

# Natural Area Preservation News

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

Volume 8, Number 1

Spring 2003

## Park Focus: Hansen Nature Area: *John Heider, Park Steward*

Leave it to a woman all the way from Russia to introduce me to a hidden gem so close to my home. Ludamila, my next-door neighbor used to tell me that she "walked" her cat Max in a park across the street. Like most of my neighbors near the intersection of Maple and Pauline, I had no idea of the gem we have in Hansen Nature Area. I lived two hundred yards from the park for a year before I even stepped foot in it.

When Luda first mentioned her kitty adventures, we were looking down Maple Road and saw a sign saying "Hansen Park." Near the park sign is a small playground, which some people may think is the entire park. But beyond the sign lies a meadow, and behind that, almost 9 acres of tall, sheltering, wonderful forest.

The forest is comprised of about 65% white and red oak trees. The rest of the forest has a good mixture of shagbark and pignut hickory; white and scotch pine; hop hornbeam; hornbeam; basswood; Norway, red and sugar maple; some American elm; a smattering of pin, black and bur oak; and a few good-sized black walnut - one of which (in my estimation) is the tallest tree in the park.

A half-mile loop trail has been established through Hansen's interior. It can be accessed near the parking lot of Grace Bible Church (off Maple) or via a winding path from the playground area through the meadow/marsh to the forest.

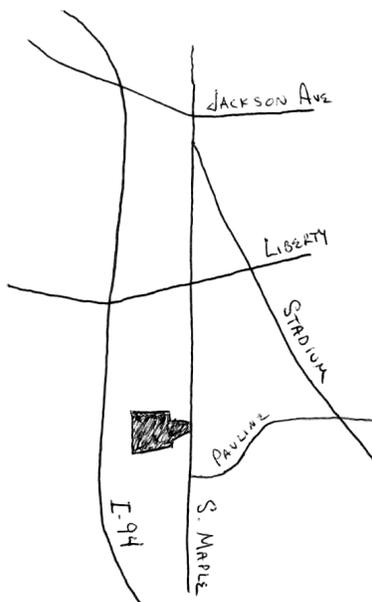
Springtime brings a respectable bloom of trillium, trout-lily and flowering dogwood. To my pleasant surprise, the interior of the forest was relatively free of buckthorn, Japanese honeysuckle and privet when I first began stewarding Hansen this past summer. The park's beauty will only increase given that a lot of the invasives have been removed in the last few months.

Hansen sports a pond that's about the size of two good swimming pools. I've never seen any fish in the pond, although as a dedicated fly-fisherman I should toss a line in its water sometime, but I have seen tons of ducks in the fall.

Not surprisingly, around duck-hunting season, the migrating waterfowl population of the small pond reaches a critical mass. (One weekend I counted 38 mallards in the small body of water.) After a few days of chowing on the pond's microscopic duck-goodies, the noisy, hungry flock flies away.

Thanks to Luda, I've found Hansen provides year-round enjoyment: spring brings lush understory flowerings; summer a palpable, shading relief from the sun's heat; fall a sharp and fragrant air as your feet release scent from a thousand oak leaves underfoot; and winter the snow-tracks of deer, squirrel, raccoon and dogs. You should visit Hansen, or better yet, find the neighborhood gem near your home.

*John Heider is the Park Steward at Hansen, for more information about John see page 6.*



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## Coordinator's Corner

# No Rest For The Weary

It's chaotic around my house these days. With both a 1-year-old and a 5-year-old, something is always happening! Even now, at 4:00 a.m., there's activity with restless kids, so I'm working on the computer. Neither of the kids has been sleeping through the night very well lately, so my sleep gets interrupted as well. Gone are the long, quiet winter nights when I could rejuvenate my body after a busy day, and a busy spring-summer-fall.

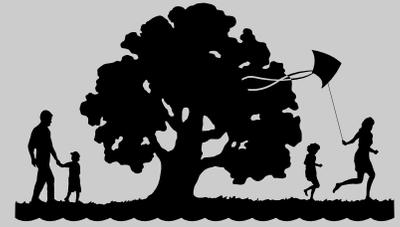
It's the same way at the NAP office. Used to be I'd say good-bye to the conservation crew and other field staff for a few months during the winter when it was too cold and snowy to do much in the field. Then I'd have a relatively quiet spell when I could focus on next year's budget and work plan, and restore some order to my office after a busy field season.

But all that's gone now too. Today's field staff must be hardier (or perhaps just hungrier!) than those in the early years of NAP because they are now working through Michigan's cold and snowy winters. And our growing corps of Park Stewards seems to be equally hardy! To be fair, I suppose the main reason for the change is that as we've gotten better organized to wage war on this city's invasive species, we've decided that we can no longer afford to slow down in the winter. We've added a fall burn season that some years takes us into December. And we've moved up the spring burn season so it now starts in February, at least with our crew training and other preparations. We've also come to realize that winter is a great time to remove buckthorn and other woody invasives, especially in wetlands that would otherwise be pretty muddy to maneuver around in. Not to mention garlic mustard, periwinkle, and other herbaceous invaders that stay green year-round and thus make themselves vulnerable to chemical control at a time when the native flora is tucked away safely underground. The end result: winter is no longer a time to slow down and catch up on inside projects.

Not that I'm complaining, mind you — at least, not about the winter. I'm thrilled that we can go year-round at NAP and I don't need to send staff away to seek other employment for a few months. It's just a different pace that I'm still adjusting to, but I'll get there. It's not going to be so easy at home, however. These busy nights are still hard to get used to, and I've been working on it for 6 years now. I keep hoping that the time will come again when nighttime means drifting off into a carefree, rejuvenating slumber. But those of you with teen-agers tell me to not get my hopes up!

- David Borneman,  
*Natural Area Preservation Manager*

If you would prefer to receive your next newsletter via e-mail please call NAP.



**Parks & Recreation**  
CITY OF ANN ARBOR

### Natural Area Preservation

is a Division of the City of Ann Arbor  
Department of Parks and Recreation.

*The mission of the Natural Area  
Preservation Division is to protect  
and restore Ann Arbor's natural  
areas and to foster an environmental  
ethic among its citizens.*

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David Mifsud, *Herpetologist*

For up-to-date information on  
stewardship activities, call the  
"hotline" at 734.996.3266.

# Invasive Species Alert: Japanese knotweed *by Jason Tallant*

Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) is an introduced ornamental that is already a serious weed problem in much of the northeastern US, the Pacific Northwest, and the United Kingdom. Now, it is beginning to take hold in our city parks. Japanese knotweed has no specific habitat requirements but is most successful in moist, unshaded areas. This includes riverbanks, wetlands, roadsides, and disturbed areas. Existing isolated populations can be found near waterways in Gallup, Furstenberg, and Redbud Nature Areas. Although Japanese knotweed is fairly distinctive, proper identification is important to avoid mistaking it with similar native species.

An herbaceous perennial, knotweed grows in large, dense colonies often reaching heights of up to 3 meters. With its bamboo-like stems and broad, ovate (egg-shaped) leaves, this plant can be spotted well off the trail or intermingled with other species. During the months of August and September it has a densely packed arrangement of greenish-white flowers and abruptly cuspidate (terminating in a point) leaf tips that give certain proof to its identification.

Within two weeks of flowering, winged, 3-angled seeds will set and disperse via wind or other disturbance. However, seeds have been shown to be an insignificant mode of reproduction for Japanese knotweed. Its primary mode of proliferation is through rhizomes. Its extensive root system can grow as long as 20 meters. Rhizomes can fragment during stream bank erosion and then colonize downstream or they can be transferred directly with soil. This type of vegetative reproduction makes Japanese knotweed especially difficult to control.

Grubbing (digging out) can be an effective control technique for small, isolated populations, but is generally not recommended. Multiple cuttings during a single growing season can hinder Japanese knotweed's growth. The most effective control method is cutting followed by herbicide application. This is best done in the fall when the plant is translocating nutrients down to its rhizomes.



*Polygonum cuspidatum*  
Japanese Knotweed

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At the November 2002 Volunteer Appreciation Potluck many NAPpers joined together in song to celebrate our prescribed burn program. Barb Barton played guitar and Jason Tallant sang the part of Johnny Cash (with the rest of us singing chorus) in our version of:

## Ring of Fire

Leaves are a crispy thing  
When lit in a fiery ring  
NAP burns with wild desire  
We fell into a ring of fire

(Chorus)

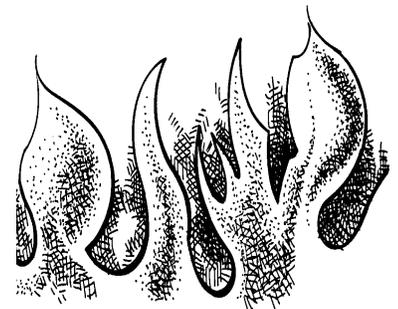
We fell into a burning ring of fire  
Dave went burn burn burn  
And the flames went higher  
And it burns burns burns  
Our prescribed fire  
Our prescribed fire

They say that fire is sweet  
Buckthorn we will defeat  
Where once a thicket grew  
Now there's trillium and meadow rue

(Chorus)

When the coals are pushed away  
We get set for another day  
In the face of all these weeds  
Burn to start the dormant seeds

(Chorus)



# Spring 2003 Natural Area Preservation Volunteer Stewardship Calendar



NAP is located at the Leslie Science Center (1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor, 48105). Our phone number is 734.996.3266. Workday orientation starts promptly at 10:00 am. A short nature walk will be held at the end of each workday, time permitting. Please wear pants and closed-toe shoes. Minors must either be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form.

## March



**March 5, Wednesday**  
**Native Landscaping Works!**  
**Leslie Science Center Nature House,**  
**7:00 to 9:00 pm**

Interested in native plants? Would you like to learn how to establish them in your yard? Then this workshop is for you! Topics will include site assessment and preparation, seed and plant selection, installation, and maintenance. Program fee: \$15. Please pre-register by calling NAP.

**March 13, Thursday**  
**Frog & Toad Walk**  
**7:00 to 9:00 pm**



Meet at the Leslie Science Center. Hear the calls of some wonderful nightlife with NAP Herpetologist David Mifsud. This tour is to help inventory volunteers with identification or for those interested in learning more. The van leaves promptly at 7:04, so don't be late! Please register by calling NAP.

**March 15, Saturday**  
**Dolph Nature Area**  
**10:00 am to 1:00 pm**



Meet in the parking lot off Wagner Road between Liberty Street and Jackson Road. Come help NAP remove invasive shrubs from around beautiful First and Second Sister Lakes and clear trails. Our efforts will aide bird surveyors later in the spring.

Many groups participate in NAP workdays, or arrange special workdays for their organization. Contact the NAP office if a group you are involved with is interested in planning a volunteer stewardship event.

**March 18, Tuesday**  
**Butterfly Survey Kick-off**  
**7:30 to 9:00 pm**



Leslie Science Center Nature House  
 Would you like to spend some time watching butterflies this year? If so, join us for our annual field survey! This required training will provide information about the survey, park assignments, and training walks. Registration by March 14 is required. Please call the NAP office to register or for more information.

**March 27, Thursday**  
**Frog and Toad Walk**  
**7:00 to 9:00 pm**



Meet at the Leslie Science Center. The van leaves promptly at 7:02, so don't be late! Please register by calling NAP.

**March 29, Saturday**  
**Cranbrook Park**  
**10:00 am to 1:00 pm**



Tired of trash in your city parks? Come on out and be part of the solution! Meet Cranbrook Park Steward Bruce Hubbard as we go through the park to pick up trash, tidy the trails, and remove some invasives. Join us at the Church of Christ parking lot at 2500 South Main Street.

**March 29, Saturday**  
**Marshall Nature Area**  
**10:00 am to 1:00 pm**



What's that nasty green stuff that is taking over the forest floor en masse? Garlic mustard and dame's rocket must be stopped and you can help! Join NAP for a fun afternoon of gratifying weeding. Meet in the parking lot off Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Road.

## April

**April 5, Saturday**  
**Redbud Nature Area**  
**10:00 am to 1:00 pm**



Garlic mustard and dame's rocket are just getting a foothold in this beautiful neighborhood park. Help us make sure it doesn't get a chance to takeover. Join us at the park entrance on Parkwood Avenue at Jeanne Street.

**April 12, Saturday**  
**Huron River Cleanup by Canoe**  
**10:00 am to 2:00 pm**



Help the Huron River by removing trash while canoeing. Please register with the coordinator of this event, David Fanslow, at 734.741.2353 or [dave.fanslow@noaa.gov](mailto:dave.fanslow@noaa.gov) as participation is limited.

**April 15, Tuesday**  
**Frog and Toad Walk**  
**7:00 to 9:00 pm**



Meet at the Leslie Science Center. The van leaves promptly at 7:04, so don't be late! Please register by calling NAP.

**April 17, Thursday**  
**Breeding Bird Survey Kickoff**  
**7:30 to 9:00 pm**



Leslie Science Center Nature House  
 This is the night you may sign up to cover your favorite park and pick up maps and instructions. NAP Ornithologist Dea Armstrong will also report on the 2002 data and survey highlights. Please register by April 11. Call the NAP office to register or for additional information.

**April 27, Sunday**  
**Leslie Woods Nature Area**  
10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Another opportunity to join NAP as we charge into the woods bent on the eradication of garlic mustard and dame's rocket. Come see what a beautiful place Leslie Woods is and help make it even better! Meet us at the park entrance at the north end of Upland Drive, off Plymouth.



**April 27, Sunday**  
**Furstenberg Native Plant Garden**  
10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Help Master Gardener and Park Steward Aunita Erskine with this spring cleaning workday. Botanical tour will be provided, time permitting. Meet at the Furstenberg Nature Area circle drive off Fuller Road.



**April 27, Sunday**  
**Ann Arbor's Farmer's Market**  
1:00 to 5:00 pm

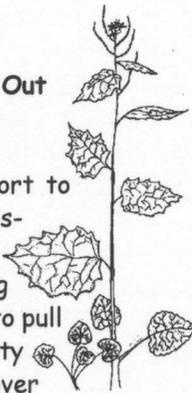
Earth Day exhibits, activities, and family entertainment. Hosted by the Earth Day Coalition: City of Ann Arbor, Ecology Center, UM Nichols Arboretum, and many others. For more information call 734.998.9541.



## May

**May 3, Saturday**  
**5th Annual**  
**Garlic Mustard Weed-Out**  
Three great locations!

10:00 am to 1:00 pm  
Join this citywide effort to stop invasive garlic mustard from taking over our natural areas! Young garlic mustard is easy to pull so this is a great activity for all ages. Last year over



a ton of garlic mustard was pulled. Choose from one of these locations:  
**Bird Hills Nature Area** - Meet at the park entrance on Bird Road between Newport and Huron River Drive. Additional parking is available in the Barton Dam parking lot.

**Black Pond Woods** - Meet at the Leslie Science Center parking lot, 1831 Traver Road.

**Cedar Bend Nature Area** - Meet at

the park entrance near the perennial gardens on Cedar Bend Drive, off Broadway.

**May 8, Thursday**  
**Dolph Nature Area Bird Walk**  
7:30 am

Meet in the parking lot off Wagner Road between Jackson and Liberty. Great chance to look for warblers and other migrants. This walk is for all levels of birders but beginners are especially welcome. Binoculars are nice but not essential. Leader: Dea Armstrong. Call NAP for more information.



**May 8, Thursday**  
**Frog and Toad walk**  
7:00 to 9:00 pm

Meet at the Leslie Science Center. The van leaves promptly at 7:04, so don't be late! Please register by calling NAP.



**May 16, Friday**  
**Gallup Park**  
**Furstenberg Nature Area**  
**Bird Walk, 6 pm**

This walk is for all levels of birders but beginners are especially welcome. Binoculars are nice but not essential. Meet at the Gallup Canoe Livery.



**May 17, Saturday**  
**Furstenberg Nature Area**  
10:00 am to 1:00 pm

This park is just too beautiful to let it succumb to dame's rocket. Meet us in the parking lot across from Huron High School on Fuller Road for a fun filled afternoon of feel-good work!



**May 18, Sunday**  
**Maryfield Wildwood Park**  
10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Help install native plant plugs and remove invasives. Join us at the intersection of Linwood and Wilton Streets.



**May 31, Saturday**  
**Gallup Park Butterfly Walk**  
9:30 to 11:30 am

Did you know that Gallup Park is home to 49 species of butterflies? Come join Entomologist Barb Barton and explore the many habitats in the park as she searches for butterflies. Participants will learn about the life cycle, habitat preferences, and life history for each species you find.



**May 31, Saturday**  
**Brown Park**

10:00 am to 1:00 pm  
More dame's rocket! If for some reason you haven't been able to make it to any of our other herbaceous weeding days, this is your chance! Come see the amazing amount of progress that NAP volunteers and staff have made in this park. Meet us at the parking lot off Packard Road, across from Easy Street.



## June

**June 7, Saturday**  
**Early Bird Walk at Gallup Park**  
7:30 to 9:30 am

Join City Ornithologist Dea Armstrong as she leads a walk to look for birds in the morning in Gallup Park and Furstenberg Nature Area. Meet at the Gallup Park dock across Fuller Road from Huron High School.



**June 7, Saturday**  
**Furstenberg Native Plant Garden**  
10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Help in the garden and learn a bit about native gardening. Your help at this workday will be enjoyed by hordes of park users. Botanical tour will be provided, time permitting. Meet at the circle drive at Furstenberg Nature Area off Fuller Road.



**June 7, Saturday**  
**Argo Nature Area**  
10:00 am to 1:00 pm

It's National Rivers and Trails Day! Join us in removing invasives and improving trails to protect the Huron River. Meet us in the parking lot north of the Argo Canoe Livery, off Longshore Drive.



# Park Steward Erudition

Welcome aboard new Stewards...

**John Heider** has been hanging around **Hansen Nature Area** for the past year, deciding to become a Steward after learning more about NAP and how he could help. He's a photojournalist (for the Northville Record), a writer, a kayaker, and a fly-fisher. He states that he "has pulled, cut, and heaved more buckthorn, honeysuckle, and privet than he cares to remember." He's lived in Ann Arbor for the last 16 years and notes that working in Hansen is a positive experience, which benefits the community and helps nature heal itself.

**Howard Krausse** found interest in photographing wildflowers and herbs when he moved into his home adjacent to **Miller Park**, in 1979. He would unwind by walking the trails after work (in the consumer electronics industry). During the past 23 years, he, "has witnessed Miller grow from an abandoned farm to the beautiful natural area it is today". He retired in 1999, "but my dog, Isabel, insists that I take my Park Steward job seriously and inspect the trails daily!"

**Peggy Rabhi** has been active in the Children's Wet Meadow Project at Buhr Park with her children and other graduates and friends of Blossom Home Preschool.

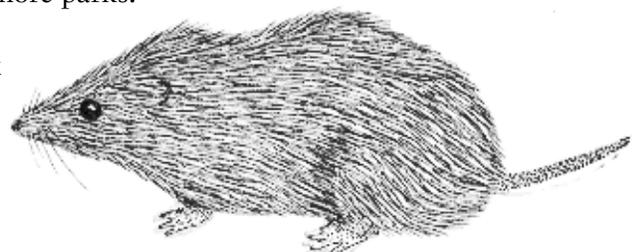
Getting involved with stewardship of **Leslie Woods Nature Area** seemed like the logical "next step" after watching her kids eagerly care for Mallets Creek as part of the Adopt-a-Stream program. Now that the kids are older, they carry their concerns for the environment to the neighborhood next to Leslie Woods. For Peggy it meshed well with her desires to foster a closer neighborhood community. She hopes to organize and inspire others who live near or use the woods to join the fun during work projects. For her, stewardship helps the local environment while creating bonds with neighbors through work and fun.

**Jessie Wood** has lived in Ann Arbor for 14 yrs, and is an Airline Pilot by trade. First becoming involved with the **Redbud** property in 1997 or so, during the beginning defensive effort that ultimately saved the property from residential development. Jessie states, "I've always felt that it is an individual's civic duty to perform volunteer community work. As I love being outdoors, particularly among nature, the opportunity to serve my community as a Park Steward has dovetailed many of my personal interests and values. I have found the experience of working as a Park Steward to be both physically satisfying and emotionally rewarding. I wholeheartedly recommend the experience of Park Steward to all."

## Volunteers Wanted!

We've had significant increases in volunteer efforts in the past year (as well as over the history of NAP), but we would love more! If you're interested in any volunteer tidbits in this newsletter (or the items below) contact Jason.

- **GPS** - NAP needs help modernizing all of our maps! If you are interested in GPSing for us in Maryfield Wildwood, Molin, Pioneer Woods, Saginaw Forest, Thurston, and Traverwood Nature Areas, please call Maggie at the office.
- **Garden Steward** - We presently need someone to help look after the NAP Native Plant Demonstration Garden (at the Leslie Science Center). If you love gardening, this is a great little spot to care for.
- **Natural Features Inventory** - See the Stewardship Calendar for kickoff and survey walk dates.
- **Park Steward** - A growing group that we would love to continue expanding.
- **Photo Monitoring** - It would be great to have volunteers covering more parks.
- **Stewardship Workdays** - As always, most of NAP's volunteer work is accomplished at workdays. Come out and visit with NAP Crew and volunteers.



# NAPpenings

Thank You...

- ❖ **Arbor Farms** for donating a case of natural soda for NAP's volunteer appreciation potluck.
- ❖ **People's Food Co-op** for donating a load of vegetables, corn chips, and hummus for our volunteer appreciation potluck.

The Park Stewards received a **Community Service Award from the Michigan Recreation and Park Association!** Their combined 800 hours of service to Ann Arbor's parks, as well as the assistance they have given to NAP, the Parks Department, the City, and other park users is an inspiration. We all owe you a much-deserved pat on the back, thank you!

Tired of winter? Ready to start thinking about spring and wildflowers? Don't miss the **16th Annual Michigan Wildflower Conference** in Lansing on Sunday and Monday - March 2nd and 3rd. There will be lots of talks on native landscaping, invasive plants, and wildflowers in general. On Monday afternoon, NAP's Dave Borneman will convene a panel addressing "The Use of Prescribed Burning as a Management Tool". For more information check out the website at [www.wildflowersmich.org](http://www.wildflowersmich.org) or call Marilyn Case, Registrar, at 517.630.8546.

**Dolph Nature Area To Grow!** Thanks to a \$688,000 grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, an additional 18.2 acres surrounding Second Sister Lake will soon be added to the 57.5-acre park. This will protect the remaining undeveloped land surrounding Second Sister, and provide for a trail connection between Dolph and Lakewood Nature Areas. It will also greatly increase access to Second Sister Lake and provide access to Dolph from Liberty Road.

On November 5, 2002, 72% of Ann Arborites who went to the polls voted to approve the 4-year **Park Repair and Restoration Millage**. Virtually the entire NAP operation is funded by this millage (approved again at the .4725 mil rate - the same rate approved in 1997). The funds it generates will allow us to continue providing ecological stewardship for the City's still-growing park system. We'll now be able to expand our restoration efforts into some new areas we couldn't get to in the past.

# Staff Updates

Changes...

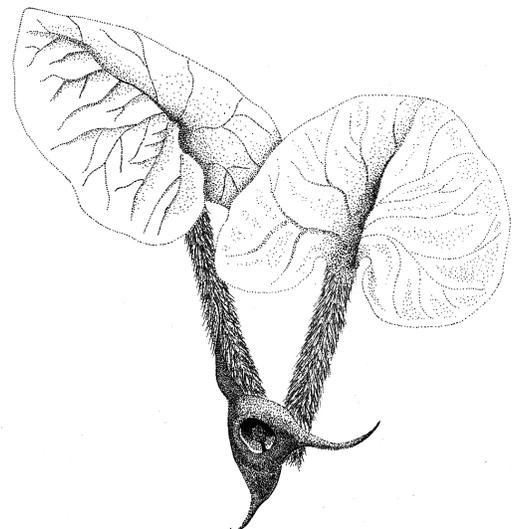


After almost 9 years with NAP, **Bev Walters** is now the Assistant Supervisor. In addition to her botanical duties she is also helping to supervise NAP staff and coordinate their activities. Congrats Bev!

Volunteers...



**Intern: Melinda "Mindy" Brenton** is currently completing her last semester in the School of Natural Resource and Environment, where she has enjoyed many classes. This past October she and her dog backpacked in West Virginia at Dolly Sods, in New Mexico at Gila Wilderness and also in Arizona at Saguaro National Park. She has also I worked as a white-water rafting guide in West Virginia on the New and Gauley Rivers and sea kayak guide and naturalist in Alaska, "where I hope to live there someday". She notes, "I love and respect the wilderness and I try my best to understand as much as I can about it and the things that live in it."



# Middle Ground *by Bev Walters*

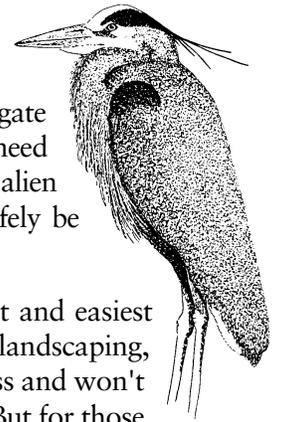
With winter winding down my thoughts are turning to the green of spring. These musings are being fueled by a flood of seed and plant catalogues coming to my house. I search for plants that are botanically interesting, hardy in Michigan, and unlikely to become invasive. Since NAP supports using native plants in landscaping, at times I've felt twinges of guilt for pursuing my passion to grow unusual plant species. Upon further thought, I realized the vast majority of plants in the nursery trade behave decently and will only grow well if pampered in a garden setting. Because a few can jump the fence and threaten the plant diversity in our natural areas is not an adequate reason to ban *all* alien species from cultivation.

I was recently dismayed when I came across a seed exchange that was offering dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) seed that had been wild collected in Michigan! This species is a garden escapee that is highly competitive with native woodland wildflowers, so it was disturbing to find it being trafficked among gardeners — with total disregard to its invasive qualities. In contrast, I've encountered native plant enthusiasts who seem to think it's immoral to cultivate a non-native plant. There needs to be a balance between the two extremes in landscaping attitudes because neither camp is going away soon. Gardeners and plant nursery folks should learn more about invasive

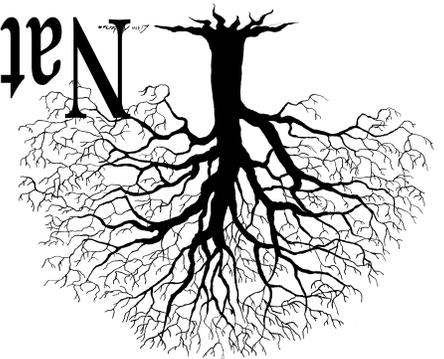
species and not introduce or propagate them. And native plant enthusiasts need to be aware that the vast majority of alien species are not invasive and can safely be grown in a garden setting.

Of course, for most people it's best and easiest to just use native plant species in landscaping, since they tend to thrive with no fuss and won't adversely impact the environment. But for those committed gardeners who get a thrill from growing more exotic plants, here are a few tips that should be used to avoid introducing a new invasive species:

- Don't grow alien plants with fruit that's bird-dispersed.
- If your garden is near a natural area, check to see if any non-natives from your garden are escaping, especially if they are prolific seeders. If so, get rid of that species from both the natural area and your garden.
- Learn about and avoid species that are known to be invasive - the internet has lots of information.
- Avoid plants that are promoted as "easy to grow in any soil" and instead select plants that are more challenging to keep in cultivation.
- Keep plants that spread vegetatively away from natural areas and bag any clippings.



# Natural Area Preservation News



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