

A Prairie Rendezvous

A joint publication of:



Greenup Vol2, N2, 2000

Happy Greenup! Although it still looks bleak outside spring is just around the corner. You'll notice the 'spring' edition of A Prairie Rendezvous has been renamed the Greenup edition; a phrase that goes back to settler times.

Thanks to Jim Hoyt for the suggestion. We still need suggestions for the summer and fall editions!

This edition also has two articles that hark back to the early settler days...using plants to create dyes and the creation of a quilt that reflects our prairie heritage.

April marks the 30th anniversary of Earth Day. Be sure to get out and attend some of the many celebrations. One way you can celebrate is to attend a workday during the month of April. The Grand Prairie Friends and the Prairie Grove Volunteers have a wide range of April Earth Day activities arranged.

A special thank you to those GPF members who renewed their membership and took the time to return the survey.

- the editors

Growing Native Dye Plants in the Garden

by Carie Nixon

While all plants have pigments, some plants have them in high enough concentration that the pigments can actually be extracted and used as dyes. Many native North American plants were used to produce a wide range of colors by the native people. Some of these plants can be easily grown in the home landscape and harvested for these pigments. Here are just a few examples.

Trees and shrubs

While you would not likely plant trees in your yard to cut them down to use for dyes, in many cases you can harvest fruit or nuts for dyes, and when wood or bark is needed, you can often use that from branches that are pruned from the tree. Many shrubs thrive on regular severe pruning.

Walnut and Butternut produce a deep brown dye from the husks of the nut.

Osage Orange fruits produce yellow and golden colors while the wood browns. Galls from Oak yellows and grays.

produces golds and greens, while the green leaves and twigs yield bright yellows and deep browns. Pine cones produce tan. Currents and Gooseberries (twigs and leaves) produce beautiful yellows and browns. Rose hips, leaves, twigs or blossoms produce yellows, golds and greens.

Cottonwood flowers produce greens, while the green leaves and twigs yield bright yellows and deep browns. Pine cones produce tan. Currents and Gooseberries (twigs and leaves) produce beautiful yellows and browns. Rose hips, leaves, twigs or blossoms produce yellows, golds and greens.

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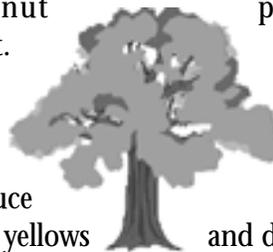
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Berries

Berries often make very vivid colors (reds and purples), but are fugitive (they fade when washed or when exposed to sunlight). Poke berries, wild cherries, blueberries, raspberries or blackberries all give good results.

Prairie Plants

While the thought of cutting down your prairie plants may not sound desirable, many can be harvested with no ill effects as long as no more than half of a plant or a quarter of a patch is cut at one time. If you prefer, you can plant some of them in a special dye garden that you harvest like you would vegetables from the garden. I prefer to just go out into my prairie patch a clip what I need.

(see *Natural Dyes*, page 6)

A Prairie Rendezvous
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A Prairie Rendezvous is a joint publication of the Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois (GPF) and the Prairie Grove Volunteers (PGV) for the restoration community of east-central Illinois.

A Prairie Rendezvous is published quarterly. Article submissions should be sent electronically to the editor at d-chien@uiuc.edu

Prairie Grove Volunteers

www.prairienet.org/pgv

The PGV is part of The Nature Conservancy's Volunteer Stewardship Network. Its stewards help coordinate volunteer workdays at native prairie, savanna, wetland, and woodland remnants. Inquires and tax-deductible donations should be sent to: Prairie Grove Volunteers c/o The Nature Conservancy,

Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois

www.prairienet.org/gpf

GPF is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to prairie preservation, restoration, and education in east central Illinois. Inquiries and tax-deductible donations should be sent to: Grand Prairie Friends, PO Box 36, Urbana, IL 61803-0036.

A Prairie Rendezvous
Submission Deadlines:

Hibernation Issue (Dec, Jan, Feb)
November 15

Greenup Issue (March, April, May)
February 15

Summer Issue (June, July, Aug)
May 15

Fall Issue (Sept, Oct, Nov)
August 15

Member submissions encouraged.

Printed on Recycled Paper

The Prairie Quilt Project

In the fall of 1993, the book, "History from the Heart: A Two Century Heritage of Illinois Quilts and Quilt Making" by E. Dwain Elbert and Rachael Kamm Elbert, which is based on the findings of the Illinois Quilt Research Project directed by Cheryl Kennedy, inspired Grand Prairie Friend member, Sharon Monday-Dorsey, to explore the idea of a prairie quilt as a traveling exhibit and educational tool about our prairie heritage. The GPF board approved the project in 1994.

Sandy Bales, art education professor at the University of Illinois, recommended Jackie Worden, artist and librarian, in Charleston, IL to design the quilt. Sharon and Jackie met in February of 1994 and adapted a quilt design from the Elbert book, "Gem of the Prairie" with permission of the Peoria Quilting Society and designer Ann Pastucha.

The concept behind the quilt was to include images which can be viewed on many levels and includes themes of natural history, ecology, cultural connections to the prairie, the food pyramid, seasons, loss of habitat and

(see Prairie Quilt, page 7)

Nature Conservancy Workshop at the Vermilion River Observatory

The Prairie Grove Volunteers of The Nature Conservancy is proud to present a workshop that will be of immense value to local stewards. On May 20 a Vegetation Monitoring workshop will be held at the Vermilion River Observatory (VRO). Vegetation monitoring is an important tool for the restoration and management of natural areas because it assesses the impact of management practices and the progress of restoration. It can also be used to accurately monitor changes in populations of threatened or endangered species. This workshop will be presented by Brenda Molano-Flores (Prairie Restoration Ecologist at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie) and Mary Ann Feist (Wetland Ecologist with the Natural History Survey).

This will be a basic course for those with little or no experience with vegetation sampling. We will begin in the morning with a lecture at the classroom building at the VRO. In the afternoon, we will move outdoors for hands-on demonstrations. The VRO is a unique natural area owned by the University of Illinois. It includes several forested ravines, seeps, ponds, recovering old fields, and some active farm fields.

The workshop will last until approximately 2:00 so please pack a lunch. Meet at the APNC at 8:30 am to carpool or 9:30 am at the site. Contact Mary Ann Feist (w: 244-6858, h: 355-3174) or Brenda Molano-Flores (w: 265-8167) to register and for directions. Registration is limited to 15. 

Volunteer Workday

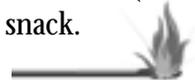


Calendar



'Fridge' Insert - Greenup, 2000

Spring means BURN SEASON! Prescribed burns will be scheduled in early March for several sites. Fire is needed at these sites to discourage the non-native species and encourage growth of native plants. Wear natural-fiber (cotton, wool), long pants and sleeves, boots, and gloves. *No synthetic fabrics* Bring drinking water and a snack. Call Rick Larimore (w: 244-6716, h: 337-7006) or Paul Tessene (w: 244-7984, h: 344-4303).



SATURDAY, MARCH 18: BUSEY WOODS. Enjoy a woodlands close to home. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 am. Contact Kim Bauer (h: 328-0552).

SATURDAY, MARCH 25: PAXTON RAILROAD PRAIRIE. Swing to the sounds of spring while doing some serious damage to non-native species. We will remove invasive species and apply herbicides to teasel rosettes at this small but high quality prairie. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 am to carpool, or on site at 10:00 am. Contact Connie Carroll (w: 244-7741, h: 352-4731).

SUNDAY MARCH 26: MIDDLE FORK WOODS NATURE PRESERVE. Kill garlic mustard and bush honeysuckle. Come help us eliminate these invasive plants from this remnant of a once vast mesic upland forest. Bring plastic bags. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 am to carpool, or on site at 10:00 am. Contact Jim or Crystal Brewer (h: 354-2558).

SATURDAY, APRIL 1: JASMINE HOLLOW NATURAL HERITAGE LANDMARK. A 140 acre privately owned site along the Sangamon River containing mature bottomland and second growth upland forest. The owner wishes to restore the site to presettlement conditions. This site is important in that it protects the Sangamon River and is a nearby link to Allerton Park. Meet at 9:00 am at the Lost Garden parking lot at Allerton and car pool from there. Contact Mary Ann Feist (w: 244-6858).

SATURDAY, APRIL 8: LODA PRAIRIE. Volunteers are needed to help clear brush at this spectacular mesic prairie remnant. Meet at Loda Cemetery at 9:00 am, or contact Dwain Berggren (h: 367-5014) to carpool.

SATURDAY, APRIL 15:

BUSEY WOODS RESTORATION. See March 18.

PATTON WOODS. 9:45 to 11:15 am. Help preserve this diverse woodland. Activities include trail maintenance, brush clearing, and some litter pickup. Meet at Parkland College at 9 am to carpool (at parking lot B-1, near the circle drive - *look for the flag pole*), or meet on site at 9:45 am.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22:

HORSESHOE BOTTOM AND WINDFALL PRAIRIE NATURE PRESERVES. Spring Wildflower Hike. See hill prairies, seeps, marsh marigolds, and breathtaking views of the Middlefork of the Vermilion River! Be prepared for several miles of rough (and maybe a bit wet) hiking. Wear good boots and bring water and a lunch. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 am to carpool to the site. Contact Rick Larimore (h: 337-7006), Dave Ketzner (w: 244-8821), or Jim Smith (h: 896-2079).

- No Pets. Activities such as prescribed burning may endanger pets, even if they are on leashes or otherwise supervised.
- Wear appropriate attire for working outdoors, (i.e. gloves, boots or comfortable shoes, long sleeves, long pants, durable clothing)
- Bring drinking water and a snack.
- Bring loppers, handsaws, and pruners if you have them.
- Sunscreen and a hat

MIDDLE FORK WOODS NATURE PRESERVE. Bring plastic bags. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 am to carpool, or on site at 10:00 am. Contact Jim or Crystal Brewer (h: 354-2558).

SATURDAY, APRIL 29:

BONNIE'S PRAIRIE NATURE PRESERVE. Bonnie's Prairie is a unique nature preserve with sand prairie and sand pond; spring flowers will be in bloom. Bring a sack lunch or have lunch in nearby Watseka. Meet at APNC* at 8:30 am to carpool or 10:00 am at the site. Contact Joyce Hofmann (w: 244-2366).

PATTON WOODS. 10 AM. Wildflower Walk. Walk through Patton Woods with your guide Earl Creutzburg to point out beautiful Illinois wildflowers. Sponsored by the Champaign County Forest Preserve. Contact Earl Creutzburg (w: 351-2371, h: 328-2375).

TUESDAY MAY 2: 6 PM. MEADOWBROOK PRAIRIE. Urbana's own restoration. Meet on site at the Race Street parking lot. For more information contact Bob Vaiden (w: 244-7984, h: 344-4303).

SATURDAY, MAY 6:

Mahomet May Day celebration. GPF will be selling plants at the Early American Museum from 9 – 12.

PELLVILLE CEMETERY PRAIRIE. Help clear brush from this high quality dry mesic prairie. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 am to carpool or on site at 10:00 am. Contact Paul Tessene (w: 244-7984, h: 344-4303) or Peggy Waltherhausen (h: 344-4303).

NETTIE HART MEMORIAL WOODLAND. Garlic mustard pulling. Restore upland and floodplain forest along the Sangamon River. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 am to carpool. Contact Bryant Barnes (vm: 493-8686).

SUNDAY MAY 7: DORIS WESTFALL PRAIRIE NATURE PRESERVE. Field trip. Let Dorris Westfall show you around her prairie. See the Indian paintbrush and other early spring flowers in bloom. Meet at APNC at 12:00 to carpool or 1:00 at the Prairie parking lot at Forest Glen. Contact Dorris Westfall (442-8100) or the Vermilion County Conservation District (442-1691).

SATURDAY, MAY 13 (MOTHER'S DAY):

LODA PRAIRIE. Spring Flower Walk. Come enjoy the spring wildflowers of the prairie at Loda Cemetery Prairie. Common spring wildflowers at this site include the rare shooting star, downy phlox, and yellow star grass! Contact April DeAtley (h: 386-2202) for details.

BUSEY WOODS. Enjoy a woodlands close to home. See March 18.

ANNUAL GPF PLANT SALE. Location to be announced.

TUESDAY MAY 16: MEADOWBROOK PRAIRIE. See May 2.

SATURDAY MAY 20: VEGETATION MONITORING WORKSHOP. VERMILION RIVER OBSERVATORY. See article page 2.

SUNDAY, MAY 21: MIDDLE FORK RIVER. Help the Prairie Grove Volunteers and the Prairie Paddlers Canoe Club as we canoe down river and collect trash. Bring drinking water and a snack (and canoeing attire, of course!). The Middlefork is a National Scenic River, so be prepared for some fantastic scenery! Contact Jim or Crystal Brewer (h: 354-2558) for more information.

Due to space constraints we are unable to list directions to the work day/field trip sites.
Please contact the listed person for directions and other information.

Check out the GPF Web site for updates and directions! www.prairienet.org/gpf

Subscribe to the new ecostewards e-mail list service for restoration
announcements delivered to your personal e-mail account.

The Prairie Bowl

by Joyce Hofmann



Although not quite as well attended as the superbowl, a good group of people braved the weather to attend the Grand Prairie Friends winter meeting on the U of I campus, Feb. 4. The meeting featured the first "Prairie Bowl" quiz.

Four teams competed, with contestants vying to answer a variety of questions about the ecology, flora and fauna, cultural history, and literature of North American (especially Illinois) prairie. Many questions were multiple choice, but others required a short answer.

Michael Jeffords (wearing a stunning pink flamingo necktie) was the MC for the quiz with Susan Post

serving as time keeper while Joyce Hofmann and Jim Payne kept score.

Competing teams were the Coneflowers (with Dianne Noland, U of I horticulture instructor and host of "Illinois Gardener" on WILL-TV, as captain), the Dropseeds (with captain Sandy Mason of the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service and a columnist for the Champaign-Urbana News Gazette), the Prairie Thunder (captained by meteorologist Ed Kieser of WILL radio and WCIA-TV), and the Prairie Fire (with GPF Secretary Jamie Ellis as captain).

The Prairie Fire defeated the

Coneflowers in the first round and the Dropseeds beat the Prairie Thunder in the second round. The final match was a close contest, but the Prairie Fire prevailed over the Dropseeds.

Members of the winning team were George Carlyle, Phil Hult, and Paul Tessene. The Prairie Fire received certificates for a flat of prairie plants from GPF and the Dropseeds received GPF t-shirts.

A few questions stumped all team members and some of the contestants proved to be very fast on their buzzers.

Thanks to everyone who participated in Prairie Bowl. 🌟

New Resource for Restoration

ecostewards@prairienet.org

Need to remind volunteers of an upcoming workday? Want to announce an upcoming workshop or seminar? Need a reminder of upcoming events? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then consider subscribing to the new ecostewards e-mail list.

Ecostewards is an e-mail list that has been created specifically for folks active with restoration projects in east-central Illinois.

The purpose of this list is to:

- provide a way for people to give notice of upcoming ecological restoration events in east-central Illinois;

- provide a way for people to announce and give information on conferences, workshops, and other events of interest to ecological restorationists;
- facilitate communication between various conservation groups and people in east-central Illinois; and
- provide a forum for discussion about ecological restoration in east-central Illinois.

To subscribe, send an e-mail to listproc@prairienet.org containing the following single line in the body (not the subject) of the message:

subscribe ecostewards <firstname lastname>

You will receive an e-mail confirmation that your subscription has been processed. Only those people subscribed to ecostewards will be able to send messages to ecostewards

If you have any questions about this new list, please contact Jamie Ellis (jamese@mail.inhs.uiuc.edu) or Chris Hauser (cehauser@uiuc.edu). 🌟

Prairie Grove Volunteers hosts 5th Stewards' Lunch

by Connie Carroll

The Fifth Annual Stewards' Luncheon was held in the Lake House at Crystal Lake Park on Saturday, February 5. The morning started off with refreshments at 9:30 am. The meeting began about 10:00 am and lasted until 12:00pm, followed by a potluck lunch for everyone.

The meeting is held in a "roundhouse" manner where everyone present gets a chance to share their experiences, news, questions, or updates from the previous year. A small selection of topics presented this year included introducing new stewards and steering committee members, potential new sites to be added to the region, restoration projects,

status of problem species, management activities and concerns, promotion of the importance of encouraging community involvement, and the importance of developing interest in the elections of local officials.

The Annual Luncheon has broadened from its mainly TNC (The Nature Conservancy) orientation the first year to include stewards from other local volunteer organizations. Thirty people attended this year's luncheon. Included were stewards from Prairie Grove Volunteers (TNC), Grand Prairie Friends, Audubon Society, and Red Bison (a U of I student run organization), the TNC steering committee members, Heritage

Biologists from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Commissioner for the University of Illinois Natural Areas, and the TNC Stewardship Coordinator.

The Annual Stewards' Luncheon is our way of expressing gratitude and appreciation to all the hard-working volunteer stewards and professionals that help to manage, restore, and preserve our local natural areas. We extend a heartfelt "Thank you!" for all your efforts as we all look forward to another successful year of stewardship.

Thank you!

Connie Carroll is the regional ecologist for the Prairie Grove Volunteers

(Natural Dyes, continued)

Goldenrod is one of the very best dye plants for producing yellows. You can harvest the whole blooming plant for dyes. This is also a good way to keep it from taking over your prairie garden!

Yarrow is also one of the very best plants for producing yellows. Use the leaves and stems when they are nice and lush.

Sunflowers are good plants for producing greens. You will need to use the flowers. Any type of sunflower will work well, including those usually planted in flower gardens and those usually intended for bird seed. Black-eyed Susan leaves produce browns while the flowers yield golden colors.

Weeds

While I don't advise planting any of these plants, if they happen to be growing in your yard and you feel you must pull them out, you can put the plant remains to good use!

Daisy Fleabane - yellow-green

Curly Dock - brassy gold

Wild Lettuce - bright yellow

Chicory - mustard yellow

Burdock - can give nice greens.

Cocklebur - golds

Ragweed - various shades of gold and green.

Purple loosestrife, that scourge of the wetlands, produces a beautiful array of browns using the entire part of the plant that is above ground.

Pigments are usually extracted by simmering the plant in water and

the resulting solution can be used to dye natural fibers such as wool and silk (protein based) or cotton and linen (cellulose based). The techniques for dyeing varies, depending on the fiber and the colors desired. The fiber may need to be pretreated or chemicals may be added to the dye bath. Also, different colors can be obtained by using different types of pots (i.e. iron, copper), and you can always mix extracts from more than one type of plant. Instructions can be found in many good books on using plant dyes. Two of my favorites are "A Dyer's Garden" by Rita Buchanan (1995, Interweave Press) and "North American Dye Plants" by Anne Bliss (1993, Interweave Press).



(Prairie Quilt, continued)

pure beauty. The images and themes are intended to inspire the viewer to learn more about our prairie heritage and ways it can be protected. The quilt includes 12 side panels, 4 corner images which are beaded designs of constellations and Potawatomi symbols, six large center images, as well as a red tailed hawk and a prairie king snake. Another world of intricate quilting reveals the tangled diversity of forbs and grasses teeming with hidden animal life of insects, spiders and other small animals. Above is the immense prairie sky with clouds and silhouetted prairie vegetation.

To see these patterns requires the viewer to examine the quilt “upclose.” The artwork of former GPF member, Jean Eglinton, was utilized in nine of the images that appear on the quilt. Over the six years the quilt has been in progress, over 3 dozen people have contributed to the applique, beadwork, and embroidered panels of the quilt including Sandy Pijanowski, project advisor and members of the Illini Country Stitchers, Charleston Quiltworks, and GPF. Jeri Corso of Champaign pieced the quilt together and the majority of the quilting has been completed by the Penfield Quilters.

Jackie Worden has gone well beyond the initial request to design the quilt and has assisted us each step of the way. At present some of the more intricate quilting work and binding is being completed by Sandy Pijanowski.

A story board and brochure will also be designed to accompany the quilt when it is exhibited in nature centers, museums, libraries and other civic sites in communities across Illinois.



The Grand Prairie Friends Quilt (8' x 10')

It is our hope that the quilt will be on the road by this time next year. Many thanks to all the GPF members and quilters who have volunteered hundreds of hours to this project. 🍀

For more information or to display the quilt contact:
Sharon Monday-Dorsey
 217-344-3016 or
 ayuda@prairienet.org

Buy books 'online' and support Grand Prairie Friends. Check out the GPF bookstore and then access Amazon.com by clicking on the book cover or title.

GPF receives 5% to 15% of the sale price of all book purchased through this site, even if a book is not listed in our bookstore.

Prairie History - Ecology -
 Restoration - Native Gardens -
 Native Plants, Animals, Birds, and
 Insects

Upcoming Events

Volunteers Needed!

GPF plant sale at May Day celebration.
Early American Museum in Mahomet
May 6, 2000

9am - noon

Contact: Jamie Ellis at 217-244-5695
or jamese@mail.inhs.uiuc.edu

WATERSHED TRAINING CONFERENCE

Illinois Student Environmental Network's Annual Conference
March 25-26, 2000.

4-H Memorial Camp on the Sangamon River in Monticello
cosponsored by Prairie Rivers Network.

Contact: ISEN 217-384-0830 or isen@prairienet.org

17th North American Prairie Conference

July 16 - 20, 2000

www.niacc.com/prairie2000

North Iowa Area Community College
Mason City, Iowa

Contact: Carol Schutte 515-422-4319 or
schutcar@niacc.cc.ia.us

The Nature Conservancy Vegetation Monitoring Workshop

May 20, 2000

see article inside

GPF Summer Internship Program

More information at the GPF web site:
www.prairienet.org/gpf

U of I Earth Day on the Quad

Music, Games, Information, and more!

Sunday, April 16, 2000

noon - 6:30

Contact: Heather Ayers 217-365-5369 or hayers@uiuc.edu

A Prairie Rendezvous

PO Box 36

Urbana, IL 61803-0036



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In this Quarter:

Spring burn season



Utility and inspiration from the prairie

New resources for local restorationists

GPF Members:

Be sure to send in your renewal notice and dues for 2000.