



Wildflowers

President's Column



It's only two days before Thanksgiving as I write this and I hope, on behalf of the

WAM Board, that all of our members had a very Happy Thanksgiving and wonderful holiday season. We do have a lot to be thankful for here in the Great Lake state as I know you all realize. Our flora and fauna is beautiful and diverse, and our water resources populate our landscape with sparkling vistas unlike anywhere else on earth. Though many of our citizens are unemployed, our economic outlook is slowly improving. And best of all...in 2012 your Wildflower Association will celebrate its 25th anniversary! That's years of annual conferences, years of educational workshops, dozens and dozens of grants given to promote the use of native plants, and at least 100 board meetings to name just a few of our many accomplishments.

I won't bore you with details of my gardening experiences this fall as my garden is almost _____ (you can fill in the blank!). In fact, I think I'll name it "almost" as it's almost bedded down, the lit-

tle pond is "almost" cleaned, the leaves are "almost" raked, etc. What I would want you all to focus on in this issue is the detailed information about our 25th anniversary conference coming up March 4-5 at the Kellogg's Center on the MSU campus in East Lansing. Everything you need to know including registration information is here. We have not increased our prices over last year and encourage all to attend – with as many guests as you can bring! We will have anniversary T-shirts, WAM pins, and seeds for sale along with another great room of vendors and exhibitors. There will be grant recipients to announce and welcome at our awards luncheon and past grantees to report on how their projects are doing now. Michelle Surreyn will present another stimulating educators' workshop and you will be exposed once again to the finest speakers on native plants and related topics that can be scheduled. Many are nationally renowned in their areas of expertise.

Treat yourself to a fun-filled, intellectually satisfying experience and please register for the March 4-5, 25th Anniversary conference!

Nancy's New Book

Tom Small, WAM board member, has completed and published the book he and his wife Nancy were writing together. Nancy died in November, 2009, after a five-year struggle with cancer, and Tom took her place on the board. He has spent most of the past two years fulfilling his promise to Nancy to "finish the book."

Titled *Using Native Plants to Restore Community in Southwest Michigan and Beyond*, the 270-page, large-format book draws together plant lists, planting guides, observations, and essays that Tom and Nancy wrote separately or together for many different environmental newsletters and journals and for the Kalamazoo Area Chapter of Wild Ones.

The book has over 175 illustrations—drawings, etchings, and woodcuts—from five artists and scientific illustrators, all but one of them from southwest Michigan.

"The book is for everyone," says Tom, "who wants to know more about making a difference—a difference they can see—in the struggle to preserve and restore the wonderful diversity of plant and animal species so stressed and threatened by industrial agri-

(Con't., Page 2)

Inside this issue:

5 Ways to Get Kids Outside in Winter	2
Who Am I ?	3
Recipe for Autumn Olive Jam	4
A Wilderness in the "Big Apple"	4
Top Ecology Papers	4
Website Musings	5
Wildflower Conference Info	6-7

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Tom's New Book, cont.

culture and conventional landscaping. It deals with how and why to do it, the rewards and joys, and what we need to understand about the true community of life." The book concludes with an essay on what a latter-day Noah needs to know about saving species from the flood and restoring community.

"With help from my friends and from wonderful illustrators and designers," Tom affirms, "I've done my best to make it a beautiful book, because my wife Nancy was, above all, a lover of beauty—the beauty and wonder of the natural world."

Copies of the book will be available at the WAM conference, or may be ordered from the Kalamazoo Wild Ones web site:

www.kalamazoowildones.org. The cost is \$25, and all proceeds will go to environmental education projects and the Nancy Small Memorial Fund of Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones.

5 Ways: To Get the Kids Outside in Winter By Bob Krueger

Kim Painter wrote an intriguing column entitled "5 Ways: To Get the Kids Outside in Autumn" for the October 5th USA Today. Since plagiarism is the sincerest form of flattery I have borrowed her titles and applied it to winter. Her original column can be found on the web at yourlife.USAToday.com.

1. Adapt homework to what is going on outside by being outside. Math problems – use snowflakes or snowballs!
2. Track the seasons (original K. Painter). One day each week go to the same spot and photograph, or pad and pencil and record the changes. Watch the buds on trees swell, or shrink in fiercely cold weather. Note the presence or absence of birds at feeders. Discover mouse tunnels in the snow.
3. Freeze water into weird forms or color snow with sprayed food coloring and build a "?". The more creative the better!
4. Embrace the night (original K. Painter). Those crisply clean cold winter nights are perfect for star gazing, sledding with light stick illumination, or snow monsters that building will amuse the neighborhood in the daytime (ala Calvin and Hobbs!).
5. Lead the way (original K. Painter). Pull on those boots, gloves, hats, etc and march out the door with a challenge for the kids. "Who wants to build a snow fort?" "Anyone want to beat me in a sledding race?" "I need some soccer (or football or baseball or?) players." Don't forget 'snow cones' aren't just for summer! And winter bouquets can be very charming!



Order your 2012 WAM Conference T-Shirts now!!

These 25th Anniversary shirts are sure to become a collector item. T-Shirt only available by pre-order with pick up at the conference. Please order with your conference registration. \$15/shirt

If you are not able to attend, but would like to order a shirt, use the registration form to order and add \$5 for shipping and handling



Who Am I? By Mike Saint

Think of yourself as a Bumblebee. Your short choppy wings beating at an amazing two hundred eighty strokes per second. As you fly above the plants in your garden, your two large compound eyes enhanced by three simple ocular organs detect the conspicuously developed UV patterns on the florets of this native plant. Your three primitive eyes centered in the middle of your head lock onto the glowing signal of this spectacular plants guidance system as ultra violet patterns, guide you effortlessly into its cone shaped nectar station.

Open up your imagination and let your senses become one with the _____. You have a long proud history of colonizing America. Your strong roots greeted the pilgrims, as they landed on Plymouth Rock. Tolerant of drought, poor soil, winter conditions, disease, and insects, your strong stems are hairy, upright, and highly branched. Your alternate leaves are parallel, shallow, veined, and covered in rigid hair. Incorporated in your DNA, ultra violet

honey conductors create enzymes that formulate UV - absorbing flavonols¹ in your petals. Slowly as your flower begins to develop a Bull's eye pattern appears in these early stages of development. A ring of green petals uncovers the bud as you create a supportive

backdrop for the golden drenched petals that encircle your silken purplish-black fringed button. Generously you offer up your halo of golden pollen to all who wish to partake. The cycle of life begins in your garden. See Page 4 for answer.

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