



Growing through Education

Wildflowers

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WETLANDS

Wetland... it simply means land that is wet. It is land which is saturated with water. Some examples are the fens and moors of Europe, African Savannah waterholes, or the bogs, fens, and coastal plain marshes of Michigan. These are all wetlands. Cattails, salamanders and great blue herons, white-tailed deer, marsh marigold, juvenile fish, and many other wildlife and plant species depend on wetlands for survival. Wetlands are not the useless swamps they have often been perceived to be, but are productive ecosystems. We have learned that not only is wildlife dependant on wetlands; humans also depend on them.

Wetlands at work

Wetlands do much more than provide a home for wildlife, they are vital in keeping water clean. Wetlands are the filters in the water cycle. Their masses of roots, leaves, and other dense, fibrous, plant life remove sediment and pollutants from the slow-moving water. The water that runs out of a wetland to return to a stream or river has been filtered and cleaned. Wetlands are also natural sponges. When floodwaters overflow the banks of streams and rivers, the porous soils and plants of wetlands soak up this excess water which then slowly seeps back into streams. This prevents downstream flooding. Wetlands that are fed by groundwater release their water into streams to keep them flowing through times of drought.

Wetlands and people

Since European settlement, more than half of America's wetlands have been destroyed. This has increased flooding, erosion, water pollution, property damage, and has reduced wildlife populations. A good example of this need for wetlands is the damage hurricane

Katrina did in Louisiana largely because the coastal wetlands have been destroyed. Filling in and draining wetlands is a practice that must be stopped. It may be possible to repair some damaged wetlands, but nothing can substitute for those that remain undisturbed. The next time you find yourself standing near shallow water, an algae covered pond, or surrounded by cattail and other native vegetation; look and listen. This is the only place you will see and hear many of the plants and animals that surround you. Wetlands are places where their ancestors may have lived since the last ice age. Remember that this wetland needs our respect to survive... and that we need wetlands.

*Adapted from: Wetlands
King County, Washington Website*

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Wetlands are productive ecosystems.

WAM

By increasing awareness and knowledge, the Wildflower Association of Michigan encourages the preservation and restoration of Michigan's native plants and native plant communities.

~ ASSOCIATION NEWS ~



President's Note...

I hope you all enjoyed reading the spring edition of our WAM newsletter. Bill Schneider's article on soil was marvelous. It came at the perfect time during my reading activities as I had just finished the book, "Dirt, the Erosion of Civilizations" by David R. Montgomery. As he succinctly describes it, a country is no better nor will last no longer than its soil.

You may want to get yourselves a copy; it's a great read for any gardener and historian.

Your WAM Board met for two hours, by teleconference, on April 8th. We discussed our successful 2010 conference and annual meeting and are already planning for 2011. That plan will begin to unfold at the board's next meeting in July. Our planning will be made easier by the good suggestions we received from your evaluation forms and for Cheryl Tolley's work in putting together a comprehensive conference procedure manual. Our 2011 conference/annual meeting co-chairpersons are Esther Durnwald and Chad Hughson. We also discussed the successful T-shirt sales and will offer them again in 2011, possibly with an option for long sleeves. Jean Weirich will look into having our 2011 program cover screened onto the backs of the shirt selections. We sold almost sixty shirts!

Our booth at the Lansing Home & Garden Show, set up next to Wild Ones-Red Cedar Chapter, was a great success. Which brings up another point the board discussed; the need for WAM to "pull its bright shining light" out from under the five gallon garden pail in which we tend to keep it. This is a vibrant, valuable organization with lots of great people and activities to tell Michigan residents about. (Or go 'bats' over, if you were at our conference!) What we need is to have everyone publicize WAM. There are many ways to do this. If you are a master gardener, make sure your fellow MG's know about us. Circulate your newsletter at your next meeting. If you live near one of our garden grantees (listed in the spring newsletter on page ten) volunteer your wildflower expertise to help them with their projects. If visiting a local park, recreation area, etc. and noting native plants present, point it out in a brief letter to your local paper. Remember, we have a wonderful website that you can cite in your communication to encourage potential new memberships: www.wildflowersmich.org.

Finally, the WAM Board is in need of a secretary. Though not a wealth engendering opportunity, it is a chance to serve one of the best wildflower associations in the Midwest, if not the nation! You will also help us meet our obligations as stated in the WAM by-laws and enable this fine organization to better accomplish its mission. Please contact me at: krueger@ferris.edu if you are interested or have any additional questions.

Robert Krueger, PhD, President

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Visit the WAM website at: www.wildflowersmich.org

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APPLICANTS NEEDED FOR WAM GRANTS

WAM awards grants annually to fund projects involving the use of native plants in the creation of outdoor classrooms, to enhance an existing public site, or other educationally directed projects that support the WAM mission. If you would like to apply for a grant or donate to our grant program, please go to: www.wildflowersmich.org and click on 'grant program'.

Emma Bickham Pitcher—1915-2010 - Many of you may remember Emma, who has passed from among us, as a wonderful friend to WAM and to all the creatures of the earth. She remains in our hearts and minds as a teacher and an indomitable spirit. Emma was a star presenter at past WAM conferences.