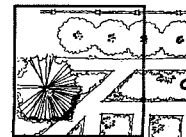




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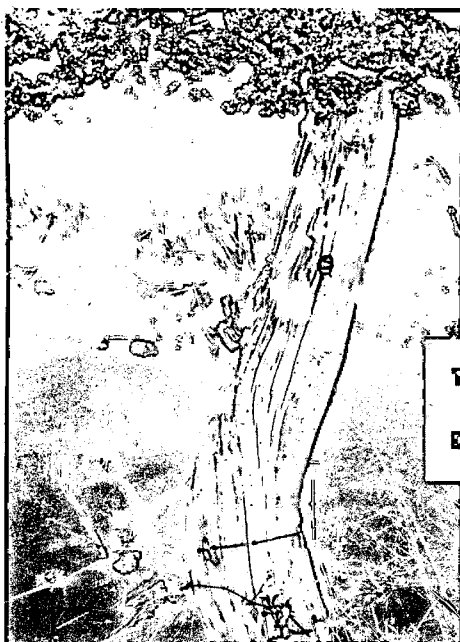
A VOICE FOR THE NATURAL LANDSCAPING MOVEMENT

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# Wild Ones®

## Journal

### SNAG



#### THE VALUE OF A DEAD TREE

**H**ow many times have you looked across the road at that dead tree in the woods and wished someone would cut it down? Before you get out the chainsaw, consider the role this tree plays in the forest.

When a branch falls off and the trunk decays, a host of animals have found a home. At least 85 North American birds are cavity-nesters. Besides birds, 30 mammals and 13 reptiles and amphibians use snags as well.

The U.S. Forest Service is encouraging landowners to save some dead snags as habitat for wildlife. They have economic reasons to do so.

The USFS believes that, if an insect outbreak occurs within a forest with a healthy bird population, the birds can "buffer, contain, or possibly eliminate

the insect infestation." The USFS also points out that natural predators cut down on the use of pesticides, help prevent pesticide resistance, and reduce the danger of over application.

In light of the beneficial role snags play, foresters are also investigating ways to create snags. One experiment is to drill holes in otherwise healthy trees. At Ohio State University, researchers are working with plastic trees. They have placed 50 soft plastic 8-foot cylinders in wood lots. Within a few months, woodpeckers had bored nest holes in 85 percent of the 'trees.'

**Some simple habitat-promoting strategies you can use include:**

- Leave 3- to 4-foot stumps when cutting trees. High stumping allows cavity nesters to move into what's left.
- Leave woody debris and underbrush in cut areas.
- Construct and hang nestboxes.
- Save snags.

*(continued on next page)*

**A brief list of bird species  
that nest in dead tress**

<i>Hairy Woodpecker</i>	<i>Wood Duck</i>
<i>Downy Woodpecker</i>	<i>Common Goldeneye</i>
<i>Great Crested Flycatcher</i>	<i>Hooded Merganser</i>
<i>Tree Swallow</i>	<i>Common Merganser</i>
<i>Purple Martin</i>	<i>Turkey Vulture</i>
<i>Black-capped Chickadee</i>	<i>Peregrine Falcon</i>
<i>Boreal Chickadee</i>	<i>American Kestrel</i>
<i>Tufted Titmouse</i>	<i>Barn Owl</i>
<i>White-breasted Nuthatch</i>	<i>Screech Owl</i>
<i>Red-breasted Nuthatch</i>	<i>Barred Owl</i>
<i>Brown Creeper</i>	<i>Saw-whet Owl</i>
<i>House Wren</i>	<i>Chimney Swift</i>
<i>Winter Wren</i>	<i>Common Flicker</i>
<i>Eastern Bluebird</i>	<i>Pileated Woodpecker</i>
<i>Prothonotary Warbler</i>	

**SNAG**

(continued from front cover)

In Wisconsin's Chequamegon National Forest, timber managers now preserve at least two snags per acre. The size of these snags is an important consideration as well, since everything from Chickadees to Turkey Vultures with 70-inch wingspans will want to use these trees. At Chequamegon, a minimum diameter of 12 inches at breast height is used for snags. Generally, the larger the tree, the more species it will support.

Homeowners should keep in mind that snag-nesting Swallows, Swifts, and Purple Martins are mosquito-eaters. A snag safely distanced from the home will draw birds and small mammals better than any birdhouse.

So next time you look out the window at that dead tree, see what activity is around it. You may be surprised. 🐦

"Until 'that tree'

becomes an

*Ailanthus* or

*Black Gum,*

until 'those birds'

become House

*Sparrows* or

*Goldfinches,*

conservation will

not acquire the

kind of grip

on the public

imagination

that it will need

if it is going

to succeed."

—Chris Bright,

Life Out of

Bounds



*Larkspur* is a Buttercup relative (*Ranunculaceae*) with violet flowers. Dwarf or Spring Larkspur (*Delphinium tricornne*) flowers in April through May, while the Tall Larkspur (*Delphinium exaltatum*) makes its showing July to September. Illustration by Lucy Schumann.

# AN EARTH POND

**D**o you remember when you were a small child and you just had that urge to dig a hole in the ground?

Well, now you're an adult looking to add that water garden to your native landscape. You've read about plastic liners and preformed pools, but nobody has discussed an earth pond with you. Here is your chance to dig that hole in the ground and turn it into a pond. At first you might think of an earth-bottomed pond as being crude, but stop and think—what is more native or natural than a pond that springs from a hole in the ground.

To build an earth pond requires a contractor who has a backhoe and/or a dredge bucket. But having the equipment does not mean a contractor knows how to build a pond, so check with local contractors and choose one with good references. Then, plan your pond together, thinking about the functions you want this pond to fulfill:

- Do you want it to be a fish pond or a wildlife pond?
- Will you build it to replace a lost wetland?
- Most of all, consider how it will fit with the rest of your native landscape and with your family's needs.

## THE SITE DETERMINES THE WATER GARDEN

Siting your pond is the first step in the process. You will need to choose a site for your earth pond that will be large enough to provide clean water. Most earth ponds should be anywhere from one-quarter acre to three acres. Before you begin, check the building regulations to see if ponds can be built in your area, if there are any restrictions, or if a permit is needed.

The water for the pond can be obtained by intercepting the water table (the upper limit of the ground saturated by water) or a spring. Pumps can be used to deliver water, but you should consider the complications that can evolve with mechanical systems. If you cannot find a natural source, perhaps it's better to forget the whole idea.

If you find some appropriate spots, dig a few test



**A newly created pond and prairie area—for the moment overrun with non-native Queen Anne's Lace.**

pits or, better yet, have them dug for you to confirm evidence of groundwater. **Test pits should be 8 to 10 feet deep.** The test pit will not only reveal the water table or ledge obstruction, but will show soil composition. The soil should contain at least 20 percent clay. It should have a minimal amount of sand or shale, which can cause your pond to leak. If all goes well and your pond has been dug and filled with water, it is important to take the next step and vegetate it with native species as soon as possible.

### **THE SANCTUARY ON MONASTERY LAKE**

The pond we feature in this article is an earth-dug pond. Take a look at the site. It needs, and uses well, both native landscaping and a horticultural landscape. This pond serves as a focal point to the entrance of a home bordering the Sanctuary on Monastery Lake, a rich wetland managed by the Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society.

As you enter the long drive past the iron gates, the pond welcomes you. It is nestled in a low point on the land, surrounded by small hills and gentle slopes. The pond is 15 feet deep to accommodate fish. It has its own well to keep the water at an

appropriate level, as well as cooling it for the fish population and algae control. On the hillside coming down to the pond is a small prairie, a drift of beautiful wildflowers and grasses. On the drive side of the pond and in the back approaching the house is lawn with horticultural trees, evergreens and perennial beds—a design developed by a landscape art firm. The pond is dotted with native waterlilies and contains an emergent edge of native plants for biofiltering, sediment control, and habitat for wildlife including spawning fish. All the species are indigenous to the flora of nearby Monastery Lake. My company, Country Wetlands, created the pond and prairie landscape for the client from our own plant stock.

The Sanctuary property serves as a background for the home, with wetlands abutting the bluegrass lawn. The entire landscape is a continuation of natural beauty blending with horticultural portions. In my opinion, neither offends the other and both are in harmony with the land. Directly behind the house is a shrub-carr, a *Carex stricta* sedge meadow and a wet meadow with over 30 species of wildflowers, Cord Grass and Fox Sedge.

As the days grow longer and you spend more time outside studying your landscape, why not take a few moments to contemplate adding a water feature to your landscape. Ponds or water gardens, more than any other scenery, allow us the opportunity to tie our landscape plans with reality. They give us the chance to bring native landscaping and wetland renewal into every landscape.

Happy landscaping! ♣

—JoAnn Gillespie

**Left, foreground:**  
A protected natural wetland, the Sanctuary on Monastery Lake served as inspiration for the earth-pond landscape on the entrance side of this residence.

*"Who can guess how many salamanders, on returning to their natural pond to breed, have found a condominium instead."*  
—Sara Stein,  
Noah's Garden



# The afterlife

I have been a landscape and garden designer for many years and became interested in prairie and native landscaping about three years ago. Native plants made up more and more of my repertoire until I made a decision to use native plants exclusively in my designs. I even changed the name of my company to The Prairie Gardener.

In the fall of 1997 I moved to a restored Sears bungalow and had the opportunity to start a whole new garden. The previous owner had been a recluse, and the yard had become overgrown with weedy, woody plants, which the restorer removed, leaving me with a blank slate. The only things left were a gigantic White Ash that was probably planted the year my house was built (1927) and a Black Walnut in back of the garage. The restorer generously offered to "throw in a couple of yews" around the foundation, but I graciously declined his offer. I designed my garden over the winter and began planting Phase 1 in April and May of 1998.

My house is on a small city lot, only 50 by 125 feet. Because of the size constrictions, I used the prairie plants in a traditional design along the house foundation, the front walk, the sidewalk, back walk, the driveway, and around and within a flagstone patio. I used mostly 2½-inch plugs, planted 1-foot on center, although I did use some gallon containers—mostly grasses. By July, the garden was bountiful beyond my wildest dreams—it looked as if it had been there for years.

My house faces south—full sun all day—and has well-drained soil. I planted two Wild Blue Indigos on either side of the front door, fronted by Cream Wild Indigo. Carolina Roses are at each front corner, surrounded by New Jersey Tea; Prairie Dropseed fills in between, edged by Prairie Alumroot.

I used small dry and dry-mesic prairie forbs to line the front walk such as Prairie Anemone, Prairie Smoke, Prairie Phlox, Shooting Star, Wild Petunia, Cylindric Blazingstar, Old Field Goldenrod, Silky Aster and Stiff Aster, edged with Heart-leaved Meadow Parsnip. I put more Prairie Dropseed at the corner of the entry walk and sidewalk, then turned the corner and continued with Smooth Blue Aster, Wild Quinine, Rough Blazingstar and Showy Black-eyed Susan. There was a railroad tie planter at the corner of the property when I bought it. I had the ties removed and the soil shaped into a mound, and I now had a *dry hill prairie*. I clothed it with Little Bluestem, Butterflyweed, Purple Prairie Clover, Leadplant and, as an afterthought, Bicknell's Sedge, after seeing it in bloom at Horlock Hill Prairie. Turning the corner again, I planted Compassplant, Prairie Blazingstar, Switch Grass



and more Wild Quinine, Smooth Blue Aster and Showy Black-eyed Susans, ending the border with three clumps of Switch Grass. I lined all the sidewalk edges with Aromatic and Heath Aster, Nodding Wild Onion, Spiderwort and more Wild Petunia.

Then I tried to be too clever by half and planted a yellow garden next to the front part of the west side of the house and a pink garden next to the back half, with mixed results. The yellow garden consisted of a ribbon of *Rudbeckia speciosa* backed by Yellow Coneflower, Stiff Goldenrod, Smooth Blue Aster and Indian Grass. I think it would have worked better if it weren't situated against the wall because the taller plants in back, with the exception of the Indian Grass, leaned toward the afternoon sun and fell over into the Black-eyed Susans. It was even worse with the pink garden, which turned out to be shadier than the yellow garden from the shadow cast by the Ash. I had planted Purple Coneflower, Prairie Blazingstars, Wild Quinine, Wild Bergamot, Rattlesnake Master, Marsh Phlox, New England Aster, Bottle Gentian, Switch Grass and more Smooth Blue Aster. There was no holding up the Blazingstars or Rattlesnake Master, and the Wild Quinine never grew beyond its clump of basal leaves. Conversely, the Switch Grass next to the house stood tall and straight, while that which was planted in the open fell every which way.

I had a 12-foot diameter limestone patio installed between the house and garage and probably had the most fun finding plants that like to grow next to limestone. Using Swink and Wilhelm's *Plants of the Chicago Region* as a guide, I came up with a list of 20 plants that do well in that situation. I planted more Prairie Anemone, Prairie Smoke, Prairie Phlox, Shooting Stars and Prairie Alumroot plus Prairie Buttercup in the spaces between the limestones for spring bloom, followed by Thimbleweed, Wild Petunia, Cylindric Blazingstar, Leafy Prairie Clover and Stiff Aster for summer. I surrounded the terrace with Early and Hairy Penstemon, Harebell, Ozark Evening Primrose, Ohio Horsemint, Nodding Wild Onion, Sideoats Grama, and Aromatic and Silky Aster, lime-lovers all. Everything grew abundantly, although the Prairie Smoke was more robust next to the front walk, where it was sunnier and presumably, drier; while the Prairie Alumroot preferred the terrace; indeed it sort of sulked in the hot, dry front garden.



## Designer Pat Hill landscapes her own showcase lot in Elgin, Illinois

### WHAT DID BEST THE FIRST YEAR?

All the small early-blooming plants did well, blooming virtually as soon as they were planted. All the grasses were full-grown the first year. I planted Prairie Dropseed and Little Bluestem in both gallon and 2½" containers; by August there was no difference in their size. The Butterflyweed was exceptional as was the Showy Black-eyed Susan. Some of the Wild Quinine grew well, some of the plants didn't bloom. The Prairie Blazingstars were amazing, although there were only one or two stalks per plant. The Marsh Phlox bloomed for a long time and was more showy than I expected it to be. The Cylindric Blazingstars did well; the Wild Petunia was exceptional all during July and August. The diminutive Stiff Aster was sweet—it also stood straight. The Prairie Cinquefoil was robust and also stood tall and straight. Spiderwort won the longest-blooming award—from June through the end of November. All the Asters were bountiful; lime-loving Aromatic and Heath Asters bilowed and puffed over the sidewalks for two months; the Smooth Blue and New England Aster were notably showy, while the ethereal Sky Blue Aster was a haze of lavender blue from September into November. Short's Aster and Blue-stemmed Goldenrod were outstanding on the shady side of the limestone terrace all during September and October.

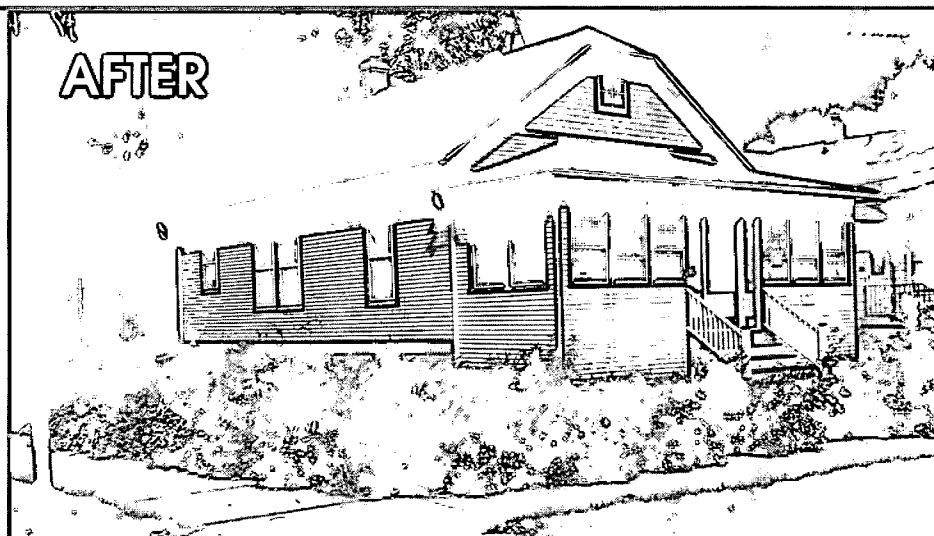
The grasses were exceptional: the fall and winter presence of the copper stems and sparkling white feather seeds of Little Bluestem were exquisite.

### WHAT DIDN'T WORK?

The Leadplant and New Jersey Tea didn't bloom, although the plants put on a lot of growth. The leaves of Compassplant and the Prairie Dock lay on the ground most of the summer; finally they made new leaves that stood up. Most of the spring planting of Rough Blazingstar died. (I replanted them in late summer and those did well.) The Prairie Blazingstar, Yellow Coneflower, Stiff Goldenrod, Smooth Blue Aster and New England Aster all fell over. Showy Goldenrod grew crooked and flopped. I think it was too shady where I had planted it.

**All in all, though, I think it was extraordinarily successful. I live on a corner, so the garden is in full view of neighbors and passers-by and many have stopped to comment—all favorably.**

To what do I attribute my success? One, I have good soil. Having been a landscape designer for years, I soon



discovered the soil around older homes is a nice silty loam for the most part, not the hard clay one finds in new subdivisions. Two, all 2½" plugs are rootbound and the roots have to be cut on all four sides before planting to expedite the growth of new roots. Professionals know this, but maybe home gardeners do not. And finally, I'm an experienced gardener—I kept my eye on it and **I weeded and watered until the plants became established.** My water bill for June and July was \$128.

Installation was easy. I had the sod cut away in the fall and then used Round-Up to zap any grass that came up in the spring before planting. I did not cultivate or stir up the ground in way. I didn't mulch at all, but I didn't have a lot of weeds to contend with: only sorrel, common knotweed and plantain, all of which were easy to weed by hand.

I planted 67 species of forbs and 12 of grasses and sedges: approximately 525 forbs and 88 grasses and sedges in total.

Losses? All the first crop of *Liatris aspera* wilted and died, as did a third of *Solidago speciosa*. And the stems of three of the seven Bottle Gentians broke and didn't rejuvenate; two Heart-leaved Meadow Parsnips, a New Jersey Tea and a Prairie Dock were pulled out of the ground by an animal and perished. One Leadplant turned brown and died in August. As far as I can tell, everything else made it. A loss of less than 5 percent, which contractors normally expect.

Currently, I'm initiating Phase II of my prairie garden: an island to fill up most of the lawn on the west side of my property. I'm also going to plant a savanna in back of the garage.

My advice would be: Go for the spectacular! Gardens should be bountiful and exuberant! One need not hire a contractor to install a prairie landscape—the 2½" plugs are fairly inexpensive and the labor is easy. ■

—Pat Hill





WILMA  
McCALLISTER

## Wild Ones You Should Know

The narrow city street on which Wilma McCallister lives teaches accommodation. A meeting of cars on Oriole Avenue often requires, like so much of Chicago life, a gesture of accommodation—one driver must pull off into an empty space to allow the other to drive through. Inconvenient? Yes, but its saving grace is that drivers have chances to be the givers and receivers of courtesy and grateful waves.

The next-door neighbor Wilma told me of as we spoke in front of her family's home (pleasantly distinctive with its deep sky blue paint and purple trim) seemed to have been filled with that same spirit. Lyle, who died recently, had been the paragon of traditional American yard-keeping. He faithfully mowed his lawn every Tuesday, even into his later years, and had a bountiful garden with nary a weed. He even trimmed his arborvitae in ovoid shapes, not unlike green corn dogs.

It isn't hard to imagine his surprise when Wilma began gardening with wild plants in 1987. Nonetheless, he was tremendously curious and was constantly asking Wilma the names of plants. When Wilma and her husband Rick planted the first of many fescue in the front lawn, with a grass lane preserved for short-cutting mailmen, Rick jested with their neighbor, "Don't worry, Lyle, it's not going to be more than six feet tall!" From Wilma's warm laugh it's clear Lyle came to respond to the landscape revolution next door with grace and good humor.



When she went blind at the age of 24, Wilma was a computer programmer for Commonwealth Edison in downtown Chicago. The diabetes which she had had from early childhood took the first eye while she was asleep. The loss of vision in the second eye was less of a surprise but was far more disruptive.

Twenty-two years later she recounted the last minutes of full vision with more than a few bursts of laughter. She was walking to the office one morning when the blood

vessels in her one functional eye began to burst. She didn't want to tell anybody or yell out, as she mockingly pretended in her best Southern belle style, "Oh, I've just gone blind!" So she continued walking to work, intent on trying out a solution to a programming challenge she had been thinking about all night. If she could just change that one line of code, she would know whether her fix would do the trick.

That wasn't to be. "But by the time I got to the desk and by the time I found my printout," she said, "I could no longer read.

I was like, oh, darn! I guess I'll have to go to the nurse."

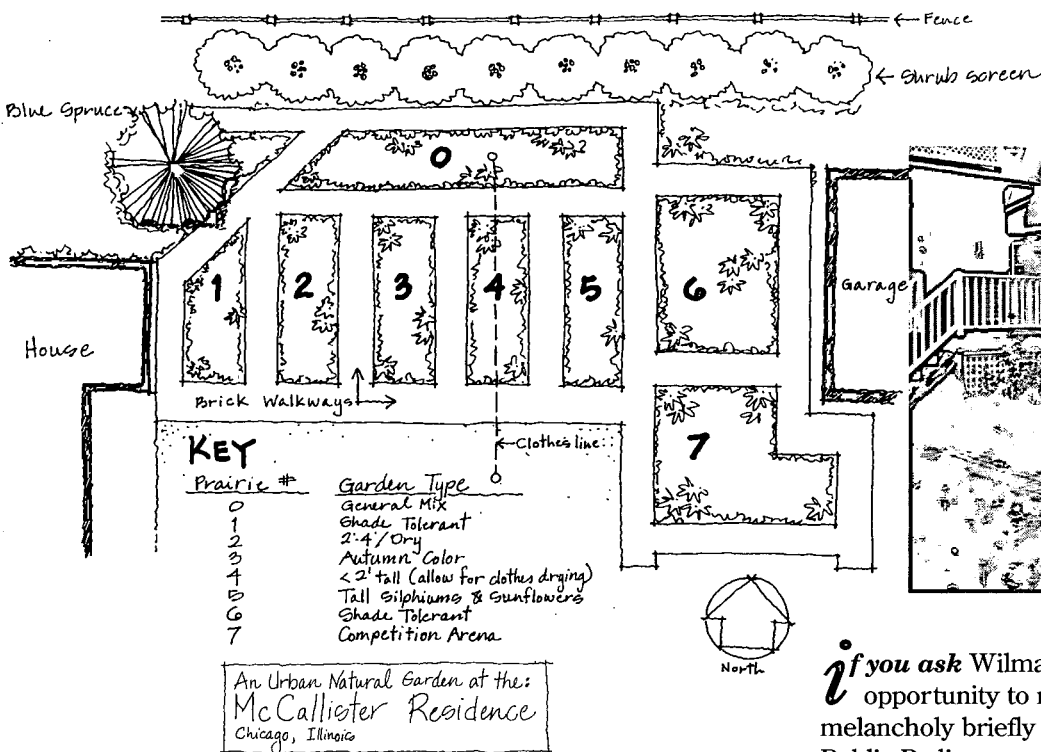
There were a few periods of slight remission, but complete darkness descended after a second massive hemorrhage one year after the first one. Rather than dwell on the difficulties of that time, Wilma laughed again as she told of the advice Wilma's own alcoholic uncle gave to Rick at the hospital, "If I were you, I'd be like Gene Autry and I'd just riiriiriide into the sunset." She and Rick had been married all of three months.

More than two decades later, Wilma and Rick have a pleasant, book-filled home and a 16-year-old daughter, Helen, of whom they are extremely proud. Wilma realizes that this is no small blessing. She's met many who lost their sight and then lost their spouse. And the challenges of daily life are indeed hard. Wilma is an independent spirit and yet she must be dependent on Rick.

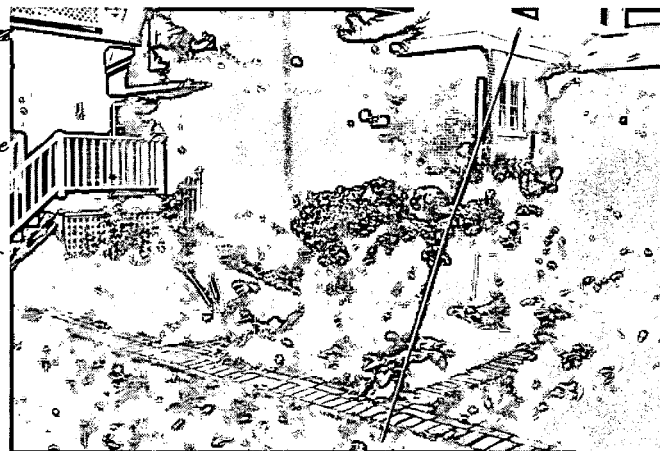
**O**ther than knowing that Illinois was the Prairie State, Wilma knew nothing of the native flora before going blind. Then, around 1983, she enrolled in a class at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Instructor Carol Fialkowski guaranteed that anyone who took the class would catch "prairie fever." Wilma caught it, and she is not eager for a cure.

But she didn't start up her garden right away. Instead she visited prairies in the area until one day it dawned on her that her family's backyard would probably get enough sunlight for some of the plants to grow. So, nearly 11 years ago, Wilma began a garden space of eight rectangular blocks of prairie intersected by 'streets' of old paving bricks. It represents the unique synergy of native plant beauty and the logic of a computer programmer's mind.

The first plot (Prairie #0) Wilma established is toward the northern edge of the backyard, and there was little logic in its makeup and design. But in the other seven blocks, which were initiated a year and a half later, Wilma hit her stride. In Prairies 1 through 7, she gave each seedling plug its own square foot of space. Each of these blocks had its own theme. Between plots are the two-foot-wide brick 'streets' which make for easy access by Wilma to every plant. So, who does the work of maintaining the garden? Rick gladly attends the Wild Ones meetings with Wilma, but the garden is her responsibility and her passion.



Portrait photo and diagram by Bob Porter  
Landscape photos by Nathan Aaberg



*If you ask* Wilma about her blindness and give her the opportunity to really talk, frustration and even traces of melancholy briefly break the surface. She tells of hearing a Public Radio essay by a woman who lost her glasses on the way to Glacier National Park and so wasn't able to see much while there. The essayist's tone had been full of annoyance and tribulation. "Stuff like that just kind of stabs you," Wilma said and then with a near-growl she pretended to address the essayist, "Lady, you saw more than you know."

"There are times," she continued, "when I just go, 'I am tired of this already.' I do these little games: If I could see for five minutes, this is what I would want to see...Helen, of course...And have all her pictures lined up so I could see how she looked as a baby." And as she so often does when talking about herself, she laughed.

When the conversation turned to Illinois prairies, she became far more grim, even mournful. She said, "It was shocking to find out that Illinois used to be so much prairie and that less than a tenth of one percent is left."

Considering the beauty of the Western national parks and the mountain ranges still in all their glory, she continued, "Oh, why didn't they save something so we'd have it [the great prairies of the Midwest]? This was a vast ecosystem that has been erased. You have this terrible feeling of loss. Why can't we have this experience like we do about the mountains?"

Here we share a common loss of sight with Wilma. We have never and will never see the vast seas of grass and flowers that used to cover so much of the lands of the Midwest. We might be able to imagine it, but for those with the love of the splendors of nature, that will never be enough.

So what do we do? We do what Wilma does—take positive actions. We plant small prairies in our gardens. In some cases, we even take down the fences separating our natural garden from our neighbor's, reversing on a microscopic scale the overall trends of fragmentation. We do what we can to help conserve and restore. And Wilma? She has plans for this coming year, plans to add more plants to her prairie plots and plans for a woodland garden under the Pin Oak and Silver Maple toward the south edge of the backyard. *ra*

—Nathan Aaberg, © 1999

The details of each planting were planned on a spreadsheet in her talking computer. But don't think Wilma programmed the life out of her garden. "The thing that I like is that if some of these things don't like where I put them originally, they go to a prairie they like better." In fact, the data serve as a baseline for following the life that the garden has taken on of its own.

The Switch Grass, for example, that was originally planted in Prairie #7 with Rosinweed proved to be quite aggressive. Its assault put pressure on the Rosinweed as well as the Big Bluestem that had first been there. Later, like a troop of island-hopping Marines, Switch Grass landed on Prairie #0.

Her voice became animated with joy when she spoke of the garden. She talked affectionately of each plant, preferring to use the botanical name. After naming some of her other favorites, she found to her surprise that indeed the tactile character of plants influenced her preferences: Bottled Gentian, Big Blue Stem, "all the silphiums," Prairie Dropseed, White Wild Indigo, Thimbleweed, and Sneezeweed are just some that came to mind.

She raved about another plant as well. See if you can guess it from her description. "You can pet every part of that plant. It's all soft. The stem, the leaves, the flowers — everything on it is soft. I go up every time I see it and pet it." The answer pleases the ear as much as the plant does Wilma's touch—*Potentilla arguta* (Prairie Cinquefoil).

There are many other pleasures to be had from her prairie garden, including the surprising orchestra of sounds emanating from it. The McCallisters often eat summer dinners outside on the high deck over the garden, enjoying its ambience. And just off the deck is the room where Wilma practices the flute. One day last summer, her playing attracted a bird which settled on a Horse Chestnut branch. The bird began to accompany Wilma's playing with its own sweet sounds. Wilma was performing *Le Rossignol en Amour* (Nightingale in Love).



# The inside story

**Family:** Berberidaceae (Barberry)

**Other Names:** Pappose Root, Squawroot, Blueberry Root, Blue Ginseng, Yellow Ginseng, Leontice, Women's Best Friend.

**Habitat:** Rich, moist woods.

**Description:** The plant is smooth with a bluish-white bloom. About midway on the stem there is a leaf divided into three stalked divisions, each of which bears about nine leaflets with from three to five lobes. Above this is a stalked, loosely branched cluster of 1/2-inch-wide, purplish-brown to yellow-green flowers. The blossom has six pointed sepals and six smaller, hood-shaped petals, six stamens, and a single pistil. It matures into berry-like seeds which look like small blue grapes. **Flowering:** April to June.

**Height:** 1 to 3 feet.

## BLUE COHOSH (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*)

**Comments:** Blue Cohosh is a native woodland perennial. The berries are rather unpleasant, without a distinct flavor, and the seeds are said to resemble coffee when roasted; they were used as a coffee substitute. The plant contains the vital mineral elements potassium, magnesium, sodium, phosphorus, salts of potash, calcium, iron, and silicon.

**Medicinal Use:** Over 80 years ago, this herb was included in the U.S. Pharmacopoeia and was considered worthy of detailed study and use in obstetric and gynecological conditions. American Indian women drank an infusion of the root for two weeks prior to childbirth, which was usually painless. It was also beneficial in treating a long list of ailments, including profuse menstruation, abdominal cramps, urinary tract infections, lung ailments, fevers, epilepsy, nervous exhaustion, high blood pressure, spasmodic asthma, convulsions, neuralgia, etc. The following quote from recent times, says it all, *"There is hardly an American remedy...that needs and probably merits, a more thorough proving, upon females especially, than Blue Cohosh, and the sooner it is done, the better able will we be to cope with many of our most obstinate uterine cases."*



Photo © 1999 Janice Stiefel Photography

**Name Origin:** The genus name, *Caulophyllum* (kau-lo-FILL-um), is from the Greek words, *caulos*, meaning "stem," and *phyllon*, meaning "leaf," because the stem seems to form a stalk for the greatly expanding leaf. Species name, *thalictroides* (tha-lick-TROY-deez) means "resembling MeadowRue (*Thalictrum*)." The "blue" in the common name comes from a bluish-white bloom on the foliage and the later blue berries which follow the flowers. The family name, Berberidaceae, is pronounced: berberry-DAY-see-ee.

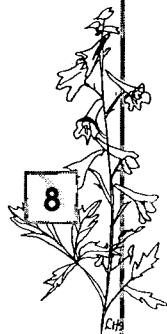
**Author's Note:** When I see the telltale bluish-white leaves of the Blue Cohosh and its simple, almost camouflaged blossoms, I'm reminded of how important this plant was to the American Indian women. And as I meander through our Wisconsin woodlands in search of spring wildflowers, I wonder what early explorers might have seen when they first laid eyes on the beautiful, flourishing understory of our forests. Now that 400 years have passed, what might they think if they were to return in 1999 to view what is left of the vast forests; the lush, green open meadows; the valuable wetlands which filtered their water; and the pristine, sparkling streams teeming with uncontaminated fish. Would they be appalled by what civilization has wrought—with its lumber harvesting, farming, subdivisions, factories, miles of roadways, air and ground pollution, and predator destruction, allowing for over-population of surviving species.

Many of the plants early explorers identified (which were growing in abundance) have become extinct or endangered. Sadly, future generations will never know what was once here, except through the miracle of photography or the brushes and pens of artists who have tried to capture the essence of the gifts this land once held—before they are lost forever. ♣

© 1999 Janice Stiefel, Plymouth, Wis.

"Coveting is a normal part of gardening. If something is beautiful somewhere else, it is perfectly all right to want to have that beauty where you can enjoy it regularly."

—Richard Bir,  
Extension Horticulturist,  
North Carolina





## PROPAGATING BLUE COHOSH

More than one reference book claims Blue Cohosh is easily grown from seed. Easy ... if you have patience. Unscarified seed takes up to four years to germinate; scarifying the seed takes one or two years off the waiting period. Seeds seem to resist being fooled into germination with artificial cold and warm periods, but if you have the seed to spare, it's worth a try.

After germination, it can still be a few years before the plant reaches its mature size. This means Blue Cohosh plants are hard to find in the marketplace, so if you want some in your woods or shady garden area, you'll probably have to try growing them yourself.

Seeds are ready to harvest about the time woods are at their hottest, stickiest, and buggiest. In July and August, grab a headnet and look in deciduous woods for the plants' deep blue berries. The berries mature at various stages in Blue Cohosh colonies, so you're likely to find something ready to pick. Berries can be found atop leafless stalks well into fall and even winter, but don't count on it! Once they've fallen onto the forest floor, they're impossible to find.

Each blue berry contains one large, hard seed. Germination takes even longer—and is lower—if the seed is stored, so plan to sow the seeds soon after collection in moist, rich soil. It's not necessary to clean the seed before planting. Most of the thin, blue seed coat will come off as you scarify or nick the seed. Several years later, when your mature plant is gracing the garden with its thrice-compound leaves; green, star-shaped flowers; and beautiful berries, you might want to divide the thick, knobby roots to make new plants. Root divisions should be made when the plant is dormant. ♪

—Maria Urice  
Ion Exchange  
Harpers Ferry, Iowa

**NOTE:** Last issue we carried a notice from *Wild Garden* magazine offering a special subscription price to Wild Ones members. For the moment, *Wild Garden* has apparently suspended publication. This is all the information available at this time.

*The Lorrie Otto Seeds For Education Fund of the Milwaukee Foundation, established by Wild Ones in 1996, honors our "philosophical compass," Lorrie. We award grants to schools, nature centers, and other places of learning for children-involved projects such as creating natural landscapes using native plants and developing outdoor classrooms. The fund is perpetual and a wonderful legacy. Additional tax-deductible contributions allow us to increase its annual grant amounts. Wild Ones chapters: Feel welcome to encourage these projects and look for new ones!*

*Our appointed panel of volunteer expert judges are pleased to announce the wonderful 1999 grant recipients. Receiving \$400 each plus seeds/plants/discounts from an SFE nursery partner are the following three recipients:*

• **Green Meadow Elementary School's** Native Garden, Oshkosh, Wis., begun in May 1998, one-half acre. Progress and knowledge will be shared online at <http://www.vbe.com/~gmeadow>. The art teacher has already incorporated the garden into art projects. Green Meadow appreciates a long list of "Gardening Angels" which includes Indian Hill School for inspiration and answers to questions, and volunteers.

• **St. Leonard School** Prairie Restoration Project, Muskego, Wis., 80 x 60 feet. Their primary goal is to help students view their own backyards as small ecosystems that can be designed to restore the land, create biological diversity, conserve natural resources, and reduce pollution caused by traditional lawn care methods. The wet prairie restoration will serve as a demonstration site for families.

• **Kids Environmental Education Project (KEEP), Slausen Middle School**, Ann Arbor, Mich., one acre. The land is provided by Briarwood Mall. Students have already begun the conversion of a retention pond and land stifled by alien invasives—the multi-year project lets them watch the successional stages into native prairie and savannah.

*Receiving \$200 each are four additional recipients:*

• **Chopin-Wagner Garden Project**, Detroit, Mich., 45 x 100 feet. A native landscape for an urban vacant lot close to St. Cunegunda Elementary School.

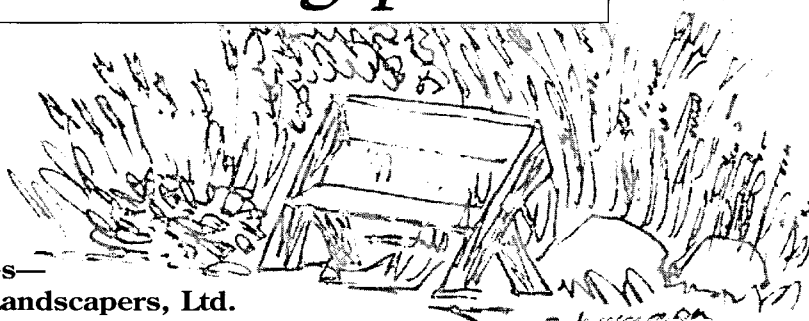
• **North Barrington School** Elementary School Interactive Habitat, Ill., 15 acres. An interactive habitat is being developed as part of new school construction.

• **Bay View Middle School** Nature Trail/Area, Green Bay, Wis., 30-acre campus. A community-based nature trail. The project will add native plants (and I.D. markers), Leopold benches, gravel paths, and more.

• **Forest Glen Elementary School** Wildlife Nature Study and Trail Project, Green Bay, Wis., 2.6 acres. This is part of a joint long-term project with Bay View (above) and the school district. ♪

—Nancy Aten, Seeds For Education director

# The meeting place



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## CHAPTERS NOTE:

**May 7** is the deadline for the July/August calendar. Submit your events notices to Joy Buslaff (see back cover for address) who will forward calendar information to Mark Charles to post on our web site. To post late-breaking announcements, contact Mark directly (734-997-8909, [wildones@ic.net](mailto:wildones@ic.net)).

Calendar information also available at [www.for-wild-com](http://www.for-wild-com)

## 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.

**MAY 1—1-3 p.m.** Tour gardens of Virginia Umberger. Take Glenwood Trail west from Rt. 25 to end of the road. Her garden is located just south of toll road I-90 and just west of Rt. 25 in Elgin. Virginia's house is on the left at 545 Glenwood Trail.

**MAY 22—1-3 p.m.** Tour Wolf Road Prairie, Westchester, at Wolf Rd. and 22nd St. Park in the bays along north side of 22nd St. west of Wolf Rd. If bays are full, park at NE corner at Dominicks.

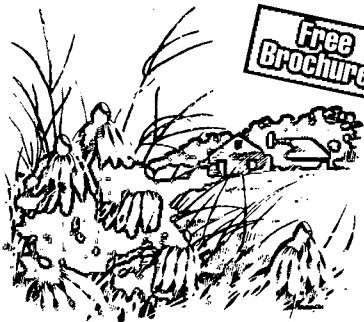
**JUNE 5—1-3 p.m.** Tour gardens of Barbara O'Brien. Take County Farm Rd. north from Roosevelt Rd. and go over railroad tracks. The first light is Jewell; go west to first street (Ethel), then turn north. Next street is Bolles, turn west and go to #171.

**JUNE 26—7:30 a.m.-5 p.m.** Field of Coneflowers Bus Tour. \$30 includes transportation, light snacks. Leave from COD west parking lot. Visit Nachusa Grasslands, Franklin Creek State Park, Foley Sand Prairie, Genesis Nursery. Send check made out to Wild Ones, name, address, phone # and car license # if using parking lot, to: Jan Smith, 555 Chippewa Trail, Carol Stream, IL 60188-1589; (630) 653-3958.

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### LAKE-TO-PRAIRIE CHAPTER

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month 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 11**—7:15 p.m. "Restoring (and Rescuing) the Plants of Woods and Prairies" presented by Steve Packard, author and a prime mover in creating supportive networks for restoration work in Cook and Lake counties. The focus of this workshop will be on restoration techniques—the when, why and what of species to rescue and transplant, and the conservation implications of wild plant gardens.

**JUNE 8**—Field Trip to Illinois Beach State Park.

### NORTH PARK CHAPTER

Meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the North Park Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, Chicago, unless otherwise indicated. Call Bob Porter for more info, (312) 744-5472.

**MAY 2**—9:45 a.m. "Spring Woodland Wildflower Tour at Harms Woods." Take I-94 to Old Orchard Rd. exit. Go west on Old Orchard to Harms Rd. Go north on Harms Rd. to forest preserve parking lot on left (before Glenview Rd.). We'll meet in parking lot.

**MAY 13**—Supplementary meeting to regular meeting (on May 2) will be a book discussion of Noah's Garden by Sara Stein. Please read before May 13!

**JUNE 10**—7 p.m. "Native Trees and Shrubs for the



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### ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER

Meetings held at Jarrett Prairie Center, Byron Forest Preserve, 7993 N. River Rd., Byron, unless otherwise noted. Call (815) 234-8535 for info.

**MAY 20**—7 p.m. Meet at Klehm Arboretum, 2701, Clifton Ave., Rockford. Laura Wyatt, director of Northern Illinois Botanical Society, leads walk through native woodland garden.

**JUNE 17**—Plant sale at Enders Greenhouse, Cherry Valley (see ad below), with discount for Wild Ones

members. Anne Meyer will give presentation and answer questions about native plants.

### KANSAS

Chapter meets monthly. Call Michael S. Almon for info, (785) 832-1300.

### KENTUCKY

#### FRANKFORT

Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 5:30 at Franklin County Extension office unless otherwise noted. Call Katie Clark at (502) 226-4766 or email [herbs@kih.net](mailto:herbs@kih.net) for info.

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## LOUISVILLE CHAPTER

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Louisville Nature Center, 3745 Illinois Avenue, unless otherwise noted. Call Portia Brown at (502) 454-4007 or e-mail [Light@entreky.net](mailto:Light@entreky.net) for info.

**MAY 18**—6:30 p.m. Meet at Jefferson Memorial Forest Welcome Center on Mitchell Hill Rd., Fairdale. Tour transitional forest. Call forest at 368-5404 for directions.

**MAY 22**—9 a.m.-noon. Wild Ones in Cherokee Park. Use eastern Parkway entrance by Daniel Boone statue. Our site is behind the flagpole.

**JUNE 15**—6:30 p.m. Meet at Bernheim Forest Arboretum Center parking lot. Margaret Shea, Natural Areas director, will lead us on a tour of the meadow.

**JUNE 26**—Same as May 22.

## MICHIGAN

### ANN ARBOR CHAPTER

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month. For info contact Dave Mindell, (734) 665-7168 or [plantwise@aol.com](mailto:plantwise@aol.com); or Bob Grese, (734) 763-0645 or [bgrese@umich.edu](mailto:bgrese@umich.edu).

**MAY 12**—7:30 p.m. Woodland walk, location TBD.

**JUNE 9**—7:30 p.m. Member's garden tour, site TBD.

## 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.

**MAY 26**—Meet at Fergus Falls Library. Field trip to Bob and Barb Lorsung's to tour their landscape.

**JUNE 23**—Tour Prairie Wetlands Learning Center and its landscape.

### ST. CLOUD

Meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month at the Heritage Nature Center, St. Cloud, 6:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

**MAY 18**—General business meeting and possible plant rescue.

## MISSOURI

### ST. LOUIS CHAPTER

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month. New chapter is developing program schedule. Contact Scott Woodbury for info, (314) 451-0850.

**MAY 5**—Plant sale planning meeting at Ana Grace's.

**MAY 15**—Spring wildflower sale at Shaw Arboretum.

**JUNE 2**—Tom and Marilyn Chryst's home garden.

## OHIO

### COLUMBUS CHAPTER

Meetings are held the second Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. at Inniswood Metro Gardens, Inniswood House, 940 Hempstead Rd., Westerville, unless otherwise noted. Call Martha Preston for info, (614) 263-9468.

**MAY 8**—10 a.m., Dawes Arboretum, 7770 Jackson Town Road WE, Newark. Take I-70 east to exit 132; drive north for 4 miles. Arboretum is on the left. Tour and then lunch at Herbs & Ewe restaurant (by reservation).

## 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.


**MAY 15**—Plant identification with social.

## 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 8**—6 p.m. "Restoration of a Buckthorn-In-fested Woodlands," lecture and tour of the Maassen's yard, 913 Honey Creek Rd, Oshkosh. Take 41 to 21 west toward Omro. After about 2 miles, turn left on Honey Creek Rd.



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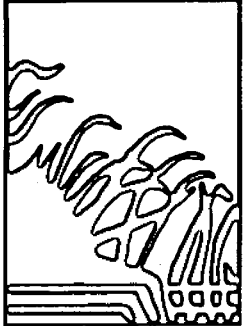
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**JUNE 12**—Meet at Kmart in Oshkosh at 8:30 a.m., in Appleton at 9 a.m., for bus trip to the Clearing (Jensen's school) and the Ridges (a park known for its ladyslippers). Bring a sack lunch.

#### GREEN BAY CHAPTER

Meetings are held at the Green Bay Botanical Garden, 2600 Larsen Rd., 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Call Bonnie Vastag for info, (920) 494-5635.

**MAY 15**—Meet at 10 a.m. at UW-Green Bay Arboretum (Green Lot) for a spring wildflower walk led by Gary Fewless, UWGB botanist.

**JUNE 9**—6:30 p.m. Tour Baird's Creek Parkway, site of old growth forest, led by Paul Hartman, UW-Extension horticulturist.

**JUNE 26**—9 a.m. Field trip to Navarino area. Tour 20-acre marsh, prairie and woodlands and the Navarino Nature Center.

#### 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.

**MAY 27**—Prairie Enthusiasts (topic and location to be announced).

**JUNE 24**—Ponds or woodworking.

#### MENOMONEE RIVER AREA CHAPTER

Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. at The Ranch,

W187 N8661 Maple Rd., Menomonee Falls. Call Jan Koel for info, (414) 251-7175.

**MAY 18**—"Woodland walk at The Ranch" with Steve Pericak.

**JUNE 15**—Build an Aldo Leopold bench at The Ranch with Joe Keller

#### 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 8**—Plant rescue. Meet at SAC. Prairie Future Seed will also be selling plants. Plant rescue for members only (may join that day).


**JUNE 12**—"Show Me Day": Members Nancy Aten and Gloria Stupak share their yards for Q&As. Meet at SAC for maps and carpooling.

#### 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 8**—Visit a native wooded habitat to appreciate the beauty of woodland species in their natural setting.

**JUNE 12**—"Show Me Day": Visit five or six homes and talk with members with native landscapes. Maps can be picked up at Wehr from approximately 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Tours last until 4:30 p.m.




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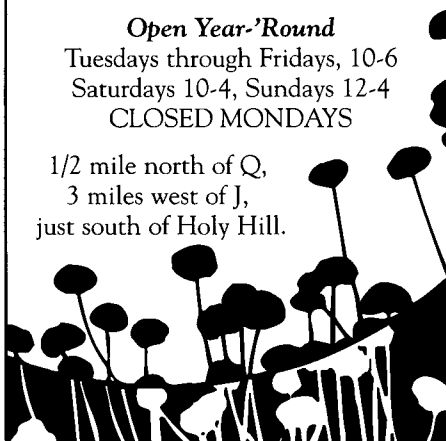
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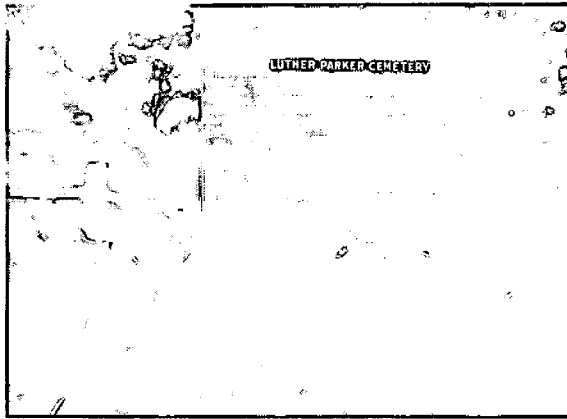
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**PLEASE**

**T**his issue we have a special request. Member Nathan Aaberg has offered to assemble materials relating to cemetery landscapes for an article in *Wild Ones Journal*. If you know of a restoration site or the history behind a burial mound or traditions having to do with planting as a memorial, contact Nathan. He's even interested whether *you* have special plans. As he says, "I can't imagine having Kentucky bluegrass over me."

**Nathan Aaberg**  
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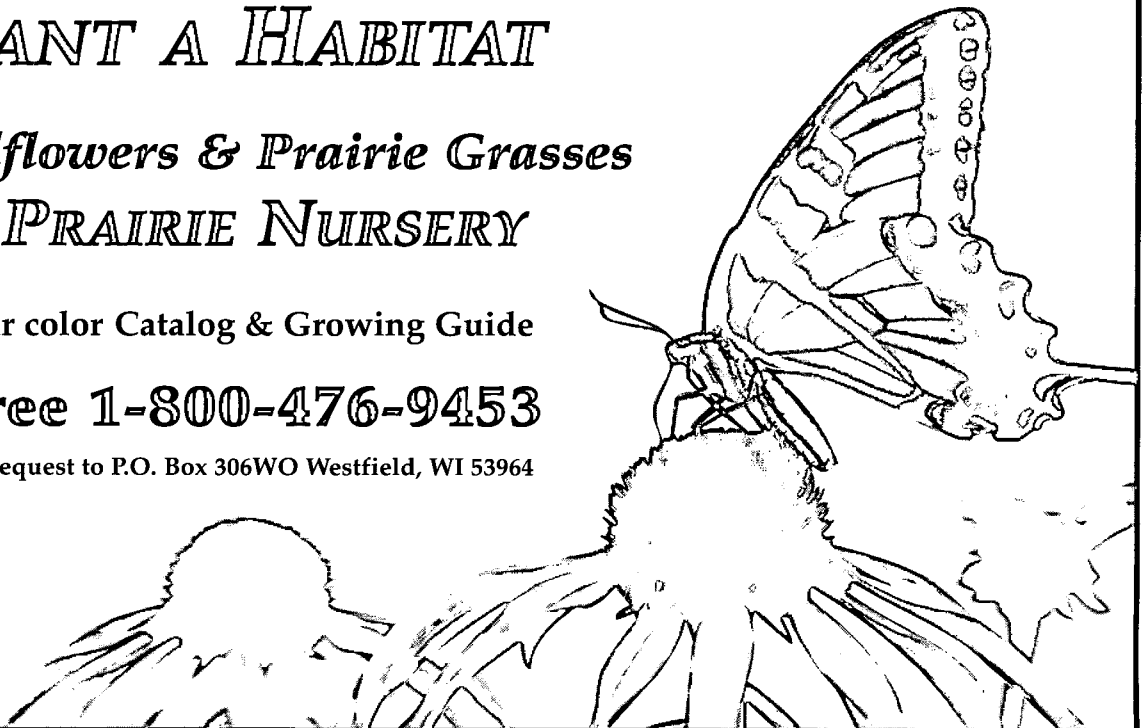
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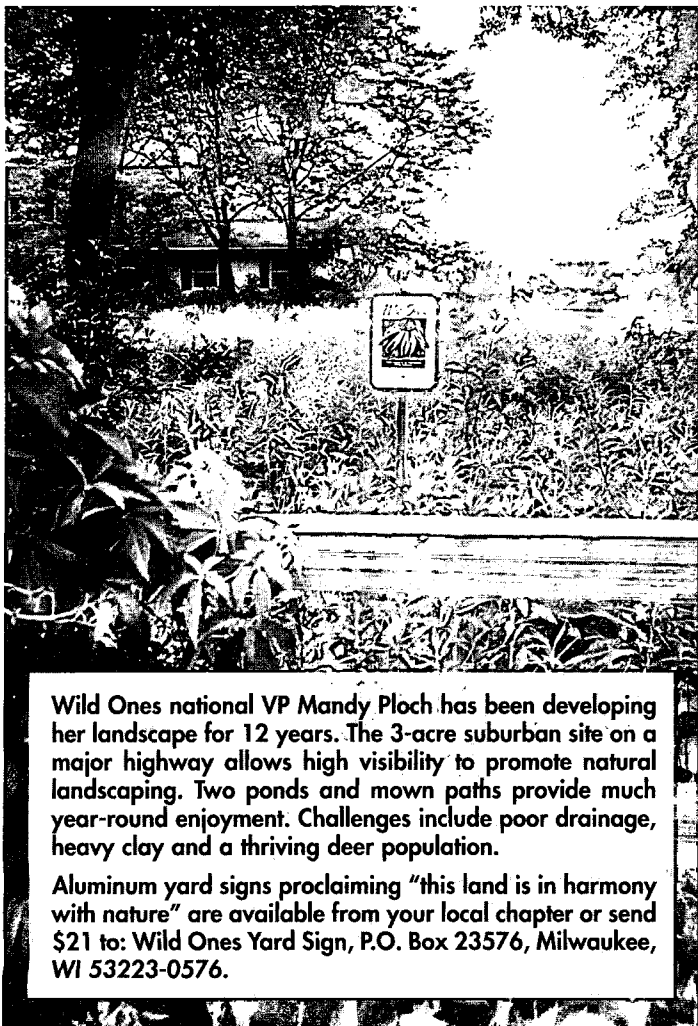
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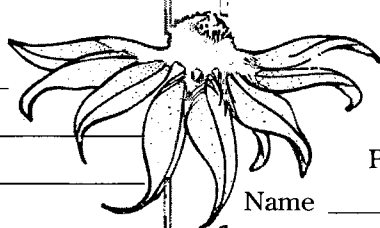
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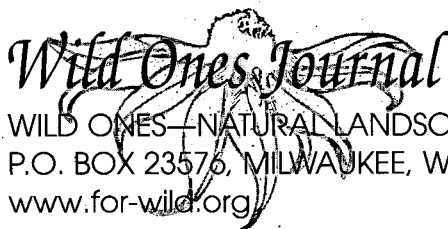
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