



Growing through Education

Winter 2013

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Wildflowers

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SAVE THE DATE!!

27th ANNUAL MICHIGAN WILDFLOWER CONFERENCE

Becoming Native to the Place

March 2 & 3, 2014

KELLOGG HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The Michigan Wildflower Conference is open to all who are interested in Michigan native plants and their habitats. General and concurrent sessions are scheduled. A wide variety of vendors will offer high quality arts and crafts, books, photographs and original paintings. Numerous exhibits will bring educational information about native plants and habitats. Additional details and registration information will be available at www.wildflowersmich.org in January.



WILDFLOWER ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

WAM

Maine or Michigan Woods?

Henry David Thoreau wrote about the Maine Woods among many other places. In the short book "Backwoods and Along the Seashore" (edited by Peter Turner, Shambala Press, 2005) I was recently re-reading I was struck by the great similarity between the woods of Maine (where my wife and I visit during the summer) and those in our beautiful state of Michigan.

In commenting on a visit to a friend's new cabin where Thoreau was offered a 'beer' clear and thin, strong and stringent as cedar sap... the topmost fantastic and spiciest sprays of the primitive wood, and whatever invigorating and stringent gum or essence it afforded steeped and dissolved in it- a

lumberer's drink...

He further comments: The forest looked like a firm grass sward and the effects of the lakes in its midst has been well compared, by one who has since visited this same spot, to that of a "mirror broken into a thousand fragments and scattered over the grass, reflecting the full blaze of the sun."

Finally, he recalled "It was a dense and damp spruce and fir wood in which we lay and except for our fire, perfectly dark; And when I awoke in the night, I either heard an owl from deeper in the forest behind us, or a loon from a distance over the lake."

As far as I can tell Thoreau never wrote about the Michigan woods directly but these descriptions are as close as can be.

Maine is taking steps to protect its resources, as they are vital to its tourism industry. Michigan can do more, and should. Our economy (and Maine's) has been brutalized over the past decades. Fracking will not provide an answer to our future employment (nor in Maine). Perhaps we here in Michigan should call upon our universities to invent a new degree in Ecotourism that will combine knowledge of the natural sciences with classical business subjects (Marketing, Small Business Management, etc.) to save our natural resources and boost tourism. Many third-world countries are succeeding with this concept; just look at Costa Rica and the Amazonian nations, or several African states. And Maine is discussing this as well!

Bob Krueger, Ph.D.

Thalictrum Dioicum: The Early Meadow-Rue

To continue the series that has appeared in several previous newsletters, and again referring back to Gracie's "Spring Wildflowers of the Northeast, a Natural History", this time I offer a common species of the Michigan woods, the Early Meadow-Rue. Its habitat belies its name as it is more commonly found in rocky slopes and thickets along rivers. It is a dioecious species having male and female flowers on separate plants. The flowers of the two plants are quite different in appearance so the novice may think they are separate species. Linnaeus named the genus in 1753 world-wide.

Thalictrum, from the Greek root 'thaleia', has between 120-330 species reflecting the great difficulty taxonomists have with its classification. The plant relies on wind pollination more so than on insects. A member of the Buttercup family (Ranunculaceae), a family known for its toxicity, Thalictrum is not a candidate for the dinner table. It contains several classes of defensive poisons to discourage herbivore feeding. Some insects can however feed on it. The plant has been investigated for its medicinal properties and some of its more complex compounds were originally thought to be useful anti-cancer agents. This research is currently continuing to try to determine if a controlled dose limiting collateral host damage can be found.

For a description of the Plant, see page 798 in Voss and Reznicek's "Field Manual of Michigan Flora" (U. Michigan Press, 2012). It is more likely to be found in the Lower Peninsula but has been noted in 8 of the UP's counties. I have it growing in my yards as a result of planting specimens purchased from WildType Nursery.

Bob Krueger, Ph.D.

Book Review

Flowers and Herbs of Early America

By Lawrence D. Griffith

This beautiful book was published by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in association with Yale University Press in 2008. It contains 292 + xi pages and is liberally highlighted with the exceptional photographs of Barbary Temple Lombardi, many of which are full page brilliant examples of Ms. Lombardie's skill.

The text is supplemented with a comprehensive index

of the plants entered by Latin binomial and common names, a general index and an extensive notes section keyed to the books sections and plants. Its content is impressive and results from a three year study of plants once familiar to colonial Virginia, but lesser known today.

The text begins with a very interesting introduction acquainting the reader with the history of Williamsburg and the selection of its plants for inclusion in a demonstration garden. A few of these (from an initial selection of 180 total) are natives and

can be found in Michigan. The rest of the text is a species by species description of the final 57 selected. These are grouped as: Flowers- annuals, biennials, and perennials, and herbs- annuals, biennials, and perennials. Their detailed description includes information on the history of the plant, type, habit, natural range and tips on its cultivation. In addition, following these is a section on General Planting Information, a short list of other recommended plants, as well as a list of seed outlets and an Arbor Day organization zone map.

Bob Krueger, Ph. D.

Plan to attend the 27th Annual Wildflower Conference March 2 & 3, 2014

Becoming Native to the Place is the theme for the 27th annual Wildflower Conference. World renowned landscape design consultant, author, photographer and lecturer Rick Darke will provide us with a keynote presentation on Sunday and Monday. Rick was our keynote speaker in 2004 and we are very excited for his return. Most recently he has teamed up with Douglas Tallamy on a new book, *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden* which is expected to be in bookstores June 2014.

As always we have gathered a group of experts to educate and inspire. Topics to be covered include beekeeping, bee nest box construction, alvar ecosystems, native aromatic plants, invasive species, preparation and management of native landscapes, butterflies, a naturalist's perspective and the role of native plants in sustainable agriculture. WAM Grants will be awarded at the Sunday lunch and we will have door prizes at Monday lunch. There will be exhibitors to visit, talented vendors who can provide you with a souvenir or gift to take home, and last but not least the opportunity to network with others who share an interest in the natural world.

This event is a great value that you won't want to miss so mark your calendars now. Please support our work at the Wildflower Association of Michigan by attending this harbinger of spring event. We look forward to seeing you there!

Conference schedule details and registration information will be available by January at www.wildflowersmich.org



Rick Darke

Keynote Speaker, 27th Annual
Wildflower Conference

Wallace Stegner in “Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs” advises us:

Environmentalism or conservation or preservation, or whatever it should be called is not a fact, and never has been. IT IS A JOB!

And in commenting on the 1964 Wilderness Act Preserves “the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”; said- “The best thing we have learned from nearly 500 years of contact with the American wilderness is restraint, the willingness to hold our hand, to visit such places for our souls’ good, but leave no tracks”

**COULDN'T MAKE IT
TO THIS YEAR'S
CONFERENCE?
DON'T FORGET TO
RENEW!**

We are sorry if you missed this year's Conference, which is also the time your WAM Membership comes up for renewal. If you haven't done so already, send a check for \$15 to our Treasurer, Jean Weirich, with the renewal form from the newsletter or website. Be sure to use her new address: 3387 Fulton, Muskegon, MI 49441.

Grants' Applications Requested

The Wildflower Association Board of Directors is pleased to announce the availability of funds for support of the 2014 WAM Educational Grant Cycle. Complete information concerning application criteria, submission deadline Dec. 6, 2013 and an application form are available on the web site <www.wildflowersmich.org> . The monies available come from donations from our business and individual members. Applicants may request up to \$500 in support. All applicants will be notified if they are or are not recipients of awards no later than January 30, 2014. Awardees will receive their funds at the Awards Luncheon Ceremony on Sunday, March 2, 2014, during the WAM conference at the Kellogg's Center on Campus at MSU.

WAM members, if you know of anyone with a project involving the creation of a garden of native plants at a school or other public space, encourage them to apply. The application process is easy and assistance with it is available. These award dollars are intended to assist in the purchase of native plants and not infrastructure, equipment etc. If you have any questions, please see the website or contact the WAM grant coordinator Maryann Whitman, listed therein.



Thalictrum Dioicum

Early Meadow-Rue

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WAM is an IRS 501c3 registered charitable organization.

WAM Educational Grant Program

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Your WAM membership expires annually on April 1. Please renew in advance of that date to keep your newsletter arriving. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please make your check or money order payable to WAM and mail with this completed form to:

Wildflower Association of Michigan
c/o Jean Weirich, WAM Treasurer

For additional information:

3387 Fulton
Muskegon, MI 49441

Online: www.wildflowersmich.org

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