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News and Views from the Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society • Spring 2012

full color. It depicts a lovely summer day with puffy clouds hovering over a homestead where a woman and two young daughters have cut flowers from the prairie that literally surrounds the entire scene. The woman and a daughter stand holding bouquets in their hands, while the other daughter down near the ground gathers more flowers from the prairie. Might that splash of deep blue at the feet of the woman be prairie gentian, *Gentiana puberulenta*? For me it is!

While researching for this article, I came across an internet blog where a fellow was describing what he sees in this painting. He mentions the buildings being nothing more than shacks, but the woman standing tall and proud reminds him that life is a struggle even in such a paradise. That homesteading was a

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The Lost Garden

Lee A. Casebere, DNR, Division of Nature Preserves

Girdling the old oak to squeeze one last crop out of the barnyard has the same finality as burning the furniture to keep warm.

—Aldo Leopold, "Deadening,"
from *A Sand County Almanac* (1949)

I don't recall when or where I first saw it, but I have always admired a painting by Harvey Dunn (1884-1952) called "The Prairie Is My Garden." It seems like I saw it in an article in *Audubon* magazine about prairies or landscape artwork. I also recall seeing prints of it for sale years ago at Wall Drug in South Dakota, which makes sense since Dunn is considered an artist laureate of that state. He depicted scenes of pioneer life on the prairies from his first-hand knowledge of having grown up on a homestead farm in eastern South Dakota in the late 1800s. This particular piece is so greatly admired by South Dakota residents that it is thought of as the unofficial state painting. Interestingly, Harvey Dunn was a contemporary of Laura Ingalls Wilder of *Little House on the Prairie* fame. Their families lived in the same area of the state and knew each other—two great artisans of pioneer prairie life, writer and painter, grew up within miles of each other!

Somehow, I had a feeling that I'd end up with a replica of that painting some day. A modest-sized print of it is now in my possession, a gift from my wife for Christmas, and it has joined a host of other art prints and photos on my already crowded walls. Do a Google search to see the painting in

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Indiana Native Plant & Wildflower Society

INPAWS JOURNAL is published quarterly for members of the Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society. Material may be reprinted with the permission of the editor.

All are invited to submit articles, news items, and event postings of interest to our membership. Acceptance for publication is at the discretion of the editor. INPAWS welcomes opposing viewpoints.

Please submit text and photos via e-mail to journal@inpaws.org or via land mail to INPAWS JOURNAL, 5304 Carrollton Avenue, Indianapolis IN 46220.

Submission deadlines for specific issues are as follows:

Spring
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Summer
May 23 for July 1 mailing

Autumn
August 23 for October 1 mailing

Winter
November 23 for January 1 mailing

INPAWS Mission

To promote the appreciation, preservation, conservation, utilization and scientific study of the flora native to Indiana and to educate the public about the value, beauty, diversity, and environmental importance of indigenous vegetation.

Membership

INPAWS is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization open to the public. For membership information, visit www.inpaws.org.

News and Views

Information to be shared with INPAWS members may be directed to webmaster@inpaws.org.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Moving Forward

I am always impressed with the plant knowledge, the dedication, and the energy of INPAWS volunteers. In its fairly short history, INPAWS has earned a strong reputation among those who know us. As your new INPAWS President, I look forward to guiding this organization to new accomplishments.

Immediate Past President Tom Hohman is a hard act to follow. Tom's boundless energy for INPAWS, his seeming acquaintance with every current and potential plant nerd in the state, and his cheerful eloquence have accomplished a lot. INPAWS is on sound financial footing, with money in the bank. In fact, we have given thousands of dollars in grants to deserving organizations that advance our mission of preserving, appreciating, and using the native plants of Indiana, and educating the public about them. Our recent grantees have included high school environment classes sampling water quality and native riparian plants; land-trusts putting together financing to buy uniquely valuable natural areas for protection and stewardship; outdoor education opportunities for young children; and much more. We have also brought Professor Doug Tallamy to Indiana for lectures and tours which have helped hundreds of people to "get it" about native plants.

Tom has also worked tirelessly to support and reorganize existing chapters of INPAWS, to propagate new ones in other regions of our state, and to reach out to new potential partner organizations. All in all, he leave big shoes to fill.

I have a few priorities as my term begins. One is to carry on the outreach to new partner organizations, so as to spread the enthusiasm for our native flora. Another is to keep open lines of communication and mutual support among our many volunteer leaders, as INPAWS grows in numbers and in ambitions. As we grow, another priority must be to update and strengthen our policies, procedures, and governance.

Lastly, I would like to encourage more frequent active participation by all of our members. I invite you to join one or more of Mike Homoya's excellent guided hikes this year, come to our Plant Sale (bring your checkbook!), attend the Garden Tour and the Annual Conference, and participate in your local INPAWS chapter.

Here's to a great year! *—Art Hopkins*

INPAWS PARTNERS

Hoosier Environmental Council

The Hoosier Environmental Council is passionate about being Indiana's leading educator and advocate for environmental issues and policies.

The Council aims to set a new path for Indiana, a path where people embrace practices and policies that dramatically reduce the footprint of industry, commerce, and agriculture on the environment for the benefit of public health, economic well-being, and the preservation of nature for generations to come.

HEC has made significant progress in protecting forests, groundwater, and lakes throughout the state, yet *Forbes* magazine ranks Indiana the 49th greenest state!

Rather than pointing fingers at those responsible, HEC directs its energies to finding new solutions and alternatives, using the tools of education and advocacy built on a foundation of good science and economics. Their goal is to make Indiana a better place to live, breathe, work, and play.

INPAWS members interested in green energy, transportation, sustainable food and agriculture, clean water, global warming, open spaces, and/or a healthy environment will find the HEC website a useful resource. Each issue is defined in the context of Indiana, the HEC position is stated, including opposing voices, and guidance is given on how to take action and which resources to explore.

Visit the Hoosier Environmental Council at www.hecweb.org.

Photo courtesy of ecodaddyo.com

The Lost Garden

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struggle is a certainty. I agree with the blogger about seeing pride in the woman's face and stature, and the whole scene speaks to the strength and determination required by the homesteaders on the prairie. But knowing what I do about natural history, it also speaks to me about loss and missed opportunities, especially here in Indiana where the loss of our prairies was nearly complete. In the Dakotas where this painting is set, there are still thousands of acres of never-plowed short-grass and mid-grass prairies. The eastern tallgrass prairies didn't fare so well.

At the time Indiana was settled, about three million acres were prairie, mostly concentrated in the northwestern corner of the state. In a few short decades, from the mid and late 1800s into the early 1900s, our ancestors managed to eliminate it all—a veritable lost garden of three million acres. The fertility of their deep, black loam sealed the fate of the prairies. Their soils were (and are still) among the finest farmland in the country, in the whole world for that matter. Unfortunately, our utilitarian viewpoint left no room for sentimental attachments to the wilderness and natural landscapes from which our ancestors molded their lives.

Off and on through the years, I've searched for writings about the prairies in Indiana in the early days of settlement, but there is little available. That is especially true of writings that describe what species of plants the pioneers were finding in our prairies. States further west that were settled later seem to have somewhat better written descriptions of the landscapes that were originally there, and better records of their fate as progress plowed its way westward. Despite the overall dearth of information about our prairies, I've managed to find some interesting comments, including a few that mention loss.

Here's a quote from *A Standard History of White County*, Vol. 1, published in 1915. It doesn't directly discuss loss, but implies it since it speaks of the prairie in the past tense. It also speaks of the paririe's beauty:

Those who ventured out to the prairie's edge were well rewarded at the opening of spring when Nature put forth her mantle of green and the prairie became a great flower garden...in full bloom, it presented a picture worthy of the greatest of painters to depict.

Here's another quote, this from *History of La Porte County* published in 1880, that clearly mentions loss:

Now both timber and prairie are largely under cultivation or pasturage, and bluegrass, white clover and a large number of introduced weeds from the East have taken the place of the original flora. Industrially, this change is a very great gain, but poetically it is as great a loss.

I've always found this passage intriguing. It equates the loss to the "very great gain." The writer doesn't say "bummer" or "too bad the loss doesn't measure up to the gain." He says "it is as great a loss"—strong words coming from someone living in the midst of a Manifest Destiny mentality in the 1800s. And what about the use of the word "poetically?" It's an odd choice, showing obvious sentimentality and an artsy viewpoint that probably held little sway in an age of rampant economic, agricultural, and industrial expansion.

This whole quote is telling because it indicates a twinge of remorse regarding how much we were changing the landscape. I'm happily impressed to note that twinge.

***Liatris scariosa nieuwlandii* at Cressmoor Prairie. Photo by Keith Board.**

Here's a quote from historian Timothy Ball regarding Lake County, written in the late 1800s:

But now all is changed except the contour of the ground.... The appearance of the prairie of 1872 is vastly unlike that of 1834. Farms and neat residences dot it all over now. It was in its native wildness and beauty then.

His comment that "all is changed except the contour of the ground" is especially interesting since it appears that he understands that a prairie without its flora is no prairie at all. Many individuals, both then and now, don't seem to make that connection.

And here's one more quote I found among notes in my files taken from books with an Indiana connection, but I didn't indicate its origin. I assume it is from an Indiana source but can't say for sure:

...to raise flowers, when the landscape round him teemed in summer with flowers of every hue and color, he thought to be a useless and needless occupation.

Those words nicely bring us back to the sentiment expressed in the title of Harvey Dunn's painting—"The Prairie Is My Garden." The prairie was an enormous, incredibly diverse and beautiful garden, yet we didn't find a way to preserve some large, representative examples of that facet of our Indiana heritage. When the prairies were first being plowed, three million acres probably seemed like they couldn't possibly be completely conquered. And even as they began to shrink, folks probably couldn't conceive that the prairies would be gone in a few short decades.

Thinking about it now, you have to wonder why we couldn't have found a way to save several thousand acres. After all, we managed to preserve remnant woodlots containing nice examples of the original flora and character of the vast eastern deciduous forest. They exist yet today as twenty-, forty-, and sixty-acre woodlots scattered throughout the state. But not the prairies. Imagine how incredible it would be if, in the prairie regions of Indiana, remnant prairie hay meadows or lightly grazed prairie pastures existed in the sizes and numbers as do the woodlots in the forested parts of the state.

In the decades since our prairies were destroyed, we have established farmland set-aside programs that leave thousands of acres of land unsown in any given year, suggesting that our rush to create tillable acres was over-zealous. Having a few sizeable prairie remnants in Indiana today would provide us with sites of important historical and biological significance, and would contribute to some level of local tourism. I'd wager that most modern-day Hoosiers don't realize that prairies were a significant part of our natural history. Many would enjoy the opportunity to stroll through a flowery grassland Eden reminiscent of that heritage. Many would decry a wasted resource. What values do you hold dear?

I sometimes wonder what the farmers, townsfolk, merchants, Sunday-morning church goers, liar's benches, and social gatherings of the day talked about back in the 1800s? Did the community openly regret or challenge the destruction that was taking place? Did anyone talk about what might be done to save some of the prairie? If the subject came up, did you have to be reminded that there was nothing that could be done? Did it go without saying that discussing it was taboo or heresy?

Those who know me well know that Aldo Leopold is one of my favorite conservationists.

His writings and philosophies form the basis for many of my own convictions, and I refer to his writings often. Leopold was a utilitarian, but a restrained one. He was trained and worked as a forester, a utilitarian endeavor, and is often considered the father of the profession of wildlife management. He was an avid hunter, another utilitarian pursuit. But he was also a founder of The Wilderness Society, and he fought to save the virgin forests in the Porcupine Mountains of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, a pursuit that seems contradictory to his forestry background. Here is a quote from this fellow of seemingly contrasting conservation principles, the utilitarian and preservationist:

Sometimes I think that ideas, like men, can become dictators. We Americans have so far escaped regimentation by our rulers, but have we escaped regimentation by our own ideas? I doubt that there exists today a more complete regimentation of the human mind than that accomplished by our self-imposed doctrine of ruthless utilitarianism. The saving grace of democracy is that we fastened this yoke to our own necks, and we can cast it off when we want to without severing the neck. Conservation is perhaps one of the many squirmings which foreshadow this act of self-liberation.

—"The Farmer as Conservationist" (1939) from *The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold*, edited by Susan L. Flader and J. Baird Callicott (1991)

Our society is still not comfortable casting off the doctrine of ruthless utilitarianism. We have made some improvements in that regard, but not soon enough for us to save any really large remnants of open prairie in Indiana. In spite of that, most of Indiana's prairie flora and some of its fauna survives today in some smaller-sized remnants. Many of these are within the context of other associated natural communities with prairie-like floras such as oak savannas, barrens, prairie fens, and sedge marshes. Protected examples of many of these communities are preserved by public agencies and private land trusts that make it their business to save small examples of the original Indiana for future generations. Thank goodness for that! Prairies, though, are wide open communities, and here in Indiana, there are very few remnant prairies that give one a sense of the openness and vastness of the prairie landscape. None allow you to stand in the midst of a throng of brilliantly colored wildflowers and look off to the horizon in every direction. Referring back to the Leopold quote at the beginning of this article, in a sense, we have girdled the old oak to squeeze one last crop from the barnyard.

Let me leave you with some final thoughts on Harvey Dunn's painting. I really like its beautiful historical depiction of a scene from the lives of homesteaders on the North American prairie. It shows that even in the hard-scrabble lives of prairie pioneers there was room for native wildflower bouquets to soften the rough edges of a challenging lifestyle.

On a deeper level, it is meaningful to me because it represents both the accomplishment and the potential loss achieved through the methodical, relentless application of single-minded determination. It reminds me of my disappointment in our ancestors' failure to preserve more of Indiana's natural features and to implement practices that would have more favorably benefitted our lands and waters. It also reminds me that our society might be served well to use thoughtful restraint in how we structure and implement our ideas, and in how we measure and judge our accomplishments. We can't undo the past, but we can do better as we move forward. I get all that from Dunn's lovely painting—guess I know too much about the lost garden.

***Asclepias sullivantii* with Hummingbird Moth. Photo by Keith Board.**

On a more positive note, there are a couple of sites in Lake County where you can go to observe the beauty and diversity of Indiana's prairies. Both are small but very open with little woody vegetation to limit the mind's concept of what a prairie should look like.

The smaller of the two is German Methodist Cemetery Prairie, yet it may be the most diverse and most beautiful, with over 100 species of plants crammed onto its one little acre. It is simply breathtaking to see in mid-May when shooting star, prairie phlox, hoary puccoon, and cream wild indigo are in flower. In the fall, prairie gentian (my vision for the splash of deep blue in Dunn's painting) makes a brilliant blue autumn sky look dull by comparison. The dominant grass is prairie dropseed, indicative of the great quality of the site. Despite the size of this little remnant, if you squint your eyes and use your imagination, you can envision the majesty of the original prairie wilderness reaching out to the horizon. To see it for yourself, from the intersection of U.S. 41 and State Route 2 west of Lowell, drive north about four miles to the cemetery on the right (east) side of the highway. The preserve is in the rear of the cemetery. The perimeter of the prairie is fenced, and due to the sensitive nature of this small site, please observe it only from outside the fence looking in. This site is now owned by the DNR Division of Nature Preserves, having been recently transferred from The Nature Conservancy.

Another fine prairie in Lake County is Cressmoor Prairie owned by Shirley Heinze Land Trust. This preserve is thirty-eight acres with over 200 species of plants. It is home to some of our most wonderful prairie gems including, once again, cream wild indigo and prairie gentian. Other niceties include such conservative specialties as Sullivant's milkweed, short green milkweed, Bicknell's sedge, and Leiberg's panic grass. There is a theme here—high quality prairies represent wonderful collections of prairie plants. Unlike German Methodist, Cressmoor Prairie has a parking lot and trails, so when you visit, you can wander through the prairie garden. For more information about this site, including directions to find it, visit www.heinzetrust.org/Nature/CressmoorPrairie.aspx.

These sites may be small, but they contain wonderfully rich assemblages of the original prairie flora, something that is missing from many larger sites that show the results of over-grazing or other disturbances. Larger preserves such as Goose Lake Prairie and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Illinois, or Konza Prairie in Kansas, are certainly worth visiting for a landscape-scale perspective of what prairie is all about. But few of the larger sites have a prairie flora as rich and as beautiful per square yard as those at German Methodist Cemetery Prairie and Cressmoor Prairie.

If you are a prairie enthusiast, do yourself a favor and drop in to see these small Indiana prairies if you haven't already. These gardens are not lost!

Lee Casebere has worked for the DNR, Division of Nature Preserves, since 1980, applying his interests in botany, zoology, natural communities, and natural area management. Lee is a charter member of INPAWS and has served on its Council.

Sharp-Lobed Hepatica
Hepatica acutiloba

Gene Bush
Munchkin Nursery

Low expectations usually accompany Midwestern gardeners when they go for a walk in winter. Cold wet winds, perhaps some lingering snow in the north and east shadows, do not usually conjure up vivid visions of flowering perennials. While there certainly is not an abundance of bloom in late February and early March as in mid-May, there are fully opened flowers to be found in native woods and gardens. Bundling up for a winter walk can be rewarding.

***Hepatica acutiloba*. Photo by the author.**

The name of our local native hepatica has been recently changed to *H. nobilis* variety *acuta*. The older wildflower guides list *H. acutiloba* and *H. americana*. Now both are under *H. nobilis* as *H*. var. *acuta* and *H*. var. *obtusa*. For me, *Hepatica nobilis* was the European species, so it is going to take a while for my old brain to make the transition.

According to the doctrine of signatures, God or nature has placed a plant into the natural world for each illness of man. Those plants can often be recognized by their shapes, which resemble parts of human anatomy. Hepatica has leaves the shape of a human liver, thus the name "liverlobe." Around the late 1800s, collecting of hepatica as an herb for medicinal purposes exceeded 450,000 pounds in a single year. I can remember my father taking his spoon of dark brown liquid from a patent medicine bottle that had hepatica both in the name and the contents. The fact that many of the patent medicines contained a high percentage of alcohol may have helped as much as or more than the herbal remedy it carried.

The sharp-lobed hepatica (*H. nobilis acuta*) is the species I find closest to my home. Within walking distance of my garden is the Blue River with its limestone bluffs. All along those rock ledges can be found colonies of very old plants, usually in pockets of leafmold over rocky soil. I have seen a few growing beneath sheets of moss on large boulders. The prevailing color of bloom seems to be white, but on occasion lavender-blue will be seen. When watching for nice color forms, pay particular attention to the stamens. On occasion

Welcome New INPAWS Members

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ILLINOIS
Chip O'Leary

the stamens will be a contrasting color to the sepals. Blooming period is from late February to mid-March and well into April.

The flowers are actually composed of showy, three-quarter inch sepals that appear as petals. Stems are quite hairy and the fuzz is very apparent on new stems. Flower stems reach from four to about eight inches in height. Foliage is evergreen on hepatica, but very tattered by bloom time. (In late fall and early winter the foliage will turn bronze, adding to their show.) Just as blooms fully appear, the new, softly hairy leaves unfold. The amount and pattern of mottling in hepatica foliage will vary from plant to plant, just as the bloom color varies. I have seen leaves with such a high degree of mottling that I would grow the plant if it never bloomed.

The soil in my garden ranges in pH from neutral to slightly acidic over limestone. Most of my hepatica are growing in raised beds containing a high percentage of compost and leafmold. All are located in the midst of shrub and tree root competition. I have noticed over the years that seed has gotten around a bit. I am now finding hepatica in the richer soils of the shade garden. The only care I give my plants is chopped leaf mulch each fall. All plants have a north and easterly exposure from the north side of a hill.

I have *Trillium nivale* as a companion to my sharp-lobed hepatica. Sometimes they will bloom together, other times the hepatica blooms just a bit later than the trillium. When the dwarf snow trillium goes dormant, hepatica foliage will persist the remaining seasons. Trout lilies, or *Erythronium*, are also favorite companions for both flower and foliage.

Gene Bush grows and sells ornamental shade plants, including many natives, in southern Indiana. Follow his blog at www.munchkinnursery.com.

This Spring—Head For the Hills!

Nancy Hill, Next INPAWS Journal Editor

I've enjoyed dozens of wildflower hikes and talks over the years, but nothing compares to the Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage in the Smoky Mountains. It is so wonderful, so rich in quality and volume of species in the natural world, I'm continually amazed that it doesn't sell out overnight.

This annual event, now in its 62nd year, is staged in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, at the end of every April. This year's dates are April 25 to 28. All walks and hikes are within the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. For the pittance of $75, you can choose from over 150 programs—talks, demonstrations, instructional walks and guided hikes. There is something for everyone, whether you're interested in wildflowers, trees, ferns, mosses, birds, bats, bugs, reptiles, or amphibians. There are also programs that focus on the early settlers in the area and the indigenous people and their use of native plants. The walks/programs range from 90 minutes to all-day. There are hikes to challenge the mountain goats among us and those who like a gentle one-mile stroll, or no walk at all.

The faculty for these programs reads like a national *Who's Who*: emeritus professors of botany and biology, foresters, park rangers, horticulturists, photographers, ecologists, wetland scientists, and authors. One of my all-time favorite programs was a morning walk led by world renowned fern expert Murray Evans. He was fun and informative, yet clear, and I learned more about Midwestern ferns than before or since.

INPAWS' own Karen LaMere, Fritz Nerding, and Roger Hedge are all leading walks at this year's pilgrimage.

I have gone to the pilgrimage six times. This year will be my seventh. I have tons of memories—entire hillsides covered with white fringed phacelia (*Phacelia fimbriata*, a relative of Indiana's *Phacelia purshii*, or Miami mist) on a section of the Appalachian Trail, patches of fire pink (*Silene virginica*) on the banks along the roads, the rare yellow lady's-slipper hidden just off a trail (the word quietly passed of exactly where).

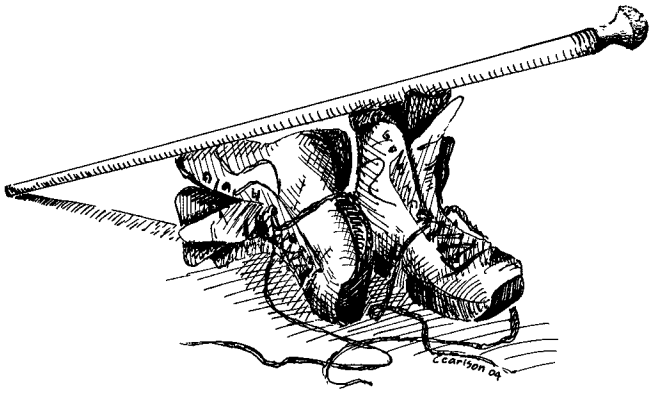
On a half-day walk around Greenbriar, we saw 71 species of plants, ferns, and shrubs. Many of the species in the park are decidedly Appalachian, but there are many Indiana natives out just a bit sooner and more plentifully than back home. On a birding motorcade I learned the calls of the Black-throated Green Warbler (zee-zee-zee-zu-zee) and the Parula Warbler (the "zipper bird"). One evening I had the opportunity to actually hear the sound of bats via an instrument that tuned down their high sonic pitch.

One trail had dozens of mature sourwood trees (*Oxydendrum arboretum*) and I later, after tasting its delicious flavor, bought sourwood honey. You can buy native plants from a variety of local vendors who exhibit inside the Gatlinburg convention center, where there are also many more vendors selling books and outdoor gear. The pilgrimage has one of the best T-shirts ever!

The week is well-organized. They've had plenty of practice. Some walks start in Gatlinburg with a free shuttle into the park. For others, you drive to a meeting point within the park. Gatlinburg is rich with reasonable accommodation, restaurants, and grocery stores for brown-bagging it.

For a detailed list of programs, leaders, and online registration information, visit www.springwildflowerpilgrimage.org.

Nancy Hill is a past president of INPAWS, a Master Gardener and amateur naturalist. She spends her time in Indianapolis and a cabin in rural Owen County.



Drawing by Chris Carlson in R.A. Ingraham, *Swimming with Frogs*.

A pebble drops into a pond. The water ripples in concentric circles for a moment…then smoothes over again, leaving not a trace. A life can be like that. But occasionally you encounter someone who makes a splash that will linger long after he's gone.

Mr. Donovan

I first met Donovan Miller when he was newly retired and active in INPAWS as the chair of the Youth Outreach Committee. We collaborated on a brochure publicizing INPAWS' latest initiative, Letha's Youth Outdoors Fund, in honor of Indiana's "wildflower lady," Letha Queisser.

Quite obviously, Donovan and kids belonged together, as Donovan in retirement got in touch with his inner child, often dressing up as the Indiana State Museum's cardinal mascot to entertain the children on Earth Day and such.

Retirement also brought more time for putting hands to the soil, harkening back to Donovan's Mennonite childhood on a farm in Goshen, Indiana. He took Master Gardener training with the Marion County Purdue Extension Office and, needing to put in 40 hours of community service, landed at the Marian University EcoLab in Indianapolis, where he worked with outreach coordinator Jody Nicholson to maintain their woodland and wetland and learn all he could about Indiana native plants.

While collecting his MG service hours at the EcoLab, Donovan got wind of the City's environmental studies magnet school right next door and was curious. He wandered over to see what Cold Spring School was all about and discovered they were educating elementary school students from all around Indianapolis—many from disadvantaged backgrounds with little exposure to nature—in a building situated on 39 acres in the same White River watershed and ecosystem as the EcoLab.

Drawn to a 20 x 30 ft glass house behind the main school building, he peeked inside and saw its long metal tables vacant, suggesting the Greenhouse was not in use. It was love at first sight! Would it be okay if he gave the Greenhouse a little use? he inquired. The powers that be said that would be fine.

The Greenhouse had been built in the 1970s when Cold Spring School housed a special education program serving retarded or multiply handicapped students, ages 5 to 18, but that program had been phased out years ago. There was no telling how long the Greenhouse had been neglected.

Donovan wasted no time putting it back into service. He began by bringing over his many houseplants to overwinter. Then he invented projects to do with the children of the school—rooting cuttings from the houseplants, lessons on plant care, composting, how to get good soil, etc. The Greenhouse became his "playpen" as he described it, and he was never happier than when tending his flock of plants and students under glass.

He managed to rope me into a project at Cold Spring too, a native plant demonstration garden, and my association with others volunteering at the school morphed into fullfeldged enthusiasm and the start of Friends of Cold Spring School, Inc., dreaming big dreams of "a premier environmental studies magnet for Indianapolis, a premier model of environmental education for Indiana."

All the while, Donovan was at play in the Greenhouse. He was gifted with a prairie planting mix from Cardno JF New, and starting those seeds became a project with the children. Groups of five or six kids at a time came to the glass house to fill flats with soil, scatter seeds, and water them in. Adult volunteers Robert Yahara and Michael Harris were often present to attain the optimum ratio of one adult per three children. Donovan established his own unique relationship to these inner city children; they respected him and called him "Mister Donovan."

The prairie mix seeds germinated and thrived in the balmy Greenhouse climate, soon filling the flats to capacity. What to do? It wasn't time to plant outside yet, so Donovan and kids set about sorting the seedlings that looked alike and planted them in separate flats, in most cases not knowing what species each set of seedlings was. Recalling scenes of the Sorcerer's Apprentice, flats of prairie seedlings grew apace, soon covering the Greenhouse tables in quantities threatening to go out of control.

In time, seedlings became young plants, so that their leaves could be matched to pages in native plant field guides, and their identities began to reveal themselves. As springtime unfolded, flats upon flats of prairie natives were "grown on" to the plug stage, their 4" tall pots enabling them to develop their naturally deep roots.

Remembered

What to do with so many plants? No solution but to plant a prairie! A site was duly scoped out on the hillside surrounding the Greenhouse, and into the ground went the hundreds of plugs, planted by fourth graders and their teachers.

The next year, the idea was hatched of staging a student plant sale, where the children could take plants from seed to sale, with all the lessons on growing, publicizing, pricing, and accounting that this process implied. The plan was to grow as many plants as there were children—bedding annuals, tomatoes, peppers, and such—but of course, who would want to waste any seeds, so the result was probably more like ten times the number of children!

In the end, there were way more plants than customers for the sale, but the experience was invaluable for adults and children alike. Half the proceeds went back to the individual classrooms as discretionary funds, the other half to the school to buy supplies for next year's plant sale. Luckily, Harshman Middle School just happened to be building a community garden on the last day of school, so the flats of unsold plants served to populate their raised vegetable beds, decorated huge concrete pots in front of the school, and were carried home in the nurturing hands of junior high kids.

The circles of effort thus initiated by Donovan kept expanding, taking in INPAWS and Letha's Fund, the children and teachers and volunteers of Cold Spring School, and a whole other project I learned of only lately: maintaining the Turner Prairie Garden at Indiana State Museum.

Then came another circle, one that emerged after Donovan announced he had lung cancer and would not survive. Brave man that he was, he drew friends and family into relationship, not just to take over duties that Donovan had to give up or to lend a hand to his wife Barbara and daughter Shawndra as his health began to fail, but also to share his journey.

Sitting around a campfire in Donovan's backyard, we told stories and got to know each other, so as to be able to support each other when the time would come to grieve. Robert Yahara and I became acquainted over weeding in the Demonstration Garden at Cold Spring School and carting off Donovan's huge collection of houseplants to be shared with teachers and classrooms and friends.

I came to know Donovan's other circles of associates, church members, extended family, and family friends at an early celebration of Donovan and Barb's 50th anniversary, and greeted them again at the memorial service that Donovan himself planned to the last detail, including the New Orleans style jazz that accompanied our exit from the hall.

I credit Donovan for showing us the way to end life with grace and intentionality, and I'm glad he made his wishes known so that we who remain could honor them. "Mister Donovan's Greenhouse" will be his lasting legacy to the children and teachers of Cold Spring School, brought back to life even as Donovan's own life was drawing to a close. He never had so much fun, nor so profound an influence, as when tending his plants and nurturing the next generation in the Greenhouse.

Donovan's example reminds us to make a splash, to live life fully as long as we draw breath.

—Wendy Ford, Editor, INPAWS Journal

Contributions in memory of Donovan Miller may be made to:

INPAWS, Attn: Letha's Youth Outdoors Fund, P.O. Box 501528, Indianapolis, IN 46250

Friends of Cold Spring School Inc., Attn: Mister Donovan's Greenhouse, Wendy Ford, Secretary, 6911 Cabernet Way, Indianapolis, IN 46278. (*Note:* The Friends are working with their attorney to apply for 501(c)3 nonprofit status.)

Indiana State Museum & Historic Sites, Attn: Memorials for Donovan Miller to Turner Garden, 650 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

***Left:* The Greenhouse at Cold Spring School, soon to be refurbished in Donovan's honor. *Right:* Donovan in the student-planted rain garden that he helped maintain during the school's year of renovation. Photos by Wendy Ford and Shawndra Miller, respectively.**

Spring Garden Tour Preview

"Spring Landscaping with Native Plants" is the theme for this year's INPAWS garden tour on Saturday, April 21. You'll experience spring wildflowers in the natural setting of a wooded parkland, then head off to see how local gardeners incorporate these same spring ephemerals into their landscaping.

Spring peeper illustration by Chris Carlson in R.A. Ingraham, *Swimming with Frogs.*

Flowing Well Park

This Carmel park is known for its artesian well where people from all over come to fill water containers. The well was discovered almost 100 years ago when workers were drilling for natural gas. The water flows at approximately 15 gallons per minute.

The park's one-mile natural trail and dirt footpaths traverse 18 acres of wooded land and cross the meandering Cool Creek.

Springtime is magical here when the spring ephemerals bloom. The flowers range from vibrant Virginia blue bells to delicate Dutchman's breeches. There are trilliums, wild ginger, and May apples. Wander through the trails and forget that you are next to a busy suburban street. See the majestic sycamore trees throughout the park with their mottled bark that shows the creamy bark towards the upper branches.

The park includes some invasive species, which offer a teachable moment: See what the much-talked-about garlic mustard really looks like.

There will be a plant identification scavenger hunt at the park.

Twin Beeches

Before she knew much about Indiana's native plants, this garden owner despaired of ever growing anything under her huge beech trees. Then Ruth Ann Ingraham participated in a plant rescue at Tutwiler Woods.

She brought home many spring ephemerals and put them under the two old-growth trees in her back yard. Over time, she was pleasantly surprised by a multitude of flowers coming up that she hadn't expected. Turns out the soil from the rescue site contained a rich seed bank.

Now the beneficiaries of that plant rescue are not only the rescued flowers and their unseen comrades but also the owner, who loves to look at them every spring, and people who pass by to admire her gardens.

There is very little lawn in this Broad Ripple yard. Native spring wildflowers include spring beauty, harbingers of spring, Virginia bluebells, wild geranium, mayapple, trilliums, violets, bloodroot, twinleaf, Jack-in-the-pulpit, green dragon, waterleaf, and several others. Shrubs and trees include redbud, serviceberry, spicebush (male and female), American hazelnut, chokeberry, and, of course, American beech.

Ash Tree Acre

What do you do when your yard is full of ash trees and the Emerald Ash Borer is known to be in your county?

That is the question Matt Newell faces at his home in Geist. Come see how one gardener is diversifying his yard with native plants in response to the inevitable loss of some of his ash trees.

At first glance, Matt's yard doesn't look too different from the rest of his suburban neighborhood. The front yard is mostly trees and grass. Upon further inspection, one sees a small island of native trees and shrubs including serviceberry, red twig dogwood, and swamp white oak. A screen of bald cypress will soon shield a neighbor's garage and also provide food for wildlife.

Moving closer to the house, one finds a rain garden gladly accepting water from three downspouts. The rain garden features shade tolerant sedges and bottle brush buckeye under a thick canopy of ash and maple trees. Cardinal flowers bloom in the late summer adding a rich red color to the area.

In an unforested portion of the back yard is a "pollinator pasture" full of warm season prairie plants, the three years of its creation obvious by the differing maturity of the plants. The pasture has little blue stem, prairie dropseed, purple and grey coneflowers, Culver's root, goldenrod, and black eyed Susan. Matt tends a small vegetable garden and vineyard nearby. The asparagus plants should be sending up shoots during the garden tour.

The back of the property was planted in 2010 with about 80 trees and shrubs from the Department of Natural Resources (the "wildlife pack") including hawthorn, crabapple, shagbark hickory, black cherry, hazelnut, American plum, pawpaw, and dogwood. After the ash die off, Matt hopes they will get enough sunlight to prosper.

The belle of a spring garden tour is his "budding" collection of native woodland wildflowers including trillium, celandine poppies, Solomon's seal, wild ginger, Jack-in-the-pulpit, and Virginia bluebells.

Cedar Haven

This garden, located in Broad Ripple Village, is a haven for the owner as well as wildlife. It lies across the street from the White River Levee and is part of a wildlife corridor filled with many lovely tall trees.

When Linda Shikany bought this house, the yard was bare except for turfgrass and a mulberry tree. Enlisting the design skills of Chris Turner, and assisted by noted naturalist and photographer Bill Brink, who died last fall, this nature lover of Lebanese descent (whence the

"cedar") replaced most of her lawn with plants designed to attract wildlife.

"If you build it, they will come" came true in this case. Linda hears three types of owls (great horned, screech, and barred) and gets many other birds as well as bats. Red foxes, woodchuck, bald eagles, great blue herons, and hawks have been spotted along the levee, along with the usual joggers and dogs.

Although small, the property offers a prairie along the driveway (plants that can stand the heat!), spring ephemerals, unusual flower species, and a variety of trees and shrubs. There's always something of interest in this 10-year-old garden, including a native orchid, cup plant, sylphium, goldenseal, hepatica, spygelia, blood root , Indian pink, green dragon, wild ginger, twinleaf, Solomon's seal, Buddha bed, passion flower, redbud, hemlocks, and tulip tree. The gardens also include many prairie grasses.

Linda dedicates her participation in the tour to Bill Brink and plans to display some of his photos the day of the tour.

For The Birds

This avid birder transformed her urban lawn into woodland and other gardens to attract birds and butterflies at all seasons throughout the year. Betsy Wilson has certainly succeeded! Native plants bloom from February to November.

Back and front yard are filled with a lush abundance of trees, shrubs, groundcovers, grasses, and flowers arranged in pleasingly shaped islands and borders, with plants grouped and contained and displaying a good variety of shapes, heights, and colors. Many of the hundreds of species have permanent identification tags. Hardscaping includes trellises, sundials, birdbaths, a shed, and birdfeeding stations.

Even with this proliferation of plants, no complaints have been heard from the neighbors in this trim urban neighborhood near Binford (State Road 37) and 71st Street. Mark M. Holeman Inc., long-time INPAWS supporter, designed the front yard layout; Betsy designed the back yard and chose all the plants, many of them propagated by her. There are multiple woodland gardens and a vegetable garden, all planned for a succession of bloom through the seasons.

Most trees and bushes are native and include burr oak, silver maple, tulip tree, black walnut, wild cherry, yellowwood, redbud, dogwood, red buckeye, serviceberry, persimmon, inkberry, native holly (Ilex), Ohio buckeye, spice bush, itea, button bush, and hydrangeas. Most grasses are native. Expect to see wild hyacinth, bluebells, marsh marigold, iris versicolor, Greek valerian, cranesbill, blue and white baptisia, native columbine, penstemons, twinleaf, trilliums, Jack-in-the-pulpit, shrubby St. Johns wort, Bowman's root, ferns, ginger, heartleaf Alexander, and mayapple.

A few of the plants coming up for later bloom will be pipevine, white native wisteria, buttonbush, native honeysuckle, royal catchfly, prairie quinine, liatris, turtlehead, butterfly weed, largeleaf aster, monarda, stiff and other goldenrods, prairie dropseed, little bluestem, mountain mint, meadow rue, compass plant, coneflowers, flowering raspberry, Culver's root, wild senna, Joe Pye weed, bottle gentian, native monkshood, and swamp milkweed.

ONCE YOU'VE SEEM 'EM, YOU'LL WANT TO BUY 'EM!

INPAWS Plant Sale & Auction "Native Plants to Attract Birds"

Saturday, May 12
Park Tudor School, Upper Gymnasium
7200 N. College Avenue, Indianapolis IN 46340
(Use the 71st Street entrance)

9:30 a.m. Pre-sale talk by Janet Cramer, Staff Naturalist for Indy Parks and Assistant Manager of Southeastway Park, on the best plants to attract birds. $10 fee for the talk entitles ticket holders to start shopping 15 minutes before the general public and get $10 off any auction purchase.

10:15 a.m. Plant sale and book sale, open through 1:00 p.m.

11:15 a.m. Live auction, continuing until every plant is sold.

There's something for every gardener at this popular annual event. This year, we move to a new venue, the gymnasium of Park Tudor School, which is spacious, well lit, and has ample parking. The gym will be chock full of Indiana natives to plant in designed landscapes or natural areas, and INPAWS members will be on hand to answer questions and help you shop.

Plants for the sale and auction are donated from INPAWS members' own collections, plant rescues, and local nurseries specializing in native plants. The selection is different every year. The choicest, rarest plants are set aside for the plant auction, an entertaining and informative opportunity to learn about Indiana natives, as each offering is introduced by native plant experts.

Alongside the plant sale, look for select books on plant families, naturalistic gardening, conservation, and related topics. INPAWS logo items such as T-shirts and caps will also be available for purchase.

New this year: a silent auction of native plant related items. Plant sale chair Ross Nelson is seeking interesting items for this; please contact him at plantsale@inpaws.org.

Ross could also use more volunteers, and wagons or charts to help transport plants to cars. To help out, sign up at Volunteer Spot, http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/323456345555780109.

To participate in the garden tour, email gardentour@inpaws.org and let Mary Miller know you're coming.

She will send addresses and directions to the gardens a week or so prior to the event.

A Picture Book and a Second Look

Barbara Plampin, PhD, Shirley Heinze Land Trust

"What a lot of Solomon's seal!" we exclaimed as we stumbled, hot and tired, out of a dim swamp forest north of a Porter County bike trail into dazzling sun. At trail's edge, a soldierly mass of delicate miniature "treelets" stood at attention. That each tree had two branches instead of a single arching stem escaped our notice, as did the absence of flowers or fruits. The parallel-veined leaves made us confident we were looking at a *Polygonatum*.

Chancing on the plants again on May 13, 1993, I stepped back, startled: the "treelets" were merrybells, aka little or wood merrybells, or wild oats (*Uvularia sessilifolia*). (Solomon's seal and *Uvularia* are similar, being paired in Liliaceae keys.) I didn't shout "Eureka! Page 103 in "Peterson!" But I do owe the recognition to bedtime browsing in that book, and the page is indeed 103. See the color picture lowest right. I was thrilled because merrybells hadn't been seen in the Chicago Region since 1891 when Higley and Radin reported it as rare from Cook County, Illinois.

Merrybell blossom (*Uvularia sessilifolia*). Photo by Thomas G. Barnes.

Merrybells is not state listed; Deam reports it from Monroe County and farther south in Indiana. Still, these plants are disjunct, an island some distance from populations ranging, according to Michigan botanist the late Ed Voss, "From the Porcupine Mountains (and Minnesota)...south through Wisconsin to the southern states, and from Saginaw Bay southward to northeastern and southern Ohio and beyond, eastward to New England" in "an essentially circular pattern." Voss does not mention Indiana.

Yes, the flowers did resemble the one in the color plate on page 103, except the one-to-a-plant pendant flowers had withered from yellow (some say cream) to greenish brown or straw. Unlike *Polygonatum* leaves, merrybells' are sessile, clustering mostly at branch tops, though a single leaf grows at branch fork. Indiana's frankly much prettier and taller *large-flowered bellwort* (*U. grandiflora)* and perfoliate bellflower *(U. perfoliata*) have perfoliate leaves. Still, merrybells could look attractive massed in a wildflower garden. I sent a specimen to the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois.

I'm asleep. The telephone shrills. It's 7:00 a.m. The caller is Dr. Gerould Wilhelm, Morton Arboretum botanist, voice very excited. "Where did you find it? Is it native? From an abandoned garden?" I fearfully report a lone garden iris up the trail, then mention Higley and Radin's 1891 report. The *Plants of the Chicago Region* entry (Dr. Wilhelm, junior author) decides merrybells is native and calls the discovery "remarkable."

Despite the local utility's tree cutting and a bike trail renovation, three separate merrybells colonies still flourish in full sun along about 250 feet of trail. Associates include marsh shield, sensitive, and cinnamon ferns (*Dryopteris thelypteris pubescens, Onoclea sensibilis, Osmundas cinnamomea*), mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), and, surprisingly, shade lovers like Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense interius*) and star flower (*Trientalis borealis*).

Later, when we helped the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore botanist collect seeds to propagate, we found the four-to-thirteen-inch merrybells plants holding on in duff below an overstory of goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.) and up-to-14-foot hollow and other Joe Pye weeds (*Eupatorium fistulosum, Eupatorium* spp.). The three-angled capsules were few. Seeds did not germinate, perhaps because of premature collection.

I've yet to visit the site early enough to find merrybells with fresh yellow flowers. The published dates, June 12 to June 19, are a bit late.

Some Books

Higley, W. K. and C. S. Radin. *The Flora of Cook County, Illinois, and a Part of Lake County, Indiana*. Bulletin Chicago Academy of Science: 2:1–168, 1891.

Peterson, R.T. and M. McKenny. *A Field Guide to Wildflowers: Northeastern and North-Central North America.* The Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin, 1996 (1968).

Swink, F. and G. Wilhelm. *Plants of the Chicago Region*. Fourth edition. Indiana Academy of Science: Indianapolis, 1994.

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We have done our best to include every donor who gave in 2011 or 2012 and was not previously mentioned in INPAWS Journal. Our apologies if we missed you. Please let us know. (Donations honoring Donovan Miller will be published next issue.)

Letha's Youth Outdoors Fund supports trips for school and youth groups to experience nature in an educational context. It also supports youth-initiated activities that bring them in closer contact with nature. Preferred groups are those with the least access to wholesome experiences in the natural environment.

You may donate by sending a check to INPAWS, Attn: Letha's Fund, P.O. Box 501528, Indianapolis, IN 46250.

F I E L D N O T E S

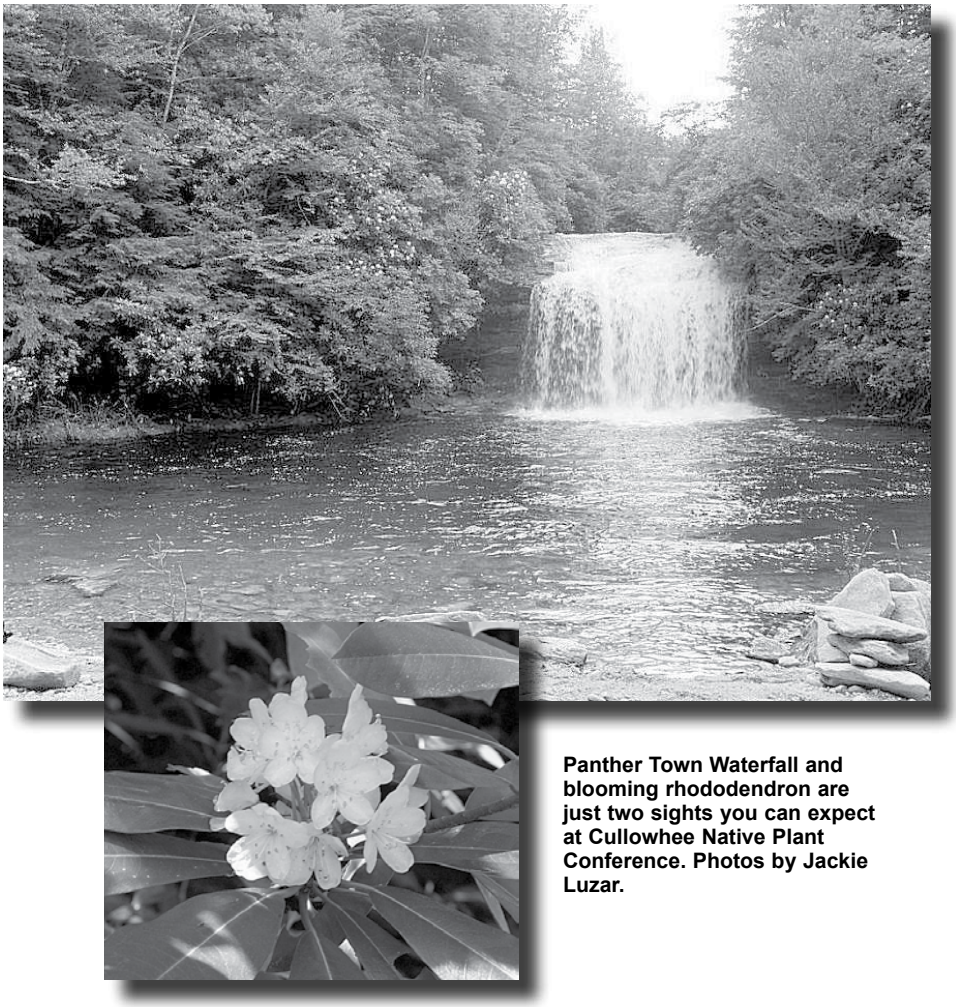
Cullowhee Native Plant Conference Offers an Educational Opportunity

Since 1984, the annual Cullowhee Native Plant Conference has been attracting nature enthusiasts to the Appalachian Mountains in July. The aim of the conference is to increase interest in and knowledge of propagating and preserving native southeastern plant species in the landscape.

All activities take place in or surrounding the town of Cullowhee, North Carolina, the home of Western Carolina University. Located just southeast of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the area provides breathtaking views, a variety of flora not always found in Indiana, and many natural sites to explore. Three and a half days of activities include a variety of field trips, seminars, workshops, and the availability of related merchandise and plants native to the Carolinas.

Fieldtrips are often one of the greatest attractions for conference attendees, offering a chance to learn hands-on about the region's ecosystems. Past field trips have included canoeing, hiking, photography tips, and bus tours. Depending on the trip, one might experience encounters with waterfalls, carnivorous plants, or even Native American cultural sites.

For more information or to sign up to attend the conference, visit http://wcu.edu/6371.asp.



Panther Town Waterfall and blooming rhododendron are just two sights you can expect at Cullowhee Native Plant Conference. Photos by Jackie Luzar.

Proud to Be an INPAWS Member

As many of our members have heard, there were technical difficulties with the credit card machine used for the Book Sale at our 2011 Annual Conference. As a result, all transactions were deleted, and INPAWS faced the prospect of a loss over $4,000. However, paper receipts provided the names of those purchasing books using a credit card and the amount of purchase. These attendees were contacted and the situation was explained.

Then a truly wonderful thing happened—87% of those contacted responded with a check covering their purchase within two weeks. The remainder has since been received.

What a fantastic organization!

Friesner Launches New Research Aid on Marion County Flora

Friesner Herbarium, Butler University, is pleased to announce the addition of the "Marion County Flora Searchable Database" to its redesigned website. As part of Friesner's mission to explore and document Indiana's flora, Herbarium staff have conducted a series of long-term studies of the flora of Marion County and the city of Indianapolis.

Using our archive of historical plant specimens, recent floristic inventories, and monitoring of native plant installations to better understand our urban wild plants, we have developed a searchable photo and information database.

Visit our site and the database at www.butler.edu/herbarium.The Marion County Flora Database can be found in the "Important Information" column, or by clicking on Projects, then Marion County Flora, and Flora Search. You may search by scientific name, common name, and/or location where plants were found. Our database contains records for approximately 1,000 species, nearly 70% of which are Indiana native plants.

In addition to the Marion County Flora Database, there are also sections contain-

ing photos and info for Trees, Wildflowers, and Prairie Plants found on the Butler University campus, as well as general information helpful in tree identification and prairie ecology. An extensive Links section connects to other botanical resources.

You will notice that not all species in the database have photos associated with them, and this is where YOU come in! We need your help and are requesting submissions of photos to help populate our database. Our goal is to have photos and information for every species. This will be a useful resource for the public, and INPAWS members are a vital link to this outreach. Our hope is that eventually we will be able to expand the database to include all species found in the state of Indiana.

If you would like to contribute one or more photos for our database, please contact me at mmoore@butler.edu. You will be credited as the photographer on any submissions that we use. Thank you for your assistance.

—Marcia Moore, Herbarium Assistant

Botanist Ed Voss Wrote the Book on Michigan Flora

Edward G. Voss, professor emeritus of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Michigan and a legendary teacher at the U-M Biological Station, died in February, just three days before the release of his latest book, *Field Manual of Michigan Flora*, co-authored with Dr. Anton A. Reznicek, curator of vascular plants at the University Herbarium. According to the publisher, the new *Flora* is the most up-to-date guide available for all seed plants growing wild in Michigan.

Jim McCormac, biologist with the Ohio Division of Wildlife, who considered Voss a mentor, writes. "[W]hat Ed did throughout his career that was at least of equal importance to his academic work was his encouragement of others… For years, other budding young botanists and I would make annual pilgrimages to Ann Arbor to visit Ed and his colleague Tony Reznicek. We would come bearing sheets and sheets of 'mystery' plants—specimens that, try as we might, we could not satisfactorily attach a name to. Ed would always, with great patience and never a trace of condescension, work us through our mysteries until a name was arrived at. Those of us who made these journeys to The Man, learned not only a great deal about identifying plants, but also how to encourage students."

The full obituary, excerpted here, can be found at http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eeb/news_events/news/newsDetail.asp?ID=129

INPAWS Journal in Capable New Hands

This is my last issue of *INPAWS Journal*. With the next issue, I'm handing over control to the dynamic duo of past INPAWS president Nancy Hill and past Speakers Bureau chair Kit Newkirk.

Both have excellent credentials. A gifted writer and organizer, Nancy has recently completed advanced studies in creative writing at IUPUI. Also a gifted writer, Kit has a masters in Journalism and has just returned from three years in China, where she taught English and journalism at Sun Yat Sen University. Nancy will preside over the editorial programme, Kit over layout and photos. I can't think of a more competent team.

It's been a joy to work on the *Journal* for the past seven years. I've learned much about our organization, about native plants, and about what INPAWS can do to make a difference for Indiana.

I want to thank Becky Dolan for double-checking plant names, and especially our proofreader Amy Perry for her eagle eye and fine-tuned editorial sensibilities. She always made things better.

I'm proud to have been able to showcase the knowledge and writing talent of our INPAWS members in articles submitted for publication. This newsletter has been around since INPAWS's very beginnings, and I look forward to indexing back issues so that we can take full advantage of this rich resource.

I encourage all of you to continue thinking of *INPAWS Journal* as your voice for conserving and preserving our native flora, advocating on behalf of biodiversity, presenting quality information to our membership, and inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards.

—Wendy Ford

Coming Up

April 14
INPAWS Hike: Fort Benjamin Harrison State Park, Indianapolis, led by Perry Scott, 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. EDT

April 21
INPAWS Spring Garden Tour, Central Indiana, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

May 5
INPAWS Hike: Forest Wildflowers of Kokiwanee Preserve, Wabash County, led by David Hicks

May 12
INPAWS Plant Sale & Auction, Park Tudor School, Indianapolis, 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Watch for announcements of INPAWS events in the mail, via email, and on the INPAWS blog at www.inpaws.org.

Additional events not sponsored by INPAWS are posted on our website in the Calendar of Events under the heading "Gatherings."

Indiana Native Plant
& Wildflower Society

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MC-IRIS UPDATE

Go Green, Grow Native!

Ellen Jacquart, Monroe County–Identify and Reduce Invasive Species

A few years ago, concerned landowners and land managers in Monroe County got together to form Monroe County–Identify and Reduce Invasive Species, or MC-IRIS for short.

One of the first things we did as a group was to list the worst invasive plant species in the county. It was the usual list of suspects—Asian bush honeysuckle, Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose, and so on. What struck us when we looked at the list was that 9 of the 10 worst species were deliberately introduced for landscaping or wildlife habitat reasons (the only one that wasn't deliberately introduced was Japanese stiltgrass, an unintentional introduction through packing material).

It turns out that's about average. Sarah Reichard of University of Washington found that 86% of the woody invasive species in the U.S. came from landscaping, and another 14% came from agriculture or production forestry.

Enough to raise your eyebrows, isn't it? It made us think hard about ways to try to decrease these deliberate introductions of problem species. We got a suggestion from our friends in Southern Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area—why not encourage retailers to stop selling invasive plants and sell native plants instead? And so Go Green, Grow Native was born.

It's a pretty simple program. We contact plant retailers and tell them that the Go Green, Grow Native program can reward them in two ways.

First, if they sell native plants, we will provide them with free promotional materials about native plants. This includes signs, plant stakes, bench tape, and other materials with the Go Green, Grow Native logo and information on native species, as well as brochures with more information on invasive species and non-invasive alternatives.

Second, if they agree to stop selling all invasive species, which we define as those species on the Invasive Species Assessment Working Group list (http://www.in.gov/dnr/4619.htm), we'll also add them to the INPAWS Retail Sources list (http://www.inpaws.org/landscaping/sources-of-indiana-native-plants/).

To be able to provide these promotional materials, of course, we needed funds to buy them. We made a request to INPAWS to provide the funds needed, and they generously provided $2,000 to start the project.

We started with five Monroe County plant retailers last year—Mays Greenhouse, Twin H Tree Farm, Linnea's Greenhouse, Stranger's Hill Organics, and Bloomington Hardware. Each received the Go Green, Grow Native promotional materials they wanted to draw attention to the natives they were selling, and two of them—Linnea's Greenhouse and Stranger's Hill Organics—were also certified "invasive free" and added to the INPAWS Retail Sources list.

Through the summer, we visited the retailers to see how the program was working. We learned that "native" had a much broader definition for some retailers, as some were including any species native to the U.S. That's not surprising. If you visit your local or on-line plant vendors, they rarely specify where a particular species is from—just that it's native to U.S. We clarified that our intent was to promote species native to Indiana, those adapted to our climates and soils, and provided information on which species they sold were actually native to Indiana.

At the end of the 2011 season, we surveyed the retailers about their involvement in the program. All five responded that they'd like to be involved again, and that their customers had a positive reaction. We also got helpful suggestions for other promotional materials, like 5 x 7 inch signs that will fit standard sign frames.

This year, we've extended the invitation to all the plant retailers in Monroe County to join in Go Green, Grow Native. We also invited the original five retailers to join again, along with a suggestion that they consider dropping a few of the invasive species they sell. We had a great response from Mays Greenhouse in particular, who agreed to stop selling yellow floating hearts and Norway maple (once the last few trees are sold).

Step by step, we're hoping we can move retailers away from invasive species and towards native species in Monroe County. We're also hoping that other cities or counties in Indiana are interested in joining the Go Green, Grow Native program. Please contact Ellen Jacquart if you are (ejacquart@tnc.org).

MC-IRIS plant sticker.