just at the sanctuary's edge.
Inside I could see the faithful—
coreopsis, butterfly weed, prairie dock,
the ever-expanding spiderwort family,
and head and shoulders above everyone else—
the cutleaf silphium.
Bees meandered about uttering their own private
prayers, and a robin occupied the center font.
Chanting in the south courtyard
led me to discover the turk's cap lilies—
tall and grand in orange and black.
Joining them in hymn was the viper's bug gloss,
higher in voice,
but rising only to the lilies knees.
Crimson monarda, eclipsing vinca minor,
obviously relished its elegant role
in the community worship.
Carrion vine, too, rose in adoration—
each tendril stretching skyward.
As usual, I couldn't name every one there—
I needed you, mentor and friend, to remind me.

WWW Dot

Our last issue contained a house for sale notice. Since then I've gotten inquiries about advertising additional properties. Obviously there is a need to help matchmake new owners with naturally landscaped properties. At this time we're looking into creating a branch on the newly developed Wild Ones web-site for real estate listings. Once the site is fully operational, webmaster Mark Charles will give us a report about the various materials he's organized on the internet. —Ed.

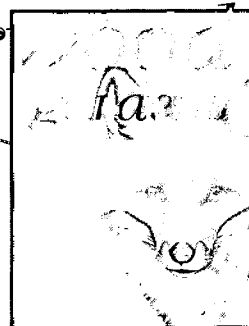
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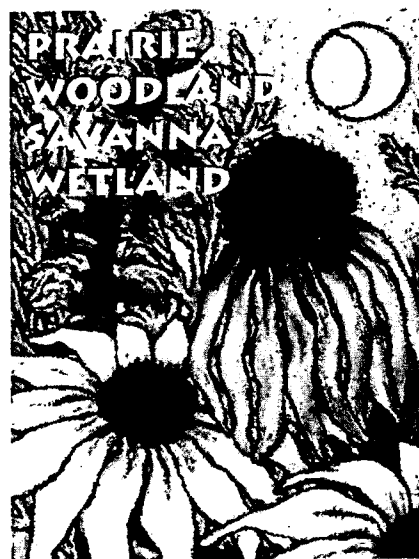
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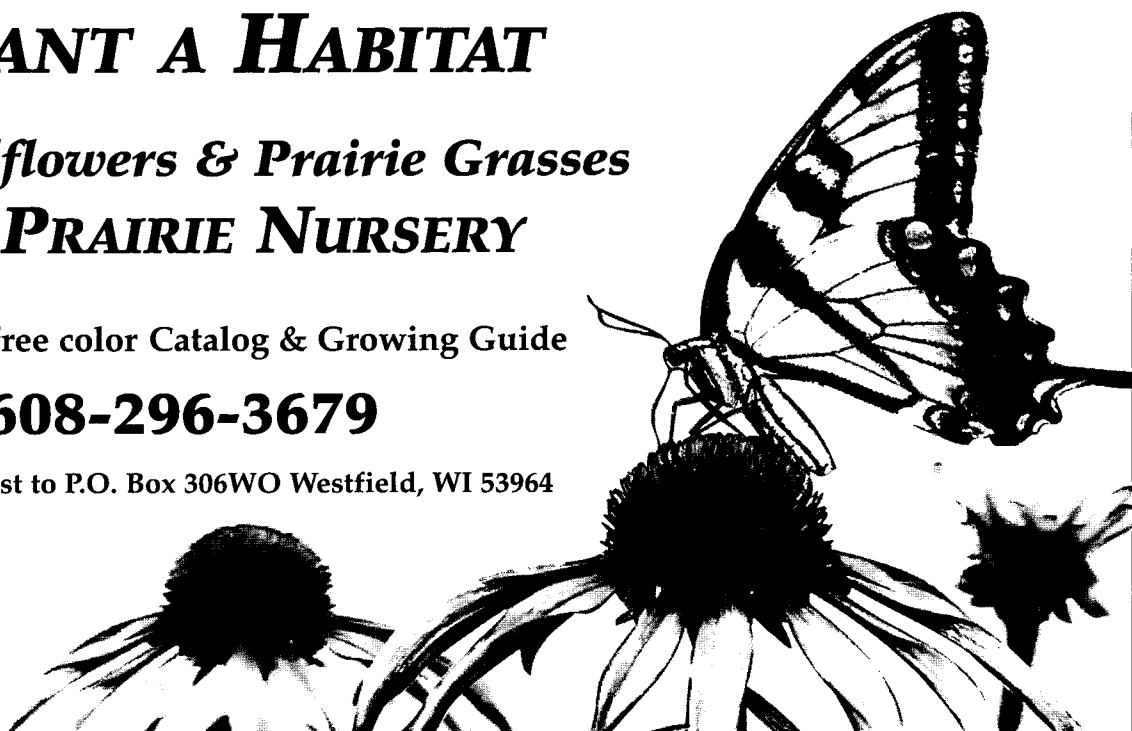
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Send a snapshot showing where you've posted your yard sign (along with an SASE if you'd like your photo returned) to: Wild Ones Journal % Joy Buslaff, S89 W22630 Milwaukee Ave., Big Bend, WI 53103.

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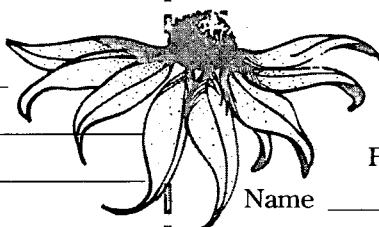
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