

Natural Area Preservation News

Protecting and restoring Ann Arbor's natural areas and fostering an environmental ethic among its citizens

Volume 15, Number 3

Autumn 2010

Restoration at Huron Parkway Nature Area

by Ann Radloff Hubbard, Volunteer Park Steward

Wearing work clothes and carrying tools, the people in the woods behind my house caught my eye. In five years of living here, I had never seen anyone in this thicket of shrubs and trees. I decided to find out what they were doing. The conversation that followed gave me my first knowledge of Huron Parkway Nature Area and Natural Area Preservation, which planted the seed for a relationship that has lasted more than a decade.

The Ann Arbor Parks Department purchased the Gunn-Moore property to establish Huron Parkway Nature Area (HPNA) with a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund in 1993. The land is located on Huron Parkway between Lindsey Lane and East Huron River Drive. Since its acquisition, many people have participated in restoration activities at HPNA. A Girl Scout Silver Award project by Nicole Mitchell was an important early contribution to the control of garlic mustard. She, her family, and fellow Girl Scouts dragged out dozens of orange bags of the invasive herb. Our annual spring Garlic Mustard Weed-Out Day (GMWOD) has brought many school and community groups, families, and neighbors to help restore native plants in an area once choked by garlic mustard. Spring beauty, May apple, wild geranium, trillium, and Jack-in-the-pulpit are just some of the native wildflowers that were on display for this year's GMWOD. One young girl with sharp eyes also spied several toads and a couple of highly prized mushrooms.

Thousands of people see HPNA from their car windows while traveling along Huron Parkway. Volunteers have removed a wall of shrubs to open up a view of the pond

and wetlands in the interior of the park. Park neighbors, Pioneer Key Club, UM volunteer groups, and community members have removed hundreds of buckthorn shrubs (and millions of their purple, seedy fruits) to let in sunlight, which allowed the establishment of a meadow where big bluestem, Indian grass, sedges, and wildflowers flourish. Seed collected from the meadow has been used to expand it, and to establish these plants at other nature areas in Ann Arbor.



Volunteers and NAP staff remove shrubs from Huron Parkway Nature Area. Photo by Ann Hubbard.

The NAP burn crew has provided another important restoration tool: fire. HPNA is a challenging site to burn due to its proximity to a major roadway. Despite this,

burn crew staff and volunteers have conducted successful controlled burns at HPNA that have helped control invasives and maintain the diversity of spring flora. The transformation of the early spring woodland from brown to ashen in an afternoon is a striking sight. The change from black to green in the weeks following the burn is magical. Almost overnight, May-apples poke their heads through the ash. Dainty spring beauty and cut-leaved toothwort are sprinkled amidst the char.

The restoration and enjoyment continues! I recently saw a mink cavorting near the woods—a brief, rare sighting. A family of red fox has been spied, owls are heard nightly, and a white-feathered wild turkey has been seen, all of this near one of the busiest roads in the county! Consider this your personal invitation to join me, NAP staff, and other nature-lovers at our fall work day in HPNA on October 30th, or at a workday in a park near you. (See the calendar on pages 4 and 5.) Perhaps it will be the beginning of a long-lasting relationship for you!

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Coordinator's Corner

Bumble Bees and Mud Pies

Ten years ago I wrote an article for this newsletter entitled "Special Place" where I talked about a discussion I participated in at a Natural Areas Conference. Here's an excerpt:

"The topic turned to experiences which allow children to develop a deep sense of wonder and connection with nature, and how most of the time that requires a close connection to a particular piece of land—a special place. . . . It may offer a child her first exposure to, or at least her first discovery of, a bee pollinating a flower, or a bird building a nest, or a tree starting its life from a seed. It doesn't matter if the flower is a dandelion, the bird a house sparrow, or the tree a buckthorn. What matters is that the child is exploring, discovering, and *connecting*."

In the past decade, there's been a growing interest in this topic, much of it sparked by Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*. Locally, there was a documentary from Michigan Television entitled "Where Do the Children Play?" This summer, NAP staff participated in a discussion about how we can encourage Ann Arbor's children to enjoy the unstructured dabbling outside that is so important for developing a connection to nature. We're not talking about building playgrounds in the woods or about building anything at all! From our perspective at NAP, it's about removing the barriers that keep kids from doing what kids naturally do in the woods: explore, play, and have fun. This may be as easy as removing walls of shrubs that block entry to the forest or make it feel unsafe, or creating paths that encourage walking there, or even allowing off-trail play in areas that are less sensitive to heavier use. This is all that most kids are looking for.

I learned this by watching my own daughters grow up in a tiny Ann Arbor yard much smaller than the Illinois farm where I was raised and the woodlot or "timber" where I played. I tried to give them as many things to play on as I could: two swings, a sandbox, a trapeze, acrobatic rings, a frog pond, a hammock, and even a zip line! In the end, they spent most of their play time in the untouched, "wild" back corner of the yard where they created a house and made mud pies and other creations with what they found there!

I just moved to a new house, where I put this knowledge to use. Other than a swing, my only "improvements" in the unmown portion of the yard have been to remove enough shrubs and create enough trails to make the wild area inviting. I look forward to seeing what my girls will do in this area, and I hope it becomes a refuge for them just as the "timber" from my childhood was for me.

I hope that all of you with children will help keep them from developing "nature deficit disorder." Ann Arborites are fortunate to have a tremendous park system. If you need suggestions on places to explore near you, give us a call. And keep your ears open for additional discussions about how to continue expanding opportunities for our children to discover nature.

Dave Borneman, Manager



CITY OF ANN ARBOR
**Natural Area
Preservation**

A unit of the City of Ann Arbor
Public Services, Field Operations
*The mission of Natural Area Preservation is
to protect and restore Ann Arbor's natural
areas and to foster an environmental ethic
among its citizens.*

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NAPpenings

thank you . . .

to the following for their help last summer and this spring and summer:

- Sam Levine, Eagle Scout, for making a board walk at Mary Beth Doyle Nature Area.
- Ann Arbor Brewing Company for hosting an Adopt-a-Park fundraiser.
- EMU Delta Tau Delta Fraternity for collecting litter at Furstenberg.
- UM Ross School of Business for clearing shrubs in Argo.
- Temple Beth Emeth for trail work in Mary Beth Doyle.
- Whole Foods Employees for invasives control in Cranbrook.
- WCC Technical Middle College for invasive control in Marshall.
- Girl Scouts for weeding the park entrance at Lakewood.
- High school rowers for cutting shrubs at Argo.
- Community High for pulling garlic mustard at multiple locations.
- Youth Day-of-Caring participants for working at Leslie Science and Nature Center.
- Friends of Sara Jackson for pulling garlic mustard at Cedar Bend.
- Rudolph Steiner High School students for shrub removal at Black Pond Woods.
- UM law students for pulling knapweed at Barton.
- REI for trail work at Scarlett-Mitchell.
- NSK Americas for removing invasives at Argo and Bandemer.

NAP Receives Award from Department of the Interior

Take Pride in America is a nationwide program authorized by congress to promote stewardship of the nation's public lands. On July 16th, NAP won first place, National Volunteer Award, Local Government Program. Because of all the wonderful folks that give their time to the parks and natural areas in Ann Arbor, NAP qualified for this award. Thank you volunteers!

Garlic Mustard Challenge Exceeds Goals

The Stewardship Network announces that the Huron Arbor Cluster is the winner of the 2010 Garlic Mustard Challenge, having pulled 58,327 pounds. Total pounds pulled by residents of South Eastern Michigan was 243,216 or almost 100,000 pounds more than the original goal! Thank you to everyone who participated. More information is available at www.stewardshipnetwork.org.

Michigan Prescribed Fire Council Annual Meeting

The Michigan Prescribed Fire Council promotes the safe use of and public awareness of prescribed fire. Their 11th annual meeting will be held September 10th and 11th at the Fort Custer Training Center in Augusta, Michigan. For further information, go to www.firecouncil.org, or email info@firecouncil.org.

Traver Creek Studied by Water Quality Survey

The Peter G. Meier Water Quality Survey, founded by Ann Arbor resident Hannah-Maria Jacques, has sampled Traver Creek stream invertebrates since 2006. Such aquatic organisms are used to help determine water quality, and their distribution and species diversity may be used by government to formulate policy and to monitor management of our water resources. Sampling from Traver Creek's source to its confluence with the Huron River, the survey has collected 42 families of aquatic insects, including 14 genera of caddis flies in 9 families. In 2010 the survey expands sampling to include the namesake of the Black Pond Woods Nature Area, and streams that drain the city's newly acquired Narrow Gauge Way Nature Area. For further details, visit the survey's website at www.watershedpress.com or contact Hannah-Maria at jacques@umich.edu.

Argo Headrace Update

Hikers along the headrace path below the dam at Argo Nature Area will notice a lot of vegetation clearing. NAP has been working with Park Operations and Forestry to remove the shrub understory. This was required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment to allow for maintenance of the drains located along the earthen dam. The water level in the reservoir was lowered in the early summer to allow for visual inspection of the drains, and is now back to previous levels. The trail will be closed in August and September, while the city continues active management.

Update for the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan

Ann Arbor is updating its Parks and Recreation Open Space (PROS) Plan. This document provides a long-term vision for the park system. The City held public meetings and conducted an online survey over the summer to gather resident opinions and suggestions. A draft of the new plan will be available at the district libraries and posted on-line in the fall. The State of Michigan is expected to give final approval of the plan by the end of 2010. More information is available at www.a2gov.org/prosplan.

Urban Forest Management Plan for Ann Arbor

Ann Arbor is currently developing its first Urban Forest Management Plan. There are nearly 50,000 street and green space trees in the City. The goal of the plan is to manage these trees as a community asset in a manner consistent with the values and needs of residents. For more information, or to be a part of plan development, contact Kerry Gray, Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Planner, at kgray@a2gov.org or 734.794.6430, ex. 43703.

Volunteer Stewardship Calendar

September

September 11, Saturday
National Day of Service and Remembrance

Miller Nature Area
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Join us in improving Miller's 22 acres of woods, flowers, and bird habitat by removing invasive shrubs! Meet us at the Arborview Boulevard entrance, just east of Wildwood Avenue.

September 11, Saturday
National Day of Service and Remembrance

Foxfire South Nature Area
1:00 to 4:00 pm

Take a few hours out of your weekend to explore a little-known nature area! Come to Foxfire South to remove invasive plants and help native plants thrive. Meet us at the corner of Dhu Varren Road and Omlesaad Drive.

September 12, Sunday
Furstenberg Native Garden
12:00 to 3:00 pm

Help us weed and preserve this native garden amidst the 38 acres of Furstenberg Nature Area. You'll learn about native plants, particularly prairie plants, with Park Steward and Master Gardener Aunita Erskine, and have a great time digging and planting in this excellent garden! Meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School.

September 14, Tuesday
Stewards' Circle
Bruegger's Bagels
709 N University Avenue
7:30 to 8:30 am

Join the Stewardship Network's

Huron Arbor Cluster for an informal discussion on a monthly topic with volunteer and professional land stewards. This month's topic: "Plants are one of the powerhouses of ecosystems. How do we introduce new plants? How are they propagated?"

September 13, Monday
Greenview Nature Area
7:00 to 8:30 pm

Join NAP in a walk through Greenview Nature Area. A staff naturalist will point out native plants and talk about ecological restoration. Meet at the Greenview Park sign, on Greenview Drive, across from Barnard Road.

September 19, Sunday
Hannah Nature Area
1:00 to 4:00 pm

This small, forested, nature area located right near downtown needs many hands to help remove invasive shrubs! Buckthorn and honeysuckle crowd out native plants and wildflowers. Meet at the west end of Bath Street, west of 7th (between Miller and Huron).

September 26, Sunday
National Public Lands Day
Marshall Nature Area
1:00 to 4:00 pm

Enjoy one of the last summer weekends in the great outdoors! Come to Marshall Nature Area to remove invasive shrubs and help native plants thrive. Meet in the parking lot on Dixboro Road, just north of Plymouth Road.

October

October 2, Saturday
Dicken Woods Nature Area
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Join NAP, the Friends of Dicken Woods, and neighbors in removing invasive shrubs from this special woodland. Meet up at the Dicken Elementary School parking lot, off of Runnymede Boulevard.

October 2, Saturday
Greenview Nature Area
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

You took the nature hike on September 13th—now take action! Help NAP, the Friends of Greenview, and the Ann Arbor Public Schools remove invasive shrubs and improve trails in this park. Meet at the Greenview Park sign on Greenview Drive, across from Barnard Road.

October 2, Saturday
Wurster Nature Area
1:00 to 4:00 pm

Bring friends and family out to lend a hand and wrap your arms around Wurster's own champion oak tree! We'll be removing invasive shrubs and planting some native ones to take their place. Meet in the circle drive of Edgewood Place off of West Davis Avenue.

October 10, Sunday
Molin Nature Area
1:00 to 4:00 pm

Learn about storm water runoff and how it can affect nature areas. We'll be working to mitigate the effects of storm water on Molin's primary trail. Meet us at the end of Powell Road on Columbia.

October 12, Tuesday
Stewards' Circle
Bruegger's Bagels
709 N University Avenue
7:30 to 8:30 am

This month's informal discussion topic: "Protection and restoration can

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only happen with the community's support. How do we instrument social will in stewardship? How do we get residents interested and involved in our work?"

October 13, Wednesday Public Meeting, Controlled Ecological Burn Program

Leslie House, Leslie Science & Nature Center

1831 Traver Road

7:30 to 9:00 pm

Fire is used as a restoration tool in many of Ann Arbor's natural areas. Burns are conducted in city parks throughout the spring and fall. This meeting provides information and an opportunity for discussion about the Controlled Ecological Burn Program.

October 17, Sunday Bird Hills Nature Area

1:00 to 4:00 pm

Bird Hills has miles of trails, taking visitors through beech-maple and oak-hickory groves, by vernal ponds and streams, and even through an old farmstead! Help keep Bird Hills navigable by removing invasive shrubs at this workday. Join us at the Beechwood entrance off of Sunset Road.

October 23, Saturday Miller Nature Area

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Join us in clearing Miller's trails and spreading wood chips to keep them passable. Bring your sleds with you to help us transport the chips and brush. Meet us at the Arborview Boulevard entrance, just east of Wildwood Avenue.

October 23, Saturday Swift Run & Mary Beth Doyle Nature Areas

10:00 am to 3:00 pm

One of the most fun and rewarding stewardship opportunities is seed collecting. We will be collecting seeds in Swift Run then dispersing them at Mary Beth Doyle. Good activity for children and adults. Meet at Swift Run at Eddy Street, off of Verle Avenue, just north of Ellsworth and Platt.

Please wear pants and closed-toe shoes to all workdays. Minors must be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form. Snacks, water, and tools are provided.

October 24, Sunday Barton Nature Area

1:00 to 4:00 pm

Bring your family to learn about native plants and lend a hand in this beautiful nature area. If you have not yet helped with seed collection, here is your chance. Learn to identify native plants in the seed-bearing stage of their growth cycle. It's fun and educational for the whole family!

October 26, Tuesday Volunteer Appreciation Potluck Cobblestone Farm, 2781 Packard Road Starts at 6:30 pm

All volunteers are invited to our annual appreciation event. We will share good food and music, and learn more about the different aspects of NAP. Costumes are encouraged. Awards will be presented for Volunteer of the Year and Best Costume. Please bring a dish to pass. Friends and family welcome. RSVP to 734.794.6627 or nap@a2gov.org.

October 30, Saturday Huron Parkway Nature Area

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Volunteers have made great headway

in this lovely nature area over the years, controlling invasive plants and encouraging natives. Help us continue that progress! We'll remove invasive shrubs near the parkway to extend the prairie. Meet at the Park Steward's house at 3470 Woodland Road, off East Huron River Drive. (See feature article on page 1.)

October 30, Saturday Bluffs Nature Area

1:00 to 4:00 pm

Come see the results of persistence at work. We've been helping the native plants beat back buckthorn and honeysuckle, and each year there are fewer invasive shrubs. Help us clean them out! Park on Sunset Road, and meet in the Elks Lodge parking lot, 220 Sunset Road.

November

November 9, Tuesday Stewards' Circle Bruegger's Bagels

709 N University Avenue
7:30 to 8:30 am

This month's informal discussion topic: "Many of us work with volunteers; many of us are volunteers. How does volunteerism impact the stewardship movement? How do we improve? What have we learned?"

November 13, Saturday Mary Beth Doyle Nature Area

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Tremendous progress has been made to increase the native habitat in this large preserve. Help keep the ball rolling by removing invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle shrubs. Meet at the end of Verle Avenue, two blocks west of Platt Road.

Gardening for Butterflies

by Kathy Sorensen

This article is excerpted from the summer 1998 NAP Newsletter. Autumn and Winter are great times to plan a new garden for next year! For more information see NAP's website.

Want to attract some wildlife to your yard and landscape with native plants? How about a butterfly garden? Butterflies are creatures of the sun and warmth, perfect icons of summer. To have your very own butterfly garden, basically you will need a sunny prairie with a few special additions for our winged wonders.

Hot-spots: Since butterflies only move about when warm, they could use a little help getting going on cool summer mornings. You can help by placing things like rocks or bricks in your garden. These will warm up quickly in the sun, and the butterflies will go there to warm up.

Shelter: You will also need to provide some shelter from the elements, so plant shrubs and trees nearby (select species that are good food sources).

Water: Butterflies need watering holes such as puddles or something as simple as a bucket of sand and water buried in the ground. This is especially important for the males during mating time—it is thought they need the extra salt.

People-food Garden: If you have a “people food” garden nearby, you might attract a few butterflies by having plenty of representatives of the cabbage family (cabbage, turnips, broccoli, kale), carrot family (carrots, dill, parsley), and legumes (peas, beans).

Display: Grouping the same flowers in a cluster will form a dramatic display likely to attract the casually wandering butterfly.

Continuous Blooming: Have a variety of flowering plants so that there will be something in bloom all summer long

Food: Most butterflies eat nectar, so you'll need plenty of flowers. Some butterflies, however, eat sap, rotting fruit, or even dung (not everything about butterflies is beautiful). Don't forget the caterpillars (larvae). If you really want the butterflies to stick around you'll have to convince them it's a good spot for egg laying.

If you are looking to attract a specific species you will have to research its dietary requirements. For example, if you want to make your yard attractive to spicebush

swallowtails, you will need to plant spicebush or sassafras for the larvae and joe-pye weed, jewelweed, and golden alexander for the adults. If it is monarchs you are looking for, be sure to plant milkweed.

One way to decide what plants to use in the garden is to know what butterflies are in your area. Thanks to our many volunteers, NAP has found 74 butterfly species in Ann Arbor Parks, so we have a good idea of what species to target for a butterfly garden in this area.

There are a few species that count for well over half of the butterfly observations in Ann Arbor Parks, so there is a good chance of attracting the following four butterflies if you plant what they like. The **clouded sulphur** prefers members of the legume family, so if you don't have a “people-food” garden nearby, plant some showy tick trefoil (*Desmodium canadense*) or round-headed bush clover (*Lespedeza capitata*). The **pearl crescent** larvae and adults both eat asters. **Little wood satyrs** and **wood nymphs** need grasses for the larvae to eat. The wood nymph adult eats tree sap and rotting fruit.

There are some plants you can start with that satisfy many butterflies. You will need plenty of flowers for the adults; grasses for some of the larvae; and shrubs or trees for protection, egg laying, and sap. You might also want to have a little rotting fruit available for the adults. It's up to you (and maybe your neighbors) if you really want to attract the butterflies who eat dung. Choose several plants from the lists below that are suitable for your yard, and you will have a great start on attracting butterflies as they flutter by.

Flowers

Spring to Early Summer

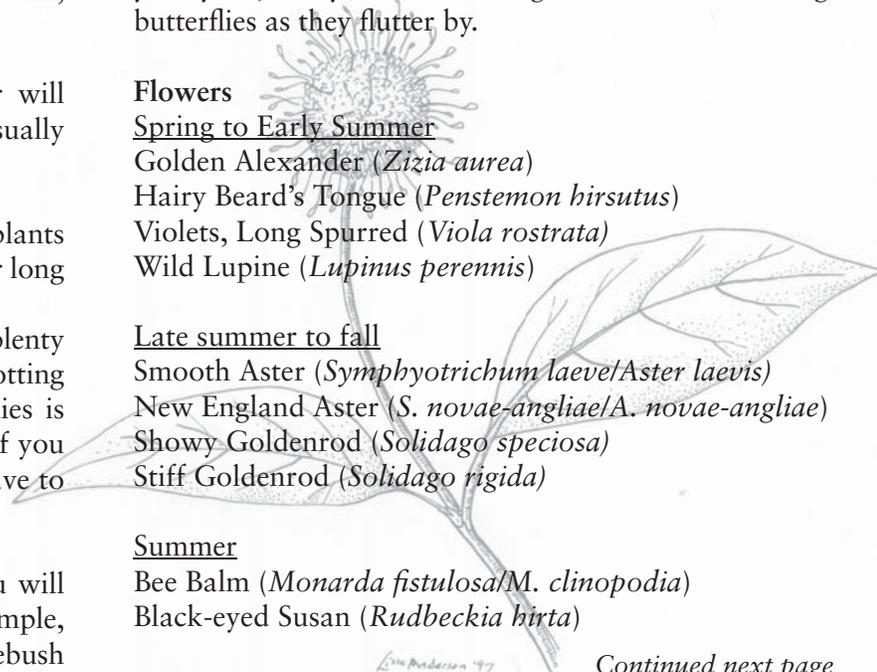
Golden Alexander (*Zizia aurea*)
Hairy Beard's Tongue (*Penstemon hirsutus*)
Violets, Long Spurred (*Viola rostrata*)
Wild Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)

Late summer to fall

Smooth Aster (*Symphotrichum laeve*/*Aster laevis*)
New England Aster (*S. novae-angliae*/*A. novae-angliae*)
Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*)
Stiff Goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*)

Summer

Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*/*M. clinopodia*)
Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)



Zizia aurea '97

Continued next page

Staff Updates

Colleen Breslin



I was chosen by the UM Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, Community-based Research Fellowship, and worked at NAP over this summer. I researched and looked for new and better ways for NAP to reach out to volunteers with social media. Assessing what worked well and what didn't, I went about finding ways to make positive changes for NAP and the community. And of course, input from Ann Arborites and the volunteers was vital in my work. This was a productive and enlightening summer for me, and it was really great.

Dick Jarvis



I have a Master's degree in computer science. I have more than twenty-five years' experience in application software development, including automotive, financial, aircraft, medical, and manufacturing industries, mainly in mainframe and personal computers. I have developed several Microsoft Access systems including a material control system at Mazda Corporation in Flat Rock, Michigan. I'm doing enhancements to the NAP Microsoft Access database system which is a very challenging system to be involved with.

Robert Schubert



Joining NAP as a summer intern, I am currently a senior at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. This December I will receive a B.S. in Environmental Studies with a minor in Biology. A passion for forest ecology has led toward a pursuit in the field of ecological restoration. Other interests include hiking with my dog, canoeing, mountain camping, botany, and horticulture. When not generally engaged in some form of biophilia, I may be found in my back garden enjoying a fine brew.

Abby Williams



During the Summer of 2010 I continued work on a research project that Omotara Kufeji, Ali Lunau, and Stephanie Dority had begun researching for NAP. The overall goal of our combined research efforts is to explore why the demographic of NAP's volunteer base does not match the demographic of Ann Arbor as a whole. My focus throughout the summer was to research innovative ways to build bridges with diverse communities within Ann Arbor, and then help NAP to utilize these improved lines of communication to share its environmental goals with the whole community.

Gardening for Butterflies

Continued from previous page

Blazing Star, Rough (*Liatris aspera*)
Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*)*
Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)*
Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
Yellow Coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*)
Ironweed (*Vernonia missurica*)*
Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*)*
Joe-pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*)*

Shrubs

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)*
New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)
Prickly Ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*)
Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)*
Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)*

Trees

Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*)
Oaks (*Quercus sp.*)
Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)
Trembling Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)
Tulip-tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)*
Yellow Birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*)*
Willows (*Salix sp.*)*

Grasses

Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)
Bottlebrush Grass (*Elymus hystrix/Hystrix patula*)
Indian Grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)
Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

*Prefer moist to wet soil

Note—many of the flowers that are nectar sources for adults are also food plants for caterpillars

Plant Names in a Nutshell

by Bev Walters, Research Museum Collection Manager (Vascular Plants), UM Herbarium

Since common names for plant species vary between countries and even local regions, the use of standardized scientific names helps people interested in plants better communicate with each other. In the mid-18th century Carl Linnaeus started the tradition of using two words in Latin to name plant species, first using the general group (genus) followed by a descriptive or defining term (species epithet), such as *Acer rubrum* for red maple. Over the years the naming process has been refined into a set of rules called the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, which botanists use to guide the naming of plant species.



Aster novae-angliae (New England aster) is now known as *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*.

So why do plant names seem to change so often? There are two basic reasons for this. First, with advances in the understanding of plant groups and their relationships, often supported by DNA analysis, botanists need to realign plant classifications to reflect the improved knowledge of plant evolution. So the group of Michigan plants I learned as asters are now split into six different genera. Most of them have been placed in the genus

Symphyotrichum, but my favorite, the flat topped aster of fens and wetlands, is now known as *Doellingeria umbellata* rather than *Aster umbellatus*. But even though there are now molecular biology and computer methods available to help analyze evolutionary relationships, the plants and their characteristics are still the same, so changes in names don't make plants any more difficult to identify.

The second reason a plant name may change is if its name fails to conform to the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature. For example, one rule is that if a species has been given two different names that are both validly published in the botanical literature, the older name has priority. So even though a scientific name may be in general usage, if an older name is discovered in a botanical publication, the older name is the only legitimate one.

For a more detailed discussion on plant names see 'Demystifying Nomenclature: The Game of the Name' by E.G. Voss (Mich. Bot. 48:38-44. 2009).

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