



The purpose of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society is to encourage the study, protection, propagation, appreciation and use of Oklahoma's native plants.

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Autumn 1999

**COPY AND ART DEADLINE
FOR NEXT ISSUE IS
15 November 1999**

☛ Contributions from members are welcome!

Gaillardia

The Oklahoma Native Plant Society Newsletter

CALENDAR

Note: the events dated below are identified either by a page number for a fuller description of the event or the name of a person to contact.

Sept. 18 (Saturday) Crystal Bridge tour at Myriad Gardens in OKC. 10 a.m. Admission \$3. See page 10

Oct. 15-17 (Friday-Sunday) Annual meeting at Lake Texhoma (see the enclosed bulletin). Sheila Strawn

Oct. 25 (Monday) regular evening meeting of Central Chapter. Sharon McCain. See page 10

Nov. 29 (Monday) regular evening meeting of Central Chapter. Plant Identification for beginners, plant exchg.

Feb. 5, 2000 (Saturday) Indoor Outing in Tulsa. Betty Kemm. More in next issue.

Spring 2000 (Friday & Saturday in May) Wildflower Workshop in NE Oklahoma. Ruth Boyd

May 26-28, 2000 (Friday – Sunday) Spring field trip to Black Mesa. Connie Taylor Put this outstanding opportunity on your calendar now.

October 2000 (Friday – Sunday) Annual Meeting at Quartz Mountain Lodge. Paul Reimer & Sharon McCain.

Special Fund Contributions

Anne Long Fund
Lawrence K. Magrath, James F. Elder, Aline B. Romero
Betty Kemm (in memory of Janie Bell)

Harriet Barclay Fund
James F. Elder, Marjorie Greer, Aline B. Romero,
Debra R. Bair
In memory of Janie Bell: Paul Buck, Ruth Boyd

General Fund
Marion B. Norman

PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPH

June 30, 1999

Governor Frank Keating
State Capitol Building, Room 212
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

To the Honorable Governor Frank Keating,

On behalf of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, I am writing to call your attention to a serious error in judgment on the part of our Department of Environmental Quality Director of Solid Waste Management Service. Dr. Mark Coleman has recently approved and is proceeding with a draft permit for establishing a Municipal Solid Waste Landfill in Clear Creek Valley, referred to in the permit as "Hidden Valley".

Until recently this valley has been so clear & pristine that Native Americans could find precious herbs for food, medicine, & healing ceremonies. Both Northern and Southern Bald Eagles can be found there in winter. This property adjoins The Clear Creek Farm and Gardens which has been registered with the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory for the *Tradescantia ozarkana*, a floral species found there. *Nocomis asper*, a freshwater fish species, is dependent on the clean water there. Oklahoma has very few of these prime habitats left.

If the loss of native species were not enough, the concept of putting a landfill in a steep valley of broken limestone and chert should call a halt to this misguided use of Oklahoma's land. The broken limestone that lines the valley allows water to seep down below the surface where it reacts, forming a karst landscape over caves lined with calcite. This is an extremely unstable landscape that gives way to sink holes & landslides.

If a topography too dangerous for heavy landfill equipment were not enough, consider the other residents in the valley. Aquifers fed by this watershed supply wells used by other residents of the valley. The owner of this property does not have the right to dump medical & industrial waste in the watershed that feeds the wells used by residents of the valley. Furthermore, this proposed waste facility would drain into Clear Creek only 5 3/4 miles upstream from Lake Fort Gibson.

As proud of Oklahoma's natural native condition as you and I are, we cannot let this go further. I can write letters, notify members, and vote. **Please do whatever you can to stop this ill-conceived landfill.**

Very sincerely,
S/Dr. Sheila Strawn, President
Oklahoma Native Plant Society

ONPS IS ON THE 'WEB'

Check it out, and then bookmark this site:
<http://www.telepath.com/chadcox/onps.html>

We encourage all members to take advantage of this new member service. ONPS member Chad Cox of Norman has designed and is maintaining this website as a contribution to the Society. Why not drop him a line at his email address: chadcox@telepath.com and let him know you appreciate it. This issue of *Gaillardia* will be available at the web site. Also, links to other Native Plant websites and sources of some great pictures.

Editorial

By Pat Folley

This will be my last editorial for the *Gaillardia*. I'm either getting old, or busier, and find it hard to get each issue out on time. A new member, Paul Johnson, will be the *Gaillardia* editor beginning with the Winter 1999 issue. The newsletter cannot be better than the participation of our members. Please give Paul all the help you can.

I intend to continue active participation in ONPS, especially in the Education and Field Trip committees. The e-mail address will still be active, so - keep in touch!

All future *Gaillardia* material should be sent to the regular ONPS address at the Tulsa Garden Center, 2435 South Peoria, Tulsa OK 74114. Paul Johnson lives in Tulsa and can pick up the material there. Paul is an ISA Certified Arborist and a stay-at-home-dad. He will be using the same software and, at least for a while, the same formats, so whatever has been working for you in the past will still work. He doesn't have time, though, to take last-minute reports over the phone, so try to respect that limit.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee announces the following slate of officers to be presented for election at the Annual Meeting in October. Other nominees may be presented at the time of election, provided they have agreed to serve.

President: Sheila Strawn
Vice-president: Tina Julich
Secretary: Maurita Nations
Treasurer: Mary Korthase
Historian: Lynn Allen
Boardmembers-at-large:
Sue Amstutz and Paul Johnson

WE PROUDLY ANNOUNCE

At the 1999 Summer Environmental Conference on August 11-12, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful awarded its first-ever Lifetime Achievement Award to ONPS Charter Member Joanne Orr. Then, Destiny Marie Gualco, a student member, received an award for Individual Achievement in Education and Promotion. Sorry, we didn't learn what Destiny did to win. Congratulations to both our stars!

GARDENING ON THE WILD SIDE

By Susan Chambers

The Ethics of Mulch

By now, almost everyone I know, knows that mulch is a good thing, mainly because I've told them so. Most people can even name a few different types of mulch: cottonseed hulls, cypress, compost, etc.

This issue, I want to write about where mulch comes from and its effect on the environment. Most mulches are organic in origin, but some are inorganic. Some mulches are intentionally a temporary soil covering (they enrich the soil as they decompose). Some mulches are a permanent installment if properly installed. All mulch comes with a price — and not just what you paid at the garden center. I spoke with Jeff Potter, of Green Country Soil, Inc., about the organic mulches he carries. Jeff was full of good information about how his mulches are harvested and where they come from. I'm sure his resources can be considered an industry standard.

Red cedar mulch comes mostly from the waste of cedar furniture construction. It's really fragrant when new, insect-resistant, an attractive color, and will last more than one year if applied a couple of inches thick. It can be used close to the house without fear of termites. Just in the state of Oklahoma, we have a lot of red cedar, more than is really good to maintain our natural prairie ecosystems.

Cypress mulch is another really long-lasting organic mulch that can be used next to the house. It has no obvious odor, but is pleasantly straw-colored. The whole tree is ground, but old-growth cypress is not used. Added to this are the leftovers from furniture manufacture. When you see different textures of cypress mulch, you are seeing the products of different grinders. Just remember; the larger the particle size, the longer it lasts; but the more shredded it appears, the better it will hold on a slope or in washout areas.

Hardwood mulch is really great for away from the house in shrub/tree/groundcover areas. This is from trees such as oak and sycamore — mostly the bark. Depending on nugget size, it might last a couple of years. If you're trying to recreate a woodland garden, hardwood mulch is best.

Pine bark is excellent as a soil modifier for potted plants or permanent plantings. It has great longevity when in contact with soil. Pine bark is derived from the bark of plantation and natural stands of pine that have been clear-cut and debarked for lumber. **Pine nuggets** are for

decorative use in permanent plantings and will last longer if they do not contact the soil. The size is too large for areas of annuals or perennials, so either use just enough to cover the soil, or, better yet, lay down landscape fabric and apply nuggets to cover the fabric. The larger nuggets will last several years in non-pedestrian areas. Pine nuggets are from the same source as the bark, but ground differently.

Cottonseed hulls are the seeds of cotton after the oil is removed and the cotton is gone. It is excellent as a soil conditioner but very short-lived. One growing season is all you will get from this mulch. **Composted cotton burrs** are the prickly husks from the outside of the cotton boll. It also is fairly short-lived but an excellent soil conditioner. Burrs should be applied fairly deeply (2 – 3") and not allowed to dry out completely as they can be hard to wet once completely dry. Be aware that cotton is a highly chemicalized crop and composting may not remove enough of the chemicals for use on sensitive plants. "Organic" just means that it was once alive, not that it was grown without chemicals.

I don't know anyone personally who uses **peat moss** as a mulch, but it is an additive to some composts. Peat moss is extremely hard to wet, once dry, and does not last more than one season. It is harvested from peat bogs and is not renewable because peat bogs grow so slowly that it takes millions of years to reach a harvestable depth. If you use peat moss, make sure it's for something important, and please don't waste it!

Coco hulls are a recent addition to the mulch choices in plains states. It is a renewable mulch, coming from the production of cocoa and chocolate. It has a wonderful fragrance when new (yum!) and is really nice to look at; a rich brown shade. It lasts only about one season. Ask me in a year or two how well it works as a soil conditioner in our clay soils.

Straw makes a really decent mulch for vegetable gardens or planting farther away from the house. It needs to be several inches deep if loose or a couple of inches deep if in flat "books". Straw decomposes rapidly, so it will last only one season, but is an excellent soil enrichment. It can be turned into the soil at the end of the season. Straw is a natural by-product of the wheat harvest (the bottom of the stems) and is fairly sustainable. Herbicides are used in the growth of most wheat, so, once again, you'll need to use caution on sensitive crops and annuals.

Leaf mold or chopped leaves are free, totally sustainable, and usually pretty chemical-free. They break down quickly and will need to be replaced every year. Depending on the source, they may eventually alter the pH of your soil. Leaf mulch is excellent for building good soil to feed your plants. If you haven't enough trees to supply your own, ask your neighbors for theirs.

When I tried to collect information on **inorganic mulches**, 3 of 4 phone calls netted me promotional literature about the advantages — but nothing really about the sources. Digging (no pun intended) on my own yielded more. **River rock** is essentially water-smoothed gravel from the beds of streams and rivers, mostly in Colorado.

(Continued on page 6)

CONSERVATION CORNER

By Berlin Heck

During January and February, Ford Hendershot and I inventoried dwarf palmetto (*Sabal minor*) plants in southern McCurtain County, the only place where they are found in the state. A total of 2,339 plants were located in many locations, nearly all of which are not protected and are very vulnerable to destruction. Locations were sent to the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory.

In March, letters were sent to Governor Keating, Congressman Watkins, Senator Nickles, and Senator Inhofe to advise them of the position of the ONPS on the Conservation and Reinvestment act (HR 701/S 25) which would provide a permanent source of funding for conservation programs in Oklahoma. Governor Keating responded that he has officially endorsed this Act. Congressman Watkins did not respond but he is a co-sponsor of this Act.

The threat of logging to the only known stand of Swamp Chestnut Oaks (*Quercus michauxii*) in Oklahoma appears to be resolved. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Trust for Public Lands are cooperating to attempt to acquire this land from Weyerhaeuser Co. Inc. for inclusion in Little River National Wildlife Refuge.

If you have not noted the huge bloom of wildflowers this spring, shame on you! Remarkable blooms include Celestial Lily (*Nemastylis geminiflora*), which are normally rare and very scattered in small stands. In late April and early May, hundreds of acres of prairie were painted blue all across northern areas of the state, but especially north of Oklahoma City and east to Pawhuska.

In prairie areas south of Muskogee there were fine stands of Grass Pink Orchids (*Calopogon oklahomensis*) during mid-April. There is a huge bloom of Giant Coneflowers (*Rudbeckia grandiflora*) this month in southern McCurtain County south of Idabel.

(Ed. Note: wasn't that a refreshing report? I just wish all our members would send reports on their observations of plants in bloom and good work being done. The Gaillardia would have to go to magazine-size!)

The remainder of this page will contain excerpts from Laurel Upshaw's report on the Hidden Valley Landfill site near Peggs (see President's Paragraph, p. 2)

"The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has approved a "draft permit" for establishment of a Municipal Solid Waste

Landfill virtually on top of Clear Creek and its aquifer. This is to be called the Hidden Valley Landfill, located in Cherokee County, OK, approximately 1 1/2 miles south and 1/4 mile west of Peggs, OK in Sect. 7, T 18N, R21E. There is objection from the surrounding citizens, most of whom derive their household water from wells into the local aquifer.

If approved, this landfill can receive commercial and industrial waste, hospital waste, asbestos, bio-medical waste, herbicides, pesticides and other household waste. On December 9, 1997, a public hearing was held in Peggs, at which strong opposition was voiced. DEQ gave the landowner 15 months to correct numerous discrepancies noted by the Agency.

As a Tier III permit, the DEQ called a "final" public hearing in Peggs on June 17, 1999. Over 300 people attended and voiced strong opposition to the landfill. At this meeting, the time for public comment was extended by about 60 days. ONPS members were alerted by phone and e-mail, and several letters were sent.

(We are concerned for the following reasons):

- 1) The site is on broken, uplifted limestone and chert, incised by steep valleys that includes caves, sinkholes, and numerous springs. Most of the local people get their water from the aquifer that exists in these limestones. Effluent from the landfill will pollute both ground and surface water.
- (2) The gathering spot for effluent is directly on the bank of Clear Creek. The planned landfill will occupy a steep valley that drains into Clear Creek. Slope of the valley is over 100 feet in less than 1/4 mile. Clear Creek drains directly into Lake Fort Gibson which is approximately 5 3/4 miles downstream from the landfill site.
- (3) The Clear Creek Farm and Gardens, owned by ONPS members Kirk and Loretta Bowers, adjoins this proposed landfill site. This site is registered with the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory as a site for the Ozark spiderwort (*Tradescantia ozarkensis*) and other rare plants.
- (4) The area is a wintering site for the Bald Eagle, dependent on clean water for their food.
- (5) Local bands of the Cherokee Nation use the local waters for cleansing and healing, and they also gather native plants for food and medicine and in ceremonies.
- (6) The landfill owner plans to bring in 200 tons of waste per day. Problems with road access, burning, etc., have not been addressed. **Monitoring wells on the site will be checked by the owner every 6 months** - the fox guarding the henhouse.
- (7) The area gets seven to nine-inch rainfalls that the gathering system is inadequate to process.

"Politics and money are the background for this. The head of the engineering firm which has drafted and written the engineering data for the permit, Steve Mason of Cardinal Engineering, is also the chairman of the Solid Waste Management Advisory Council for the DEQ. DEQ has given Mason \$90,000 - 100,000 of taxpayer money to cover the necessary "closing of the landfill" cost that must be in hand from the first day of operation."

In short, we are being taxed to support this monstrosity. Though it is too late to send letters now, please let your state government representatives know that you will not be made a party to such abuse!

BOTANY BAY

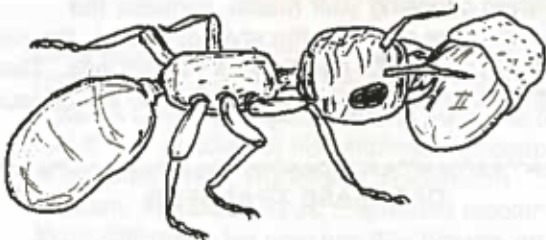
By Paul Buck

(Paul wrote this last March, and it may be "out of season" to use it now, but I really wanted to get it in. Think cool!)

As I write, rain rattles against the window, driven by a cold northwest wind. The sky is overcast and the low, scudding clouds warn that winter is still here.

Not long ago an interesting word came to mind. Let me share it with you: *myrmecochory*. What a strange and unusual word. I know you wonder why it would pop into one's head.

It was early winter and I was sitting on the edge of the porch watching birds vigorously competing for the abundant seed in the feeder hanging from the bur oak. What dumb animals! If they had any brains they would know by now the supply is unending. However, it was another of those special Oklahoma days. Clear, warm sunlight, a gentle breeze from the south, temperatures well above those of 24 hours earlier — you know the kind of day I mean. When one is not surprised to find dandelions flowering in the lawn.



The base of the corner pillar supporting the porch does not sit tightly against the concrete deck. The small gap on one side has been accepted with the thought the resulting ventilation might help keep the wood dry. But on that day the base was enclosed with a bright green wreath of lush, young, spring-like vegetation, a veritable garden of foliage. Examination showed it was 100% *Lamium amplexicaule*, dead-nettle or henbit — whatever name you prefer; a common, beautiful, but oft-despised prolific lawn weed. Such a mass of young plants must have been the result of a large cache of seeds. The moment I saw that growth I thought (What a beautiful example of myrmecochory). The word means "dispersal by ants." Here the seeds of *Lamium* had been gathered by ants, laborously transported through the grass of the lawn, across the drive, up the side of the house, across the porch, and into the hollow pillar. For what reason would ants go to all that trouble? The answer discloses an interesting story.

Myrmecochory comes from the Greek, with *myrmeco-* meaning "ant" and *-chore*, "to spread". In this case in reference to seed dissemination by ants, one of the many dispersal mechanisms ranging from autochory, dispersal by the plant itself, to zoochory, a variety of approaches utilizing animal agents. But there is more. One cannot help but wonder why ants go to the expense of gathering, transporting, and accumulating large quantities of seeds and then apparently abandoning them. What is in it for the ants?

At the next opportunity, gather some henbit seeds and examine them under low magnification, anywhere from 15 to 45 times. The small, brownish, hard, and apparently inedible seed is evident. Notice however, one end is capped by a mass of light-colored, fleshy tissue surrounding nearly half the seed. This lump is rich in nutritive compounds, primarily fats and proteins. These masses are gathered and stored by animals as a future food source. As you know, botanists have a name for everything. This structure is called an *elaiosome*.

Let us not concern ourselves with what part of the plant produces this clump of food. That is another story. The fact is, ants collect henbit seeds and carry them to their nests where they gnaw off the elaiosomes for their food value. The problem the animals then face is what to do with the waste material, in this case, seeds. At my house they dumped their debris under the porch pillar, not far from the nest entrance, in a *Lamium* trash pile. It was there, under favorable conditions, the seeds germinated and produced that lush ring of vegetation.

Think a moment. Have you ever observed an ant hill surrounded by a ring of *Viola* (violet) seedlings? It is not an uncommon occurrence. If so, you have encountered the phenomenon of myrmecochory; that circle of young plants represents the colony dump. But wait. In the case of violets that is only half the story. In this genus myrmecochory serves as secondary seed dispersal. Primary dispersal is autochorous, with exploding fruits scattering seeds around the plant, frequently as far as a meter.

For you doubting Thomases, let me make a suggestion. First locate some healthy *Viola* plants. Observe them until you locate maturing fruit and then, on a calm day, to eliminate wind as a factor, spread white paper around the plants (poster or butcher's paper will do) and record the distance you find the seeds from the parent plant. If you are fortunate (and observant) you will see seeds suddenly appear as they are thrown from the capsules (fruits). Use the opportunity to examine seeds under magnification. The elaiosomes are evident.

There are other Oklahoma wildflowers with either exploding fruit or elaiosomes on the seeds. Why do you suppose we call *Impatiens*, that common member of the Balsaminaceae, "Touch me not"? Also, take time to closely examine the seeds of *Corydalis* for external structures.

I hope these comments regarding this strange word, *myrmecochory*, will open some eyes to one of the unusual botanical phenomena taking place in our yards. But do not stop here. There are numerous other unique events and relationships to be discovered out there. Start looking for some.

SLIDE SHOW REPORT

Recently, two different branches of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation have borrowed one of our wildflower programs for use in their activities. I always ask for the users to report on the number of people who have seen the show, and they never have a count, but their responses may give you an idea of the kind of reception they receive:

From Mike Smith, Biologist at Hugo/Pine Creek WMA: "I want to thank you for the use of the slides. I have shown them numerous times to many civic groups. Oklahoma wildflowers are wonderful and you've helped so very much to show many children and adults another pleasure of our outdoors world." (Mike had the Doyle McCoy set, for identification of common wildflowers.)

From Melynda Hickman, Nongame Wildlife specialist at the Department's Oklahoma City Office: "We've used it many times and we did get it duplicated. I would guess-timate that 350 people have seen the program, if you are keeping track of numbers." (Melynda had the Native Plants for Wildlife set.)

It is encouraging to me that we can provide this service. We could do so much more if we had people to take the programs and present them, but as a "second-best", I am grateful for the opportunity to offer them.
Pat Folley



I'D LIKE -

I'd like to know
what this whole show
is all about
before it's out.

A Grook by Piet Hein

Mulches (continued from page 3)

It is essential for breeding of some types of fish and is not renewable in several lifetimes. With that in print, I will state that it is one of the better permanent mulches. With a proper underlayment of landscape fabric, river rock mulch will last forever. I personally know of one landscape where it has been in place for over 17 years with only one load of "top dressing". This is recommended only for shrub-tree beds, as are all the rest of the permanent mulches.

Lava rock is mined from surface pits in the western states and is mostly used for road-building. Only a small fraction is used for landscaping purposes. It is produced by volcanic activity, therefore not much is being formed in the mainland U.S. Lava rock is very rough-textured and is hard on hands and plant stems. It traps blowing leaves very easily and can get lost under organic debris and become useless. It is important to keep it clean when leaves are dropping in the fall.

White marble rock is not really marble, it's actually gypsum. Most gypsum is used in other industries: sheetrock, toothpaste, hand lotion, etc. It is mined out of surface pits and bagged for sale after relatively little processing. Most of its cost, other than packaging, is in transportation. Unless landscape fabric is laid underneath, white rock has no chance of lasting as a mulch. Even with fabric, it has a tendency to get dingy with acquired mineral salts. White rock also traps leaves easily and requires cleaning in fall and winter.

When choosing your mulch, consider the permanence of the planting, the style or design, the plant types and, of course, the cost to your pocketbook. This guide to the environmental impact may also affect your choices.

DATABASE TRANSFER

Tina Julich has completed the transfer of our membership files to MS Access, an up-to-date system that combines flexibility with easy-to-use formats. (Our old system was approximately contemporary with Commodore 64, and could not be run on some current computers.) Expect a noticeable improvement in member services soon.

IN MEMORIAM

We were saddened to hear of the loss of our member, Janie Bell, Tulsa. Janie was a native Oklahoman who returned after years in New York as an editor for Reader's Digest. She moved to Tulsa when she retired and became active in ONPS and the Perennial Club. She was the sister of Charter Member Marilyn Bell.

We will miss the participation of Janie Bell in this organization.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

By Pat Folley

Cimarron Sand Dunes

26 June, 1999: Fourteen ONPS members and guests met at a fork-in-the-road south of Alva to carpool into the dunes on a private ranch. It had rained heavily the night before, and there was a good deal of water on the ranch roads, giving some of us a couple of good stories to entertain our grandkids with. Paul Nighswonger, his son and grandsons came with a big 4-wd truck, which came in handy for the several times we got stuck.

We were thrilled to meet Jim Norman, who has not been able to attend as many of the field trips this year as he used to do. Wish I could name every one of the great folks (and good sports) who came. The prairie wildflowers were wonderful right at the start – in a waste area along the highway – and continued into the dunes. We didn't see *Palafolia*, but did see a new plant for me: *Psoralea linearifolia*, aka slimleaf scurf-pea. The dunegrasses were in fine shape after all the rain, and most of our bunch made it to the top of the big dune.

Our thanks to Paul Nighswonger for arranging the trip with the Shepherd family.

Orchid Tour

Larry Magrath and Connie Taylor led this outing, which has become an institution for ONPS. Charles Lewallen reports that he was able to add 8 new species to his wildflower website: *Brunnichia ovata*, *Agrimonia*, *Hypericum mutilum*, *Mimulus alatus*, *Euphorbia bicolor* and *Xyris difformis*. He now has 624 flowers on his site. Only 2,000 more to go!

FIELD TRIP PLANS

BY Connie Taylor

I have already scouted out some places to visit during the Annual Meeting. SEOSU has a bioscience preserve near Lodge that may be available.

Black Mesa State Park Group Camp has been reserved for Memorial Day weekend, 2000: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. There were 89 at our last such field trip, and some of them remember it as a grand adventure. Put this on your calendar now: it's a rare opportunity to spend some time in an area with few tourist amenities. Meals will be catered, and the group camp has screened sleeping houses, rest rooms and a kitchen/meeting room. Using the group

camp will reduce the cost to about what it would cost you to stay at home!

FIELD TRIP RULES

>Preregistration is required for all field trips.

>Field trip announcements will contain the name, address, and telephone number of the leader. If you have doubts about the terrain, difficulty, etc., ask.

>Field trips take place rain or shine. Hiking boots, long pants and a hat are essential.

>Bring water and lunch or a snack. Sunscreen and insect repellent are always in demand. Field guides, a camera and binoculars are nice.

>Participation is at your own risk.

>All ONPS field trips are open to the public at no charge, unless charges per-member are specified in the announcement. Visitors and newcomers are always welcome.

>Children old enough to keep up are welcome. Pets are not. Children should be warned against picking flowers or collecting animal or plant souvenirs: many of our field trip sites are havens for the rare and endangered.

Reflection

"How sorry are those who refuse to use the gifts they receive. They miss the greatest thrill in life – the joy of giving pleasure to their maker and giver. No joy is greater than making something; no pride is bigger than finishing something; no thrill is more satisfying than seeing others use what one's mind and hand have made."

clipped from The Daily Oklahoman, long ago

Deep Green?

Last week, the Associated Press issued a little story about some of the results of a research group called *Deep Green* that is attempting to reconstruct the evolutionary tree of life for plants. About the time I read it in the Norman Transcript, Nora Jones sent a copy e-mail from Jamaica.

Besides their announcement that land plants were descended from a *freshwater* species instead of the salt-water source that had been predicted, the Deep Green group also affirmed the 5-kingdom theory in which fungi are given a kingdom of their own. Bacteria and other one-celled creatures are also accorded kingdom status.

Now, my question to you experts is this: who or what is "Deep Green"? Who funds it, and who runs it? I think that we should all be interested in a body that is speaking to the press as if it speaks for all of the plant world, including native plant fanciers. Of course, the five-kingdom theory is hardly new, but if someone is going to take new credit for it. I want to know. Pat

AN ELEGANT SOLUTION

Reprinted from Wild Ones newsletter, by Lorrie Otto

On June 21, 1997, our village, the most northern suburb in Milwaukee County, received 8 inches of rain. People awakened in the morning to find as much as 6 to 9 inches of water in basements and family rooms. They were furious. They blamed village officials.

A firm was hired to offer engineering solutions. Estimates ranged from \$2 million to \$4 million for ditches, culverts, settling ponds, and underground pipes. Also, it was recommended that a deep gully be cut through the Audubon Nature Center. At a public meeting, a defensive engineer volunteered, "Yes, big trees will be taken down. Yes, there will be a lot of dirt and noise. Yes, the ravines will be reamed out. Yes, the little creek will look different with its bottom redone with obstructions."

This gave the Audubon staff and members a real fright, and so we testified at a double-night hearing. In response, people with flooded family rooms retaliated and refused to buy any more books at the Center's store. They claimed that Audubon was not a good neighbor when it wouldn't sacrifice for the good of the community.

We weren't asked, but I thought that the environmentalists should come up with a plan. I did ...

- Each property owner should be responsible for the rainwater which falls on his land.
- No grass should be cut shorter than 3 inches.
- As with farmers who must plant buffer zones along salmon streams, lawn-keepers must do the same around their yards.
- Leaves should be raked into these areas and not sent to the dump.
- Bayside has ditches with concrete inverts — remove them. Dig the ditches so deep that, after they are vegetated, they still can hold a foot of water before draining through the culverts. Plant them with rushes, reeds, sedges or make them into hedgerows of riparian wetland shrubs such as ninebark or various dogwoods.
- And because this is public land, cutting off the ends of branches would be forbidden in favor of graceful shapes, flowers and fruit for wildlife.
- Encourage citizens to construct sunken gardens leading from the ditches with bone-set, red milkweeds, rosy Joe Pyes, blue Bottle Gentians or just iris and rocks. (And

swales are much more efficient if planted with prairie plants.)

- Use porous surfacing materials for patios and driveways.

As I was explaining this to a friend, an older Bayside guy interrupted me. "You'll never get away with that! A messy, weedy look all over the village will reduce our property values. I like neat, short grass. There is nothing more beautiful than a well-kept lawn. That is what I stand for!"

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Lillian added that there are already many naturally Oklahoma proven plants, including *Penstemon grandiflorus*, *Asclepias tuberosa*, *Echinacea pallida*, *Echinacea angustifolia*, and a long list of *Liatris*, *Oenothera*, etc. We certainly agree. Why are they not available at your local plant mart? Partly because they are perennials, in an industry that turns out millions of annuals for a high-profit, low-labor-cost, but high maintenance market. Partly because their customers (you, my dear) don't demand better.

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AN ELEGANT SOLUTION

Reprinted from Wild Ones newsletter, by Lorie Otto

On June 21, 1997, our village, the most northern suburb in Milwaukee County, received 8 inches of rain. People awakened in the morning to find as much as 6 to 9 inches of water in basements and family rooms. They were furious. They blamed village officials.

A firm was hired to offer engineering solutions. Estimates ranged from \$2 million to \$4 million for ditches, culverts, settling ponds, and underground pipes. Also, it was recommended that a deep gully be cut through the Audubon Nature Center. At a public meeting, a defensive engineer volunteered, "Yes, big trees will be taken down. Yes, there will be a lot of dirt and noise. Yes, the ravines will be reamed out. Yes, the little creek will look different with its bottom redone with obstructions."

This gave the Audubon staff and members a real fright, and so we testified at a double-night hearing. In response, people with flooded family rooms retaliated and refused to buy any more books at the Center's store. They claimed that Audubon was not a good neighbor when it wouldn't sacrifice for the good of the community.

We weren't asked, but I thought that the environmentalists should come up with a plan. I did ...

- Each property owner should be responsible for the rainwater which falls on his land.
- No grass should be cut shorter than 3 inches.
- As with farmers who must plant buffer zones along salmon streams, lawn-keepers must do the same around their yards.
- Leaves should be raked into these areas and not sent to the dump.
- Bayside has ditches with concrete inverts - remove them. Dig the ditches so deep that, after they are vegetated, they still can hold a foot of water before draining through the culverts. Plant them with rushes, reeds, sedges or make them into hedgerows of riparian wetland shrubs such as ninebark or various dogwoods.
- And because this is public land, cutting off the ends of branches would be forbidden in favor of graceful shapes, flowers and fruit for wildlife.
- Encourage citizens to construct sunken gardens leading from the ditches with bone-set, red milkweeds, rosy Joe Pyes, blue Bottle Gentians or just iris and rocks. (And

swales are much more efficient if planted with prairie plants.)

- Use porous surfacing materials for patios and driveways.

As I was explaining this to a friend, an older Bayside guy interrupted me. "You'll never get away with that! A messy, weedy look all over the village will reduce our property values. I like neat, short grass. There is nothing more beautiful than a well-kept lawn. That is what I stand for!"

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Peace of soul.

Plant four rows of squash:
Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash grumbling
Squash selfishness

Plant four rows of lettuce:
Lettuce be faithful
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be obedient
Lettuce really love one another.

No garden is without turnips:
Turnips for meetings
Turnip for service
Turnip to help one another.

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love.

There is much fruit in your garden
Because you reap what you sow;
To conclude our garden we must have thyme:
Thyme for reflection
Thyme for study
Thyme for prayer.

Contributed by Sydney Carpenter

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Linda Shackelford, Oklahoma City
Kathleen Bailey, Norman
Jim & Rosalind Elder, Tulsa
Ron & Myra Jeffris, Tulsa
Pamela Robinson, Tulsa
Stephanie Harmon, Cleveland
Clyde Butler, Ada
Charles Moomaw, Bartlesville
Dana Loy, Norman
Georgia Muenzler, Norman
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ANOTHER COMMUNITY SERVICE

By Pat Folley

Ruth Boyd, who is far too modest to write this up
for publication, related her experience with a telephone
request that came her way last year.

"In August 1998 I went to Casady School in Britton
(a suburb of Oklahoma City) to meet with Deborah Bair, the
parent-chair of a committee to build a butterfly garden on
their 80-acre campus. I spent two or three hours there, and
loaned them a set of photo-contest posters, some books
and a video. I also gave her a pile of Xeroxed copies of
articles on butterfly gardening. The loaned materials were
returned in August 1999 with the news that the garden had
been a tremendous success.

"The committee bought McCoy's Roadside Wild-
flowers of Oklahoma and Darlene Michael's book on
landscaping with native plants for wildlife. In addition, the
committee gave the ONPS a nice check to express its
gratitude for the help."

*"This learned I from the shadow of a tree
Which to-and-fro swayed on a garden wall:
Where we ourselves can never be
Our influence may fall."*

Author unknown

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