

Natural Area Preservation News

Volume 4, Number 1

Spring 1999

The mission of the Natural Area Preservation Division is to protect, restore and champion the natural areas of Ann Arbor, especially those in the City's park and recreation system.

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A Glimpse of the Botanical Past by Bev Walters



false foxglove
from Michigan
Flora Part III

As NAP works to restore our natural areas to their pre-settlement condition, it's important to try to glimpse the botanical past of these areas. Historic photos of the Ann Arbor area demonstrate how drastically vegetation can change over time. Pictures of Cedar Bend Nature Area from the 1930's show an open woodland quite different from the shrub-infested forest I first encountered there. Botanical literature published almost 100 years ago indicates a high quality tamarack bog once existed on the west side of First Sister Lake in Dolph Nature Area, where now stands just a sorry sliver of degraded bog.

Going beyond old pictures and print, I've delved into another source of historical plant information at the University of Michigan Herbarium where, conveniently, I am also employed. The Herbarium is primarily a research facility where over 1.6 million plant specimens are shelved in large steel cases. These specimens have been gathered everywhere from tropical rainforests to the arctic tundra. To preserve them they are pressed flat, dried, and glued onto stiff sheets of paper along with a label giving the plant name, location of the collection, collector's name, a collection number, and perhaps some additional plant information such as height or flower color.

When interesting plants turn up in the NAP plant inventory, I check the specimens at the Herbarium and sometimes find that those species were collected at the same locality in the past. This has prompted me to conduct a more thorough search to find out what higher quality native species used to grow in Ann Arbor and also to sleuth for tips on past locations. Our earliest specimens from the Ann Arbor area date back to the early 1800's, but, unfortunately, most of the label information on early collections is pretty skimpy. Even so, it has been possible to reconstruct the former floras of a few specific areas, such as Cedar Bend and Cascade Glen (the ravines at Bird Hills), and to grasp what plant species were in the area as it was being settled. In a few cases this search has helped me relocate species that haven't been seen locally for half a century or more. Of course, many of the more sensitive plants have been lost for good. Of the 15 species of native orchids that once grew in the area, only 4 have been found in the NAP inventory. This is largely due to disturbance in bogs and fens

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Parks & Recreation
CITY OF ANN ARBOR

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Coordinator's Corner: Here We Grow Again!

It's budget time as I write this article, time to lay out our plans and project our budget for the coming fiscal year. Because the voters approved some increased funding for NAP when they renewed our 5 year millage, this planning is an exciting process!

One of the most exciting changes occurring at NAP is the addition of a second permanent staff member, which should be completed by the time this newsletter reaches you. Although each of the current NAP staff members is very professional, very competent, and very productive, the addition of another permanent staff position will help NAP to develop more efficiently and grow to its full potential. The willingness of the public to invest in the new NAP Technician position indicates, I believe, its long term commitment to preserving and restoring our urban natural areas.

Perhaps a more visible change in the 1999 field season is a doubling of our field crew from 3 to 6 Conservation Workers. That means twice as many staff wielding loppers, brush blades, chain saws, and drip torches in our on-going battle against invasive alien plants which are taking over our native ecosystems. That should mean twice as many buckthorns, honeysuckles, and privets will be cut; twice as much garlic mustard will be torched; and twice as much spotted knapweed will be pulled.

Does that mean we've got the invasives licked? Not quite. Let's do the math. If we have 1000 acres of undeveloped natural areas in the park system, that leaves each Conservation Worker with about 167 acres to restore--a daunting task to say the least! Maybe we should double our field crew again, from 6 to 12? That still leaves each staff with about 84 acres to look after. No, we'll have a hard time *ever* hiring enough staff to do all the restoration work required in our parks.

Then what's the answer? Consider this--three years ago NAP benefitted from 1163 hours of service donated by volunteers. Last year they donated 2310 hours--another doubling in just two years! We estimate the number of NAP volunteers to be somewhere between 333 and 500. That means that rather than giving each of our 6 field staff 167 acres of parkland to restore, instead, we only need to ask each volunteer to look after 2-3 acres of land. That's a much more manageable undertaking!

So, although our staff is growing, that's not as important as the growth of our volunteer corps. YOU are the ones who are really making a difference in the battle to restore our native ecosystems. We'll do our best to organize workdays and facilitate other activities, but we need you to participate and join the NAP team. We need you to keep us growing. And while you're at it, bring a friend along so you'll have someone with whom to share your 2-3 acres!

Dave Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Coordinator

NAP-penings

Thirty-six students and teachers from **Greenhills School** joined NAP for a special workday in Barton Park on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. They helped us remove invasive shrubs from a fragile area known as a peat dome. January, with its frozen ground and dormant plants, was a great time to work in this sensitive area with minimal impact. Thank you, Greenhills School!

NAP was one of the organizations the **Temple Beth Emeth** congregation assisted on a special "Day of Caring," or "Mitzvah Day," they organized. The group worked with NAP staff in early February removing invasive shrubs at Bandemer Park. Thank you, Temple Beth Emeth !

At long last, *Along the Huron: Natural Communities of the Huron River Corridor in Ann Arbor, Michigan* will be published this spring by the University of Michigan Press. This book, written by NAP, is a guide to local natural areas adjacent to the Huron River. It includes useful information on landscape ecology and descriptions of local natural community types, as well. Be sure to keep an eye out for it in local book stores this summer!

You may see several new faces this spring at NAP. We are in the process of hiring a NAP Technician, a herpetologist, and four new conservation crew members—for an expanded field crew of 6 (NAP's largest crew EVER)! We look forward to introducing you to our new staff members at volunteer events this spring and in the summer edition of the *NAP News*.

Send us your old park photos! NAP is interested in photos of parks taken before NAP began in 1993 or early in our history. Call the NAP office for more information.

“Fowling” the Water

by Dave Borneman

Canada Geese--beautiful, magnificent birds. They have captivated hunters and bird watchers as long as humans have watched their silhouettes fly into wetlands against the setting sun. In recent years, however, Canada geese have begun to wear out their welcome in many urban areas, from city parks, to golf courses, to corporate lawns. Although a few geese are fun to see, a lot of geese--hundreds or thousands--are a public nuisance and a major polluter of the ponds, streams, and rivers they inhabit. A single goose can produce a pound of excrement a day! When it rains those excess nutrients and bacteria are flushed from the grass into nearby water bodies, fouling the water for humans and aquatic creatures alike.

Over the years the Parks and Recreation Department has tried various techniques to control the ever-growing population of resident Canada geese in Ann Arbor. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) used to help us round up the geese every summer for relocation. No one wants more geese nowadays, though, so the MDNR will only assist with “roundups” if it is understood that the captured geese will simply be killed. Rather than go that route, we’ve tried less drastic measures, such as leaving unmown buffers along the edge of water to make areas less attractive as goose habitat. In Dolph Nature Area we’ve also erected low, mesh fencing to block the movements of geese. We’ve even researched creative methods used in other cities: a grape-flavored extract which geese find offensive, dead goose decoys which discourage geese, and dogs trained to harass the birds. All of these methods have disadvantages.

Now we are considering a technique used successfully at Belle Isle in Detroit last year--egg replacement. Using volunteers trained by the MDNR and the Humane Society of the U.S., eggs were removed from goose nests and replaced with fake eggs. After sitting on the fake eggs for several weeks, the window of opportunity for successful nesting passed. The result--no baby goslings and a slow, long term decrease in the local population of resident geese.

Again, we are only *considering* using this method in Ann Arbor. Any such activity requires permitting from the MDNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It may not even be possible to coordinate such a program for the 1999 nesting season. This article is simply a request for input about controlling the resident goose population. If you have any thoughts--pro or con--about various methods of controlling geese, or if you simply would like more information on the topic, please contact the NAP office at (734) 996-3266.

Volunteer Stewardship Network

by Courtney Babb

An exciting, new program is emerging in our watershed—the Volunteer Stewardship Network! You might be surprised to learn that over the past five years NAP has been working to develop this program in conjunction with the Huron River Watershed Council, Nichols Arboretum, the University of Michigan Office of Occupational Safety and Health, and the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment. Patterned after the Chicago area’s Volunteer Stewardship Network, our Network is made up of groups within the Huron River Watershed that are working with volunteers to monitor, protect, and restore the natural systems within our watershed. Through coordination of these groups we hope to foster coordinated and widespread preservation/restoration and monitoring; provide a larger context for individual monitoring, restoration, and inventory activities; be a catalyst for people taking charge of protecting nearby natural areas; and offer an active learning environment. NAP volunteers are automatically part of this Stewardship Network. In fact, many of you have been receiving the *Ripple Effect* this past year, a newsletter that publicizes stewardship activities happening throughout the Huron River Watershed (including NAP events). The *Ripple Effect* is one of the first products of the Stewardship Network.

Our next project is to offer educational sessions that will bring together volunteer stewards from many different programs including the Huron River Watershed Council’s Adopt-A-Stream Program, Nichols Arboretum, Thurston Nature Center, Friends of Eberwhite Woods, local land conservancies such as Superior Land Conservancy and Potawatomi Land Trust, and NAP. These hands-on sessions will be for volunteers who are interested in learning more about protecting nearby natural areas. We’re still in the early planning stages, but hopefully you’ll be hearing more about these educational sessions and the Volunteer Stewardship Network soon!



Special NAP Volunteer Opportunities

Please call NAP at (734) 996-3266 for more information or to take advantage of any of these exciting opportunities!

Garlic Mustard Watch

We need help monitoring and controlling garlic mustard (an invasive, woodland plant). Each member of the Garlic Mustard Watch will patrol a specific woodland throughout April, May, and June. He/she will report sightings of the plant to NAP and hand pull small patches. Training will be provided. With your help we can keep this plant from taking over our woodlands!

Festival Volunteers

NAP needs help staffing our display at festivals, such as at the annual Earth Day Festival at Leslie Science Center in April and at Huron River Day at Gallup Park in July. Festival volunteers will work alongside NAP staff providing information to the public and selling our native landscaping brochures. This is a great opportunity to talk with others about the work you are doing or plan to do with Natural Area Preservation. No experience necessary!

Native Plant Gardeners

Do you enjoy gardening? Interested in learning more about native plants? Then this opportunity is for you! NAP is looking for help maintaining two native plant gardens this growing season. One is a native plant demonstration garden located at the Leslie Science Center Project Grow site. The other is a native plant exhibit garden located just inside the entrance to Furstenberg Park off of Fuller Road. Some knowledge of native plants is helpful, but not required. Training will be provided.

Frog, Butterfly, and Breeding Bird Inventories

Volunteers play a critical role in collecting data on frogs, butterflies, and breeding birds in our local natural areas. NAP uses these data to gage the health of our natural areas, to document changes, and to direct our stewardship efforts. This is a great activity for individuals who enjoy spending quiet time in local natural areas, have an eye (or ear) for detail, and are eager to learn more about the animals living all around us. Training is provided for all inventories. See the spring volunteer calendar on page 5 for kick-off event dates and times. This is when the initial training sessions are held and survey locations/routes are assigned. Please call the NAP office in advance if you would like to participate in one of the inventories but are unable to attend the kick-off.

Burn Crew

It's burn season!! March through May NAP conducts prescribed ecological burns in some of Ann Arbor's natural areas. Fire is a wonderful restoration tool, stimulating fire-adapted native plants while setting back many non-native species. Volunteers are a very important part of NAP's burn program, carrying out the same duties as staff members. Duties may include ignition, mop up, PR, smoke monitoring, and weather monitoring. Burns are held on weekday afternoons. If you would like to join NAP's burn crew this season, you must attend the training on March 11. Call the NAP office by March 5 to register for training or for more information.

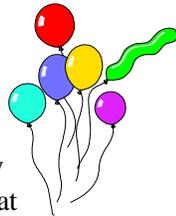


Photo Monitoring

We are looking for volunteers to help monitor restoration projects by taking photographs from set points. Photo monitoring volunteers will work alongside NAP staff and visit natural areas all over the city. It's a great chance to explore the parks with a friendly, knowledgeable guide! Photo monitoring would take place during business hours (8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday). Call the NAP office for more information.



Botanical Past

(continued from page 1)

as wetlands were decimated to accommodate, first, agriculture and, later, development.

Searching through the Herbarium, I was surprised to find that many of the rarer species we've located in the NAP inventory haven't been collected in 70-100 years. So, to document our findings, last summer I set out with plant press in hand and collected about 75 plant specimens which will be deposited in the Herbarium. Also, I've been mapping exact locations of many species for the NAP files. Just as I have relied on past records of the local flora, perhaps in 100 years some botanist will rummage through the Herbarium or NAP files to see what was here at the end of the 20th century. I wonder if our 4 remaining orchid species will still be around at the end of the 21st century? If NAP efforts to preserve and restore natural habitats continue into the next generation, then surely they will survive. And perhaps we can be so bold as to hope that they'll be joined by even more species from the past.

MARCH / APRIL**March 3, Wednesday****Public Meeting--Prescribed Burn Program
Leslie Science Center, 7:30-9:00 pm**

This meeting will provide information and an opportunity for discussion about NAP's prescribed burn program. Meet at 7:30 pm at the Leslie Science Center, 1831 Traver Road.

March 9, Tuesday**Frog and Toad Survey Kick-off
Leslie Science Center, 7:30-9:00 pm**

Want to learn more about Ann Arbor's amphibians? Then volunteer for this survey! This meeting will provide general information about the survey, and route sign-up will take place. This date may change, so call NAP (996-3266) if you plan to attend.

March 11, Thursday**Prescribed Burn Crew Training
Leslie Science Center, 12:00-5:00 pm**

This is a required training session for all volunteers interested in assisting with NAP's prescribed burns this season. Register by Friday, March 5 by calling the NAP office at 996-3266. Enrollment is limited.

March 20, Saturday**Volunteer Stewardship Workday
Dolph Park, 10:00 am-1:00 pm**

Help maintain and improve trails at Dolph Park! Meet at 10:00 am at the parking lot on Wagner Road.

March 27**April 17****April 24 (Saturdays)****Volunteer Stewardship Workdays
Gallup Park, 10:00 am-1:00 pm**

During this series of workdays celebrating Earth Day we will remove invasive shrubs from the wet prairie region of Gallup Park. For each workday meet at 10:00 am at the east end of the Mitchell Field parking lot (located on the south side of Fuller Road across from the entrance to U of M's North Campus). Come to one, two, or all three!

April 20, Tuesday**Butterfly Survey Kick-off
Leslie Science Center, 7:30-9:00 pm**

What could be more fun than looking for butterflies? Nothing, so join this survey! This meeting will provide information about the survey, park assignments, and training walks. Contact the survey coordinator, Chris Rickards, via e-mail (heliconia@juno.com) or the NAP office with any questions.

**April 27, Tuesday****Breeding Bird Survey Kick-off
Leslie Science Center, 7:30-9:00 pm**

If you enjoy bird watching in your favorite park, this survey's for you! This meeting will provide information about this year's survey, and last year's survey results will be available. Park assignments will be determined, and training walks will be announced at this session. The survey coordinator, Dea Armstrong, is anxious to hear from all potential volunteers! Contact her via e-mail (ddarm@umich.edu) or phone (668-2513) with any questions.

MAY**May 1, Saturday****Volunteer Stewardship Workday
Bandemer & Argo Parks, 10:00 am-1:00 pm**

May Day, May Day--native plants need your help! Celebrate May Day with NAP by rescuing native plants! We will be removing plants from the future site of a trail connecting Bandemer and Argo Parks. The plants will be transplanted in a safer location. Meet at the "park and ride" lot on Whitmore Lake Road at Bandemer Park.

May 15, Saturday**Weed Out Day
Marshall, Argo, Bird Hills, Cedar Bend Parks, 10:00 am-1:00 pm**

Be a part of the first ever Ann Arbor Weed Out Day! This event is a city-wide effort to control garlic mustard in our parks. On May 15 NAP will lead four simultaneous workdays to control this non-native, invasive plant. Groups and individuals are encouraged to participate in this exciting community event. Groups, please contact the NAP office in advance at 996-3266. Come to the Weed Out location nearest you:

Marshall: Meet at the Marshall parking lot off of Dixboro Road.**Argo:** Meet at the parking lot just north of Argo Canoe Livery (off of Longshore Drive).**Bird Hills:** Meet at the park entrance on Bird Road. Additional parking available at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.**Cedar Bend:** Meet near the perennial garden on Cedar Bend Drive.**May 22, Saturday****Volunteer Stewardship Workday
Scarlett Mitchell Park, 10:00 am-1:00 pm**

Join us in removing invasive shrubs at Scarlett Mitchell Park! Meet at 10:00 am at the Mitchell School parking lot off Lorraine Street.

JUNE**June 5, Saturday****Volunteer Stewardship Workday
Southeast Area Park, 10:00 am-1:00 pm**

Celebrate National Trails Day by joining NAP in creating a new nature trail in Southeast Area Park! Meet at 10:00 am at the paved area between the restroom and the playground (it will be visible from the main parking lot off of East Ellsworth Road).

NATURE ACTIVITIES

NAP, in conjunction with Gallup Park, will be leading several nature activities this spring. On-site registration is available on a first come, first served basis, or mail in a registration form (from the Parks and Recreation Dept. Spring/Summer brochure) at least one week in advance to pre-register. For more information call 662-9319 (Gallup Park) or 668-7411 (Argo Park).

Wetlands by Canoe--Gallup Park

Paddle by canoe and discover the wetland areas of the Huron River. Guided tour with refreshments upon completion.

\$7.50/person (\$12.00/couple)

April 10, Saturday, 10:00 am-12:00 pm

May 22, Saturday, 10:00 am-12:00 pm

June 6, Sunday, 10:00 am-12:00 pm

**Spring Woodland and Wildflower Walk--
Gallup Park Meeting Room**

Park walk to identify spring flowers and learn some folklore. Refreshments provided.

\$2.00/person

May 22, Saturday, 6:00-8:00 pm

**Evening Bird Walk--Gallup Park Meeting
Room**

Shuttle from Gallup to Furstenberg Nature Area. Bring binoculars. Refreshments provided. \$2.00/person

May 21, Friday, 6:00-8:00 pm

**Early Bird Walk--Gallup Park Meeting
Room**

Bird identification walk in Furstenberg Park. Bring binoculars. Refreshments provided.

\$2.00/person

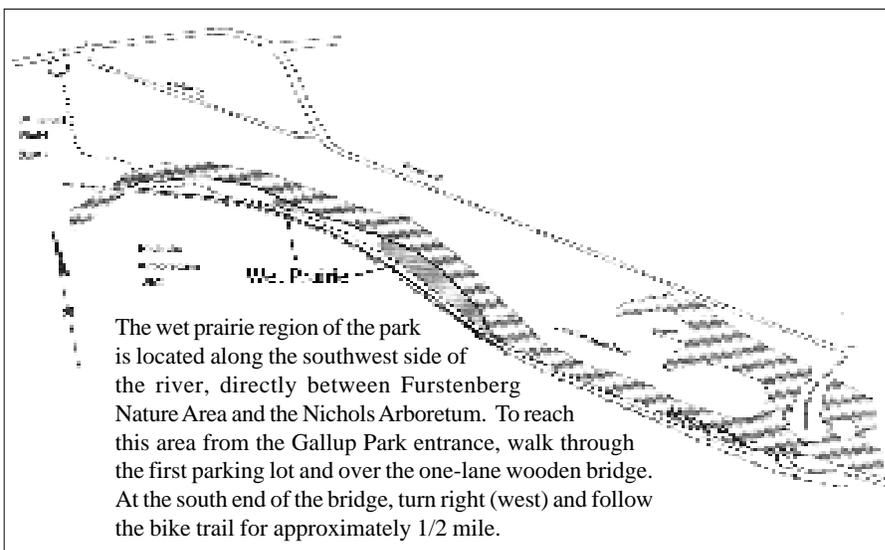
June 6, Sunday, 7:30-9:30 am

Park Focus: Gallup Park (Wet Prairie Region)

by Jennifer Maignet

This spring NAP will host a special series of workdays in celebration of Earth Day which focus on one of Ann Arbor's most unique natural areas, the Gallup Park Wet Prairie. These workdays, along with Huron River Day events held in July, will likely attract attention to a wetland that is overlooked by many users of the Gallup Park paved trail who run, bike, skate or walk by it daily. As a precursor to this newfound "stardom," herein lie the reasons why the wet prairie has been selected for

such special treatment. More importantly, however, these reasons will illustrate why the area's health depends upon users' respect for its fragility. This requires enthusiasts to admire from afar the diversity of plants and animals the wet prairie hosts by remaining on the Gallup paved path to overlook its natural beauties.



How will I know when I arrive at the wet prairie?

You will see an open area dominated by grasses and sedges. In spring look for the showy, yellow flowers and thick, dark green leaves of the marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) or the bluish-green tussocks of the sedge *Carex stricta*. More careful scanning may reveal the flowers of two uncommon plants growing nestled among the sedges. Star grass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*) produces tiny, yellow flowers and swamp saxifrage (*Saxifraga pennsylvanica*) sends out a single stalk of small, greenish flowers.

Why is this site special?

Wetlands of all types have diminished rapidly due to agricultural and developmental pressures. The first studies of wetland abundance were conducted in the early 1900's as requested by Congress to determine "the amount and location of swamp and overflow lands in the United States that can be reclaimed for agriculture." Since then, it has been estimated that up to 50% of Michigan's wetlands have been lost. Because of this, many of the plants and animals adapted to these unique environmental conditions are rare.

The ecological significance of the Gallup Wet Prairie in particular was recognized by Paul W. Thompson of the Michigan Natural Areas Council who began lobbying to have it protected in the late 1960's. In the 1970's the Michigan Chapter of The Nature Conservancy listed this site as one of only 3 good examples of wet prairie in Michigan. However, research published by former NAP Botanist David Warners in his dissertation in 1997 indicates that the site actually fits the classification of sedge meadow better than wet prairie, based mainly on its soil type. The name "Gallup Wet Prairie" has stuck, nonetheless.

How will workdays help?

The rare plants and animals dependent on the Gallup Wet Prairie for survival are currently threatened. Two major threats are invasive plants and excessive nutrient loads in the Huron River. The combination of these two factors has enabled plants such as purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), native and non-native cattails (*Typha latifolia* and *Typha angustifolia*), and black alders (*Alnus glutinosa*) to gain a foothold and begin to out-compete the rare, native plant species found there. Although solutions to water quality problems will take long term foresight and planning on the part of the entire Huron River Watershed, workdays help by removing targeted invasive plants to relieve competitive pressures on the rare plants. In doing so, we can help preserve the biodiversity of plants and animals in the Gallup Wet Prairie.

How can I help?

We're glad you asked! Helping NAP restore and preserve the Gallup Wet Prairie starts with checking the volunteer calendar on page 5 of this newsletter and deciding which workdays you will attend. It is NAP's hope that each of the 3 Gallup workdays will enable you to see first-hand why the site is so unique and teach you more about how to preserve this special place both during and after workdays. Hope to see you there!

Planning Your Garden? Go Native!

by Courtney Babb

As you plan your garden this year, consider going native! Include the natural beauty of native plants in your landscaping. Native plants are defined as those species that existed in this area prior to European settlement. Non-native plants are those that have been transported to Michigan, often from other continents, since that time. Several species of non-native landscape plants commonly escape from planted gardens or yards and destructively alter our natural areas by “taking over” and excluding native plants. These proven destructive plants include autumn olive, barberry, crown vetch, honeysuckle, multiflora rose, myrtle (or periwinkle), privet, buckthorn, oriental bittersweet, Norway maple, Siberian elm, and European alder. We urge you to avoid planting any of these species! Additionally, many other non-native species have the potential to escape your garden and disrupt natural communities. Non-natives often lack natural population controls, such as insects and diseases, that keep them in check in their native ecosystems, so when you plant a non-native species, you are gambling with our natural communities.

Aside from the destructive potential of some non-native plants, native plants have additional advantages over non-natives. Native plants are often better adapted to our climate and require less maintenance than non-native landscaping plants. Native plant gardens help to conserve and promote the health of plant communities throughout southeast Michigan. Further, native plant gardens are unique. Wouldn't it be great to have a garden that's wonderfully different from those of your neighbors? It's a fantastic conversation piece and may even provide an educational moment at your next barbecue. The scene might go something like this: “Say, Fred. This garden is gorgeous! Where did you get these plants? They look really different from my marigolds, more natural, somehow, and breathtaking. They seem to have survived our cold spring beautifully, too! They didn't turn black and shrivel like my begonias did. What's your secret?”

You smile smugly, considering the reply from that old laundry detergent commercial (“Ancient Chinese secret”). Finally, though, you decide to reveal the truth. “Well, Barney, old buddy, old pal, these are all plants native to southeastern Michigan. They do look great, don't they? And they're helping to conserve and promote the health of plant communities throughout our region. Let me tell you more about it...”

So what are you waiting for? NAP can even help you get started. We have a general native landscaping brochure for southeastern Michigan available for \$0.25 or free when you purchase our native landscaping brochure series which includes four individual brochures on native wildflowers; native shrubs; native vines, grasses, sedges, and ferns; and native trees of southeastern Michigan (\$1 for each brochure plus shipping and handling). To order call NAP at (734) 996-3266 or stop by our office upstairs at the Leslie Science Center, 1831 Traver Road. Brochures are also available for sale at the Parks and Recreation Department office on the 6th floor of City Hall. Along with descriptions of native plants, each brochure contains information about natural habitat, site tolerance, plant height, bloom time, color, and other ornamental features. Call the NAP office for information about sources of native plants, as well. Go native!

Your Landscape and our Natural Areas

Native Wildflowers

of Southeastern Michigan



Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*)

Your Landscape and our Natural Areas

Native Shrubs

of Southeastern Michigan



Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)

Your Landscape and our Natural Areas

Native Vines, Grasses, Sedges, and Ferns

of Southeastern Michigan



Wool-grass (*Scripus cyperinus*)

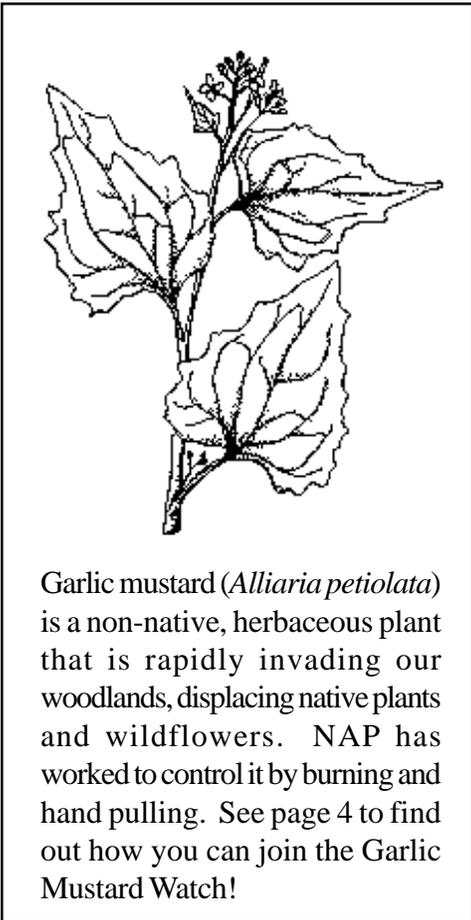
Your Landscape and our Natural Areas

Native Trees

of Southeastern Michigan



White Oak (*Quercus alba*)



Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is a non-native, herbaceous plant that is rapidly invading our woodlands, displacing native plants and wildflowers. NAP has worked to control it by burning and hand pulling. See page 4 to find out how you can join the Garlic Mustard Watch!

Garlic Mustard Lasagna

by Dan Anderson

(taken from the *Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society News*, Winter 1995)

To make garlic mustard lasagna, brown 2 pounds ground beef, Italian sausage, or a blend of the two in a heavy skillet. Spoon off excess fat. Add 1 minced garlic clove, 1 tablespoon dried basil, 1 teaspoon salt, one 1-pound can of tomatoes, two 6-ounce cans of tomato paste, and ½ cup dry red wine. Simmer uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring frequently. Cook a 1-pound package of lasagna noodles according to package instructions and drain. Beat 2 eggs and add 3 cups ricotta or cottage cheese, ½ cup grated parmesan cheese, 2 tablespoons parsley flakes, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon black pepper. Blend well. Lay half the lasagna noodles into a 9x13x2 buttered baking dish. Spread with half the ricotta mixture, ½ pound thinly sliced mozzarella cheese, about 10 ounces steamed garlic mustard leaves, and half the meat sauce. Place the remaining noodles in position and cover with the remaining meat sauce, ricotta mixture, and another ½ pound sliced mozzarella. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 30 minutes or until bubbly. Bon appetit!

Editor's note: It has been recommended to me to use only young, succulent garlic mustard in this dish. After garlic mustard flowers, the leaves can have a very bitter taste. Also, remember that some plants are extremely poisonous. Never eat any part of a plant unless you are absolutely sure you have identified it correctly as edible.

Natural Area Preservation

City of Ann Arbor
Dept. of Parks and Recreation
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