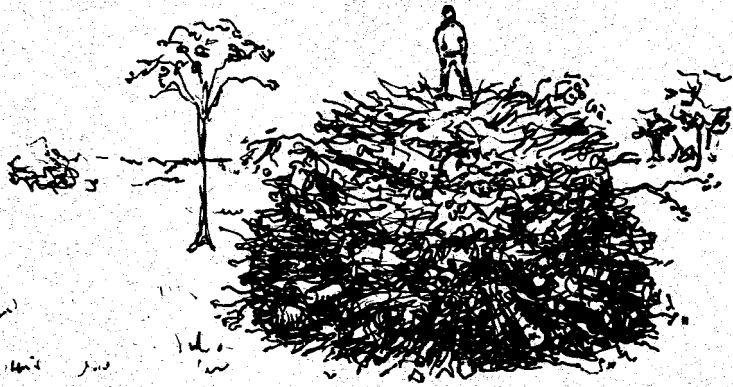


# Brush Piles



The NBPP Refrigerator Door Companion

Fall 1991

## Plants of the Season: Legumes

Among the most striking plants of our flora are the legumes: the vetches, clovers, indigos, and peas play a very important role in the communities we are working to manage and restore.

Because their deep powerful roots break up the hard clay subsoil, legumes are excellent soil builders. Of greater significance is the fact that these roots are dotted with tiny nodules that perform a biological magic trick. The nodules contain bacteria in the genus *Rhizobium* which convert gaseous nitrogen ( $\text{NO}_3$ ) from the air into nitrate compounds, ( $\text{NH}_4$ ) the same stuff we buy at the garden shop labeled "fertilizer". Even though we do not completely understand this process, known as nitrogen fixation, we do know that there are many species of *Rhizobium* and that in order to grow and thrive, legumes must find precisely the right one present in the soil. Therefore, before the seed of this family is planted it should be inoculated with the appropriate bacteria which, unfortunately, is not always readily available.

Most legumes have a cluster of typical pea flowers—a broad upper petal called a standard, two lateral petals or wings, and two bottom petals joined in a keel that hides 10 stamens. Leaves are pinnately or (less frequently) palmately compound. Fruits are pealike—one-chambered pods that open along a seam. The seeds are hard and thought to be long-lived in the soil. This can aggravate problems with weeds such as white sweet clover which come back year after year from seed lurking in the soil.

Economic botanists place legumes, particularly peas, soybeans, beans, clover, peanuts, lentils, ornamentals, and tropical hardwoods, high on their lists of important plants.

Familiar North Branch legumes are lead plant (*Amorpha canescens*), purple and white prairie clovers (*Petalostemius purpureum* and *P. candidum*), cream and white wild indigo (*Baptisia leucophaea* and *B. leucantha*), and show tick trefoil (*Desmodium canadense*).

Lead plant is one of only a few prairie shrubs, although frequent fires minimize its woodiness. Delicate grey green leaves, and an atypical single-petalled purple flower with 10 brilliant orange anthers dazzle us in June and July. Rated a whopping 10 on the Wilhelm Rating Scale, the presence of lead plant indicates a high quality natural area. It is highly palatable and was grazed out of many disturbed sites. (The Wilhelm Scale is used by naturalists to evaluate the quality of a site. All plants receive a rating that is an indicator of its rarity. Ten is the highest for plants that are not endangered.)

The two Baptisias, cream and white wild indigo, are sometimes confused. Both have long wands of large pea flowers but the white is a much more erect plant with white flowers and smooth leaves and stems. Cream wild indigo, the rarer of the two, has pubescent (hairy) leaves and stems, and flowers earlier in the year. Russell Kirt, Illinois botanist, points out that because of their early bloom, *B. leucophaea* is pollinated by a queen bumblebee that has just emerged from over wintering, while *B. leucantha* is pollinated by her offspring, the worker bumblebees. The common name derives from its use as a substitute for indigo, the old world dye plant.

The seed dispersal mechanism gives *Desmodium canadense* its common name tick trefoil. The hooked hairs on the pod (called loment) stick to any passing animal who then carries it to another location. Thoreau wrote: "Though you were running for your life, they would have time to catch and cling to your clothes..."

One last note. Because they are so important to restoration, several legumes are being cultivated in our wild seed gardens. Violet bush clover (*Lespedeza violaceae*) and Canada milk vetch (*Astragalus canadense*) are two current candidates for adoption by North Branchers.

L M R

## NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT

# Fall Workdays and Activities Schedule 1991

The NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT is working to restore and manage the few remaining prairie remnants along the North Branch of the Chicago River in the Cook County Forest Preserves. These areas, once part of a vast grassland ecosystem, are under tremendous pressure from urban development and non-native species. We are working to restore conditions that will allow these natural wild communities to flourish as a permanent part of the metropolitan area.

### Fall 1991

Morning workdays are from 9am to 12 noon; afternoon workdays are from 1:30pm to 4:30pm. Workdays which are scheduled for days other than Sunday are italicized

In the fall we work on brush control, collect seeds, and conduct controlled burns. Dress for the weather and bring some water. Bring a lunch and join the group for lunch and great company whether or not you can stay for the afternoon work session. For more information call Joanne Softcheck at 312 878-3877.

SEED COLLECTING days are Wednesdays; the site for collecting will be determined each week by which seeds are ripe. Details will be available by the preceding Sunday evening at the North Branch phone #: 312 878-3877.

Sunday	September 8	9am	Miami Woods
Sunday	September 15	9am	Sauganash
Wednesday	September 18	10am	SEED COLLECTING
Saturday	September 21	9am	Miami
Sunday	September 22	9am	Somme Woods
Sunday	September 22	1:30pm	Somme
Wednesday	September 25	10am	SEED COLLECTING
Saturday	September 28	9am	Miami
Saturday	September 28	1:30pm	ECOLOGY TOUR OF SOMME WOODS SAVANNA
Sunday	September 29	9am	Somme
Sunday	September 29	1:30pm	Somme
Wednesday	October 2	10am	SEED COLLECTING
Saturday	October 5	2pm	PLANT IDENTIFICATION COURSE AT SOMME WOODS
Sunday	October 6	9am	Somme
Sunday	October 6	1:30pm	Somme
Wednesday	October 9	10am	SEED COLLECTING
Sunday	October 13	9am	Somme
Sunday	October 13	1:30pm	Somme
Wednesday	October 16	10am	SEED COLLECTING
Saturday	October 19	9am	Miami
Sunday	October 20	9am	Somme
Sunday	October 20	1:30pm	Somme
Wednesday	October 23	10am	SEED COLLECTING
Saturday	October 26	9am	Miami
Sunday	October 27	9am	Wayside
Wednesday	October 30	10am	SEED COLLECTING

## NORTH BRANCH WORKGROUPS

The six North Branch workgroups listed below need volunteers. Contact the chairperson for more information or attend a workgroup meeting. The next **Coordinating Committee** meeting will be October 16.

### Ecological Management:

Jane Balaban, 708-679-4289  
Robert Lonsdorf, 312-508-1515  
Next meeting: October 24

### Education:

Cora Sue Nicholas, 312-262-8643  
Next meeting: September 3

### Publications:

Karen Holland, 312-929-7658  
Next meeting: Call for information

### Publicity:

Gail Schmoller, 312-935-0654  
Next meeting: Call for information

### Science:

Susanne Masi, 312-973-2608  
Next meeting: Call for information

Volunteer Development:

Saturday	November 2	9am	SEED MIXING AT EMILY OAKS NATURE CENTER
Sunday	November 3	9am	Somme
Sunday	November 10	9am	Wayside
Sunday	November 10	1:30pm	Harms Woods
Sunday	November 17	9am	Somme
Sunday	November 17	1:30pm	Buffalo Grove
Sunday	November 24	9am	Somme
Sunday	November 24	1:30pm	Glenbrook HS Nature Preserve
Sunday	December 1	9am	Wayside (Thanksgiving weekend)
Sunday	December 1	<b>AFTERNOON: OUR ANNUAL HARVEST FEAST, CELEBRATING THE END OF THE WORKDAY YEAR</b>	

### *Directions*

**BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE** (Buffalo Grove) - Turn north on Johnson Drive, which is the first light west of Milwaukee on Lake-Cook Rd. Meet in Cryovac lot, the first driveway on the west side of Johnson Dr. The prairie is under the Com Ed power lines.

**GLENBROOK H.S.** (Northbrook) - The high school is north of Willow Rd. on the west side of Shermer Rd. Enter the parking lot at the north driveway and park by the tennis courts.

**HARMS WOODS** (formerly Glenview Woods) - Meet at Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on west side of Harms Road, just south of Glenview Road.

**MIAMI WOODS PRAIRIE** (Morton Grove/Niles) - Meet at Miami Woods Prairie Forest Preserve parking lot on east side of Caldwell Ave., two blocks north of Oakton Ave.

**SAUGANASH PRAIRIE** (Chicago) - Meet at edge of Forest Preserve along south side of Bryn Mawr Ave. at Kilbourn Ave. (south of Peterson Ave. and east of Cicero Ave.)

**SOMME WOODS PRAIRIE** (Northbrook) - Take Dundee Rd. 2 miles west from Edens Expwy. to Waukegan Rd. Go north a few hundred feet on Waukegan and meet at the unpaved parking area on the west side of the road.

**WAYSIDE WOODS PRAIRIE** (Morton Grove) - Meet at Wayside Woods Prairie Forest Preserve parking lot on Lehigh Ave. (a few blocks east of Waukegan Rd. and just north of Dempster Ave.)

Brush Piles Crew:  
Edit: Barbara Rose  
Design: Joel Spears

Ted Wright, 312-871-0127  
Next meeting: November 6

### **TWO REMINDERS!**

The third Crew Leader Training class will be held on September 22 from 1:30-3:30 at Somme Woods.

The meeting for all committee members to approve the Charter and Bylaws will be held on Saturday, October 19 at North Park Village Nature Center.

### **NORTH PARK VILLAGE SAVANNA WORKDAYS**

These are Saturday mornings from 9am to noon.  
Dates are:

October 5  
November 9  
December 7

Meet at North Park Village Nature Center (Nature Center Building), 5801 N. Pulaski in Chicago. Call at 312 583-3714 for more information.

**SIC SEMPER ALLIARIIS**  
By Jim Cutler

Obscene, in fetid patches clustered,  
Defiant stood the garlic mustard:  
The project saw the need;  
We blitzed the hated weed,  
And left triumphant and unflustered.



This fall, an exciting variety of workshops are available through the Volunteer Stewardship Network :

#### **VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP NETWORK FALL WORKSHOPS:**

##### **Point Quarter Technique of Sampling Woody Vegetation**

Ralph Thornton, Director of Camp Sagawau, will instruct the class on the point quarter technique of sampling woody vegetation. How to do it, the reasoning behind this technique, and how the data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted. After inside instruction the class will actually go out and test this sampling technique on the grounds. Bring your lunch.

**Date:** Saturday, September 14

**Time:** 9am-3pm

**Place:** Camp Sagawau, at Route 2 and Highway 83 in Lemont. Take I55 to Rt. 83. Cross river and canals and continue south 1/4 mile to first stoplight where 83 turns east. Turn left (east) on 83. Entrance to Camp Sagawau is immediately on the left. If coming west on 83, the Camp is on the right, 3 miles west of 104th Ave. (Willow Springs Rd.) just before the first stoplight.

##### **Identifying Trees**

Pat Armstrong, of Prairie Sun Consultants in Naperville, will teach the class to recognize the trees and several shrubs of Northeastern Illinois savannas and forests. Leaves, bark, buds, shape and habitat will be considered. Bring a hand lens.

**Date:** Saturday, October 5

**Time:** 1pm-3pm

**Place:** Green Valley Woods Forest Preserve in Woodridge, DuPage County. If you come on I355, exit at 75th St. and head west. Coming from the east on the East-West Toll Rd. (I88), exit onto Rt. 53 and go south. If you come from the west on I88 you must exit at Naperville Rd. and go east to Rt. 53. Take 53 south to 75th St. and turn west. The first stop light is Greene Rd., turn south here and go to the first right which is 79th St. (there will be a sign saying "Thunderbird Youth Camp"). Take 79th St. 1/2 mile and turn at the first left. drive back to a parking lot.

##### **Burn Workshop**

Ed Collins, of the McHenry County Conservation District, will lecture and provide classroom demonstrations and considerations of a variety of burn situations (on paper). Ed encourages audience participation, questions and discussion.

**Date:** Saturday, November 2

**Time:** 1pm-3pm

**Place:** The College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn. Take Lambert Rd. or Rt. 53 north from Rt. 56 (Butterfield Rd.) or south from Rt. 38 (Roosevelt Rd.). The college is officially located at Lambert Rd. and 22nd St., however, it is so large that taking either road will get you in sight of it. The room number is SRC 1048. That is in the Student Resource Center which is the large, curving, glassed building. Access to this room is gained from the cafeteria. There is plenty of parking.

##### **Managing for Grassland Birds**

John Elliot, of River Trails Nature Center, will describe various grassland birds, their diverse habitats, and food preferences. If you volunteer at a grassland site or just like birds, you will find this workshop of value.

**Date:** Saturday, November 16

**Time:** 10am-12pm

**Place:** The College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn. See November 2 workshop for directions.

***Please register for all workshops at least two weeks in advance. For an update, more information and to register, call Diane Nuter at The Nature Conservancy, 312-346-8166. All workshops are free of charge.***

**REGISTRATION FORM FOR  
NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE  
PROJECT CLASSES**

Name

Address

Daytime phone

Evening phone

**Please check the classes you are  
registering for:**

☐ Gentians and Asters (\$3)

☐ Fall Migration Bird Walk (\$3)

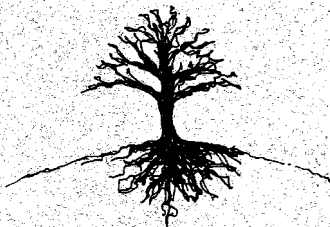
☐ Management Decision-making (\$3)

☐ Butterflies and Other Insects (\$3)

**Please mail this completed form  
and the required fee to:**

Joanne Softcheck  
4537 N. Hamilton  
Chicago, IL 60625

*Make all checks payable to the  
North Branch Prairie Project.*



***NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT FALL CLASSES:***

**Identifying Asters and Gentians**

Using slides and herbarium sheets, Jane and John Balaban will help you to identify these late-blooming plants while many are still in flower on North Branch sites. Bring your favorite wildflower guides and/or keys to class.

**Date:** Thursday, September 26

**Time:** 7pm-9pm

**Place:** Emily Oaks Nature Center, 4650 Brummel St., Skokie, (a map will be included with registration confirmation)

**Class Size:** Min. 10/Max. 30

**Fee:** \$3.00

**Registration Deadline:** Friday, September 13

**Fall Migration Bird Walk**

Wayne Svoboda, Board Member of North Park Village Nature Center and active, experienced bird surveyor and member of the Audubon Society and the Chicago Ornithological Society, will guide participants in a walk to observe water, woodland and prairie birds. Birds which are not normally seen here in the summer will be migrating through the area at this time.

Hopefully participants will be eager to volunteer as breeding bird surveyors for future studies.

**Date:** Saturday, September 28

**Time:** 8:30am-10:30am

**Place:** Sauganash Prairie, See *Directions* under Fall Workday Schedule.

**Class Size:** 20

**Fee:** \$3.00

**Registration Deadline:** Friday, September 13

**Management Decision-Making: What Would You Do Here?**

Robert Lonsdorf, co-steward at Miami Woods Prairie, has designed a class for those volunteers who are interested in grappling with the kind of management questions that a steward faces when both drafting an annual management plan and when deciding what to do on a given workday. After a discussion of the various elements of making management plans, teams of participants will be asked to formulate relevant questions and approaches for themselves through evaluating a specific area's restoration potentials, priorities and threats. Decisions will be presented and discussed by the group. Class materials will include site maps, Miami's 1990 and 1991 management plans, and the North Branch's management planning tool and activity calendar. A baseline understanding of restoration principles and techniques is strongly advised. This class will be helpful to work crew leaders and would-be stewards.

**Date:** Saturday, October 12

**Time:** 1:30pm-4:30pm

**Place:** Miami Woods Prairie. Park in lot nearest the Forest Preserve entrance east of Caldwell Ave. and north of Oakton.

**Class Size:** Max. 15

**Fee:** \$3.00

**Registration Deadline:** Friday, September 13

**Butterflies and Other Insects of Prairies and Savannas in Northern Illinois**

Doug Taron, Coordinator of the Volunteer Stewardship Network's Butterfly Monitoring Program and Co-Steward for Butterfly Monitoring at Bluff Spring Fen, will present a slide show and lecture on the ecology, restoration, and management of insect groups in this region followed by questions and answers/discussion time.

**Date:** Wednesday, October 23

**Time:** 7pm-8:30pm

**Place:** Emily Oaks Nature Center, 4650 Brummel St., Skokie (a map will be included with registration confirmation)

**Class Size:** Min. 10/Max. 40

**Fee:** \$3.00

**Registration Deadline:** Friday, October 11