

SE MN Prairie Partners Chapter Newsletter June 2022 Volume 11 issue 2



Dave Kuhnau shares his wealth of knowledge about Koester Prairie to tour participants Pat and Judith as we come down the hill. Photo by Bruce Dybvik



USDA zones 3-9 Part Shade - Shade 3-5' W x 3-4' H

Propagation - Division, Vegetative

Part(s) of plant harvested

Flavor - Similar to Asparagus, which this plant is related to

Other Info - False Solomon's Seal (Maianthemum racemosum) looks similar, but

True Solomon's Seal Polygonatum biflorum Native Origin - Eastern & Central North America

Pete Widin covered gardening with Native Edible plants in his presentation. Always get an absolute confirmation on identification prior to eating any new plants.



Bloodroot surrounded by Virginia Waterleaf at Cannon River Valley Park. Photo by Michelle **Johnson**



Prairie Dropseed (Sporobolus heterolepsis) as a border in a garden. Photo by Pat Johnson



Guide Dave Kuhnau shows prairie plants to tour participants Ann, Pat, and Jean. Photo by Bruce Dybvik



Early Figwort (Scrophularia lanceolatain) in bloom in the Koester Prairie. Not the showiest of plants, but is a big draw for bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds! Photo by **Bruce Dybvik**

Prairie Partners Chapter 2022 officers

President – Barb Bolan Vice President – Nancy Schumacher Secretary – Pat Johnson Web Master & Treasurer – Jim Sipe Membership Chair – Alice Burmeister Newsletter Chair – Ann Dybvik

Wild Ones Mission: Native Plants, Natural Landscaping promote environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

Wild Ones National Address: 2285 Butte des Morts Beach Road, Neenah, WI 54956 www.wildones.org

Membership: Sign up/ renew online at www.wildoneones.org/membership.html or by mail at above address. Cost is \$40 per year for a household (family) membership. Student and other membership types also available.

Northfield Prairie Partners Mission Statement: To preserve, maintain and provide knowledge of native and restored plant communities in a way that fosters friendship.

Northfield Prairie Partners online:

www.northfield.wildones.org

Wild Ones: SE MN Prairie Partners | Facebook

Newsletter Committee: Lead: Ann Dybvik, Chief Photographer: Bruce Dybvik, Committee: Nancy Schumacher, Jim Sipe, Gary Bullemer, Barb Bolan

Submitting articles for the newsletter – We welcome stories about natural areas, a native

garden you have visited or designed, a nature-based vacation, a special flower, bird, butterfly, etc. Please contact Ann Dybvik at anndbvk@gmail.com to discuss your ideas.

Prairie Partners member local Services

(Please let us know if you have one to list)

Minnesota Native Landscapes (MNL), INC:

Dwayne Vosejpka 651-214-2357

RBNC –River Bend Nature Center, <u>www.rbnc.org</u>, Packy Mader, Board of Directors

Halfpint Hollow Miniature Donkeys: Rod and Sue White, 507-263-2716

Goat Dispatch: Jake Langeslag, Faribault 507-333-5959

CRP – Clean River Partnership: Paula Corsi at https://crwp.net/

Notes from Prairie Partners President

by Barb Bolan

Hi all. Hopefully you are enjoying the summer and finding time to get out exploring. As you travel, or watch nature from home, or discover something new and exciting, please remember to think of our winter newsletter and take some cool photos you'd like to share with us. It is really fun seeing what everyone saw and did throughout the year.

Also, we are working on the 2023 schedule for events and tours. Please send me a note if you have any suggestions or ideas or something you would like to learn more about, or speaker you'd like to hear from, and we will see what we can do.

2022 remaining Chapter Programs – PLEASE NOTE: tour dates are subject to change.

July 14th, 5PM - Lashbrook Park led Ken Kirton and group potluck starting at 6:30PM

Aug 11 Bus trip – Whitewater State Park Native Garden, tour led by Joel Dunnette

Sep 8th, 6PM – Dakota County White-tail Park native prairie tour - led by park naturalists

Oct 13th, 6PM– Fall and winter trees – Breanna Wheeler – Hauburg Woods or in church, determined by weather. Followed by fall festival appetizer and desert potluck in church.

Nov 10th, 7PM – Ducks and Duck decoys, by Gary Bullemer. Emmaus Church

Dec 8th, 11:30AM Lunch – Location TBD

December - Nature watching where you are.

May 2022 Presentation – "Spring Ephemerals at Cannon River Wilderness Park" Led by Janet Petri, Master Naturalist



Trout Lily. Photo by Janet Petri

Spring ephemeral tours are always well worth the long winter's wait. Janet Petri, a Wildflower expert and terrific guide, took us through the park where we saw Bloodroot, Hepatica, Trout lilies, Blue Cohosh, Spring Beauty, False

Solomon's Seal, Marsh Marigolds, Cow Parsnip, False Rue anemone, Wild Ginger, Native Columbine, Jack-in-the-Pulpits and more. We toured from the East entrance which leads to wooded hills and valleys full of ephemerals.

Though much of the Wilderness Park suffered very heavy damage in the 2018 fall tornados, most trails are now open. There are about 850 acres of wooded valleys along the Cannon River, donated by farmers in the 1970s, that make it an excellent place for birding, finding flowers, mushrooms, trees, or just relaxing and enjoying the natural beauty of the park.

(friendsofcannonriverwildernessarea.org)

June 2022 Koester Prairie Tour -led by

Dave Kuhnau

Eleven Prairie Partner members gathered the evening of June 16th for a hike



Photo by Bruce Dybvik

around Koester Prairie. Our guide, Dave Kuhnau shared the history and knowledge of the area as we hiked up small and larger hills.

Located on 459.89 acres, this expansive prairie is full of interesting plants, birds, and wildlife with rolling topography, rock outcroppings, and prairie grassland. The horizon was beautiful and expansive and populated with a variety of both resident and migrating birds.

The land that constitutes this prairie was purchased by the Koester family decades ago. It is managed by using a "working lands" approach that varies with the need, from preparing fields for new plantings to removing invasive species. These activities are performed by volunteers from Friends of Prairie Creek and others. Bird watchers, hikers, rock outcrops, deer, pheasants, turkey, doves, other upland birds and wildlife all share the space. There is even an off-road parking area for interested people to park and enjoy nature in a natural, beautiful setting.

Member Profile: Jean Novotny

Hi all, my name is Jean Novotny. In January of 2021 I moved from rural Northfield into the city of Northfield. I had a large flower garden with just a few natives at my previous home and spent many wonderful hours in my garden. Unfortunately, due to divorce, I had to leave my rural home of 32 years. I came to Wild Ones looking for my new reality.

A friend and I happened to be on Bridge Square for Earth Day 2021 and found local Wild Ones chapter information. I had never heard of the group. Barb Bolan was manning (or should I say womaning) the table. I had first met Barb in 1987 when I worked at Stanton at what was then Northrup King. My friend and I signed up immediately. I have enjoyed the group and learned a lot.

I grew up in a small south-central town on the Minnesota River. We lived on the edge of town where I roamed free from an early age, exploring and observing. There, at the age of 8, my life changed. I spotted a fully grown Cecropia caterpillar crawling up our stucco house. I was hooked. It was unlike anything I had ever seen. I started researching it and became more and more excited about nature. I started a nature club with a friend where we studied trees, wildflowers, birds, insects,

mammals, rocks, reptiles and amphibians. For the next three years we had a neighborhood nature exhibit where



Cecropia moth caterpillar

we would show the things we had collected with some information. It was a wonderful time. Because of my interest in the natural world, I got a B.S. in Biology.

I have now become very interested in growing native plants. Thanks to the SE Prairie Partners chapter, I received a grant to plant some natives in my new yard. I had two circular beds installed and filled them with some young plants that I am dutifully caring for. I can't wait till next spring when they come back big and strong! Last year I planted several natives that I got at the Prairie Partners plant sale. They came back in the spring looking very healthy. I'm very happy that I came across Barb last year. Being a member of our Wild Ones group has given my "new reality" a big boost.



Golden Guides Jean used as a young girl

Board Meeting: Following are highlights of the June 14, 2022, SE MN Prairie Partners Board Meeting. Attending: Barb Bolan, Pat Johnson, Nancy Schumacher, Jim Sipe, and Ann Dybvik. Submitted by Pat Johnson

- Secretary report: Pat circulated minutes prior to the meeting. They were approved.
- Treasurer's update: Balances: Checking = \$11,865, Savings = \$4,823. We netted \$2337 on the plant sale. Expenditures have totaled \$741.60 to date this year.
- Membership update: National sends multiple reminders about renewal dates but many don't notice or receive them.
- Plant Sale: Nancy: Great sale. We will likely use South Cedar again and continue staging the night before close to the sale site.
- Presentation Tables We plan to host a table at the Rice County Fair. Member help would be greatly appreciated.
- We are working on the 2023 schedule.
 Inputs will be greatly appreciated.

Native Plant Profile, Prairie Dropseed, by

Pat Johnson

Sporobolus heterolepsis (Prairie Dropseed) is a member of the grass family



(Poaceae). It is found throughout Minnesota's prairie regions, adapting to many habitats. It can grow in dry and sandy soils or prairie's wet mesic habitats. It prefers full sun. It grows in tidy, round clumps that are 18-24 inches tall and wide.

Prairie Dropseed has leaves that are basal and alternate on the lower stem. They are hairless but slightly rough on the underside and along the edges, with a wiry appearance. Stems are slender, hairless, erect to ascending, and multiple from the base. Vegetative shoots are numerous, forming dense mounds of flowering and non-flowering stems, the arching leaves radiating from the center of the clump. Flowers appear in late summer and early fall. Flower clusters (spikelets) are loosely arranged on branches and give the plant an airy appearance. In the fall the plant turns golden and holds a vellowish color all winter. It emits an aroma that some find very fragrant. Others think it smells like popcorn. Alan Branhagen, in Native Plants of the Midwest, reports that plantings on Drake University, Des Moines, IA were removed because people complained of the smell!

Despite the disagreement about its aroma, Prairie Dropseed is widely cultivated in traditional landscapes as well as prairie plantings. It can be propagated by seed or by dividing clumps. Planting plugs is the easiest way to establish the plant. I have used it in several yard plantings to give a lower-growing edge that makes a messier prairie planting appear tidy.

For more detailed descriptions see: https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/grass-sedge-rush/prairie-dropseed

Member-sponsored Native Gardens.

We have accepted three applications thus far for the 2022 Member-sponsored Native Gardens. The goal of these gardens is to have more people use native plants in their landscapes. We offer a



One of Jean Novotny's circle gardens from the Member-sponsored Native Garden grant program

grant of \$200 to help pay for native plants for approved projects in southeastern Minnesota. Two have completed their projects. If you wish to participate, please contact Barb Bolan.

April 2022 presentation— "Landscaping with Native Edibles", Pete Widin, Artisan

Environments, LLC,

Pete Widin, a landscape designer, incorporates edible natives in many of



his designs. He helps property owners DIY their landscapes with a diversity of low maintenance, productive plantings that provide nourishment for humans and wildlife and help maintain soil and water quality. Whether a gardener is starting with a new yard or wanting to add natives and edible natives into existing gardens, Artisan Environments can help with the designs.

Some edibles he uses: Cut-leaf coneflower—cook leaves like spinach; Elderberry — good hedge for people and birds, properly cook berries; Ostrich Fern — fiddleheads, ferns can brown in late summer; Native Anise Hyssop — long bloomer, chopped leaves taste licoricey; Solomon's seal — related to asparagus, sauté stalks; Black chokeberry — use in smoothies with blueberries. Other options include Virginia bluebells, milkweed, hazelnut, Basswood, Wild strawberry, High-bush cranberry, Jerusalem artichoke and more.

Pete stresses that before you try eating any plant make sure to get highly accurate identification of it as there are some look-alike plants that are not edible. Eat only a small portion at first and follow preparation instructions closely.

2022 Plant Sale, by Nancy Schumacher

Our annual fund raiser native plant sale was held on May 18. Despite a forecast threatening rain, the weather turned out to be darn near perfect. We took a different approach this year – about half of the plants were produced by me with the remainder purchased from South Cedar Greenhouse. So, while our total sales were comparable to last year our net profit was down because of the purchases. Still, we were able to bank about \$2000 which puts us in a very good position moving forward.

Overall, we feel that the things worked well so we plan to take a similar approach next year. The folks at South Cedar Greenhouse were great to work with and we were happy with the quality of plants.

Many thanks are owed to those who helped out in a variety of ways to make the sale

happen. Members stored plants, moved plants and other materials, made plant labels, helped to get the word out and worked the day of the sale. A special thanks to Arlene who took all of the "leftovers" and sold every last one from her front yard.

I think we all enjoyed being a part of the event and deserve to be proud of ourselves.

June 2022 – "What's coming up in my garden?" by Nancy Schumacher

On June 9 a group of Wild Ones members and friends toured native gardens in Northfield. Our goal was to answer questions about "what's coming up in my native garden". The four gardens we visited are all part of the Lawns to Legumes Program. We were able to help participants identify second year plants as well some self-sown seedlings (offspring from plants that established last year). Perhaps, just as important, we identified a handful of plants that were unwanted weeds or overly aggressive natives that need to be kept in check - most notably, Canadian Goldenrod. The tour was very interactive with lots of questions and comments. I think we all learned something and had a good time in the process. Thanks to all of those who welcomed us to their gardens.



Nancy gets into the garden and shows us how to identify the young plants

Camden State Park by Gary Bullemer



Redwood River at Camden in the fall. Photo by Bill Dinesen, park manager.

A question I was asked many times in the 40 years I worked for Minnesota State Parks: "What's your favorite park?". The answer is ever changing, and today I would say it is Camden State Park. Let me explain why....

Located near Marshall in Lyon County, Camden State Park was established in 1935, as one of many Minnesota parks that were created in the New Deal era. During the Great Depression, we had quite an alphabet soup of programs designed to put people to work. The Emergency Conservation Work program (ECW) of 1933 was the source of many new initiatives, including the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC). The project to create Camden likely benefitted from all of these during the years of constructing the new park. In the roughly five years, they built many buildings, picnic grounds, roads and bridges, trails, a swimming pond and more, all adding up to an outstanding addition to the MN State Park system.

In 1935, the MN legislature formally created the Division of State Parks and the idea of providing parks within 40 miles of each state resident was hatched, so the quest to find areas to fit this bill really gathered steam. The site of Camden State Park had been used over many centuries, and not surprisingly, was chosen by Native Americans as a place to live because of the ready source of water, wood and food. Perhaps most importantly, in this valley of the Redwood River, they were protected from the winter winds. The settlement of Camden had a short life in the late 1800s and died out largely due to the decisions of where to locate railroad lines and facilities. Ironically, there is still a heavily used railroad line going through the park.



VCC camp at Camden during park construction in 1935.

The Redwood River headwaters are found in the Coteau des Prairies, the glacial moraine which forms the drainage divide separating the Missouri and Mississippi River watersheds. About 30 miles from its source, the river flows through Camden and provides many benefits to park visitors.

The valley floor and walls are mostly wooded. A large percent of the forest is sugar maple. This is the western most stand of maple in Minnesota, and the fall color is outstanding in

the park. You will find many of the same ephemeral spring flowers here as are found in the forests near Northfield, so it would feel familiar to many of our Wild Ones members in the spring of the year. In the past 30 or 40 years, much land surrounding the original acreage of Camden has been purchased and is managed as prairies and wetlands. The Camden Park staff have done outstanding work to restore and nurture the plant communities, and the myriad wildlife that call this area home. Park Manager Bill Dinesen has overseen this restoration effort for just over 20 years and deserves much credit for the wonderful efforts to preserve and protect this rare gem of a park!



Historic picture of original Camden Park entrance and manager's residence.

A couple recent improvements to the park are the creation of a paved regional trail between Camden and the city of Marshall, and the transformation of the former manager's residence into a lodging facility. These features of the park are among Bill's top sources of pride during his years as park manager. He is hopeful the trail will be extended in the years ahead, with the goal of allowing trail users to travel to Russell, MN and perhaps even further south to Twin Lakes Park at the county line.



Former park manager residence now serves as a lodge for visitors. Photo by Bill Dinesen

For a Wild Ones member, this amazing park has the spectrum of native plants of the prairies and woodlands to explore and enjoy. Many of us also love birding, and Camden is a great place to pursue this activity. If you go to this area, a sight-seeing trip along the Coteau is a must, I consider it one of my choices of top beautiful landforms in our great state (I would also recommend seeing the Prairie Coteau Scientific and Natural Area by Ruthton, MN)! If you like camping, Camden has sites in the valley or up on the hills above the river. Brawner Lake, within the park boundaries is another special feature to see and explore. I could go on, as the list of reasons to travel to western Minnesota and Camden are many, but I promise to tell the rest of the story in person if anyone wants to know more!

Jr. Naturalist Program from MN DNR

Do you have a young child or grandchild that loves nature? The MN DNR has a Jr.

Naturalist program that they may enjoy.

They offer several resources for budding naturalists, parents, and teachers.

<u>Junior Park Naturalist Program | Minnesota DNR</u> (state.mn.us) Jack-in-the-Pulpit (Arisaema triphyllum) – by Barb Bolan "The story of Jack and Jill and the fungus gnats."



While Jack-in-the-Pulpits are perhaps one of the best known and loved woodland native plants around, they quietly hold on to secrets that few of us ever hear about. These spring blooming

monocots are found throughout most of the Eastern half of North America and thrive in shady sites with moist, rich soil. They have 1 or 2 trifoliate leaves (3 leaflets per leaf = trifoliate), and 1 distinct flower.

Most of us just enjoy the unique and stoic simplicity of the Jack-in-the-Pulpits without realizing that they are actually quite an amazing story of one of nature's most creative evolutions. They are dioecious, meaning male and female flowers are borne on different plants. No big deal, other species use the same model, but a plant may be a "Jack" (male) one year then a "Jill" (aka Jackie) the next. So, by planting a male and a female together, a gardener may think the plants will just do their reproductive thing each year, but that may not work out right. And that isn't the only

intriguing twist in their lives.

The first few years, most Jack-in-the-Pulpits are male.
Later, if growth conditions are good, the plant may be a female. Conversely, if conditions are not



Male Jack-in-the Pulpit - 1 leaf with 3 leaflets

ideal, a male will show up again. With their gender flexibility, planting Jack-in-the-Pulpit plants will not guarantee that both sexes will be present in a garden in the future.

A Jack-in-the-Pulpit seed sprouts in spring. As the plant grows, an underground corm, or storage organ develops. Future plants will emerge from the corm. A short thick stalk (peduncle) arises from the corm, then one or two long petioles topped with a single trifoliate leaf grow from the peduncle. The flower forms at the apex of the peduncle and petiole(s).

Female and male plants can be distinguished easily, with no need to 'check-under-the-hood'. Female plants have two trifoliate leaves and can grow to over two feet tall. Male and barren plants tend to be smaller and usually have only one trifoliate leaf.

It takes significantly more energy for a plant to

produce seeds, so if a season is tough, a small corm is produced, and a male will reemerge next season. If enough energy is accrued in the



Female plant - 2 petioles, each with a trifoliate leaf on top.

corm during a growth season, a female will probably show up next time. This unique ability to respond to available resources is nature's way of patiently waiting until chances of successful seed production are high. The actual flowers are hidden by the "Jack" and a "Pulpit". The pulpit, technically a *spathe*, is a modified leaf that wraps around and bends gracefully down over the fleshy spike and the flowers.

Commonly referred to as a "jack," the fleshy spike is the top part of a *spadix*. The flower is the lower part of the spadix. Male and female flowers all have the pulpit/spathe and the Jack/spadix. Some plants may have a nonfunctioning female flower under the male.

Though some sources claim male spathes are reddish and females are green, my first flower dissections, and very reliable sources such as Minnesotawildflowers.info, disagree. Looking for large plants with two trifoliate leaves is a much more accurate prediction of the female.



Another fascinating process in the life of the Jack-in-the-Pulpit is their pollination. Fungus gnats and other small insects are attracted to a fungus-like smell emitted from the flowers; a smell so faint humans don't detect it. Since gnats lay their eggs on fungi to give their young a food supply, they are attracted to the funky smell of the flowers. The insects fly under the pulpit and find themselves trapped and deceived. There is no fungus. They want to leave but can't, so in a panic they dart about and try to climb out, but the flower is too slippery, and the hood prevents out-bound flights, so they remain trapped. Soon the insects fall to the bottom of the flower. Pollen also falls to the bottom of the flower, so in male flowers, the gnats and friends find themselves stuck in a pollen bath. Then thoroughly doused in pollen, they finally discover an escape route - male flowers have a

tiny hole at the base where gnats can get out. Once free, they get attracted to the musty scent of another flower, and having gnat brains, dive in only to find themselves trapped again. If it is a female plant this time, the gnats actually



Male flower with exit hole for fungus gnats

pollinate her as they bounce around desperate to get out but unfortunately for them, they are now truly trapped – the females evolved with

no escape hole so insects stay trapped and help assure pollination.

By late summer, the spathe and spadex have melted away, revealing a cluster of bright red berries in the female that are cherished by turkeys, wood thrushes and other birds.



Jack in the Pulpit seeds Photo by Judith Betchum

Indian Turnip is another common name for this plant. Native Americans used to grind properly dried corms into flour for cooking or used it for treating snakebites, colds and fevers. But please be warned, it is very critical to prepare and cook them properly to prevent getting painfully sick. Most parts of Jack-in-the-Pulpits contain high concentrations of calcium oxalate crystals, the same compound found in kidney stones, and can cause severe burning, swelling and digestion problems. It is not advisable to try eating any part of Jack-in-the-Pulpits.

The Fleshy corm with roots. The corm stores starch for next year's plant. Roots and new plants grow from the corm.



Butterfly or a Moth? By Barb Bolan

Sometimes it is easy to identify a moth and sometimes it is hard to tell at first glance if it is a moth or a butterfly, so here are some clues.

All butterflies have long, thin antennae with clubbed (thickened) tips. Our male moths have shorter, feathery antennae which they use to detect pheromones released by females. Female moths typically have simpler, thinner antenna but no North American moth has the clubbed ends on their antennae.

Butterflies often have their wings folded up at rest or open and close them while feeding on nectar or open them up to soak up sunshine. Most moths rest with their wings flat or folded as a "roof" over their bodies. Moths *usually* have chubbier bodies than butterflies.

Sometimes we here that moths are only active at night, but actually butterflies are active during the day, while moths may be active night or day, depending on the species.

Fuzzy or hairy caterpillars are moths. Butterfly caterpillars may have spikes but are not fuzzy or hairy. If it's a smooth caterpillar, it could be either a moth or a butterfly.

Chart is based on "Birds and Blooms" post.

Moth	Characteristic	Butterfly
Non-clubbed,	Antennae	Clubbed
feathery in		
males		
Often Chubby	Body size	Often Slim
Wings spread	Resting	Wings usually
flat	posture	folded upright
Night or day	Flight tIme	Day
Fuzzy, Hairy,	Caterpillar	Spikey or
can be smooth		smooth



Hummingbird Clearwing Moth female - chubby body, no antenna clubs or feathering



Grapevine Skeletonizer Moth male -feathery antenna



Northern Pearly-eye Butterfly - note clubbed antennae, upright wing posture at rest



Tussock Moth Caterpillar - very hairy



Monarch Caterpillar - hairless -by Sue White

Return Address: Barb Bolan 9700 Baldwin Ave Northfield, MN 55057

Sharp-lobed Hepatica at Cannon River Wilderness Park. Photo by tour guide Janet Petri



Clay-colored Sparrow, common in the Koester Prairie. Photo by Barb Bolan



Blue Cohosh unfurling. Cannon River Wilderness Park. By Norma Gilbertson.

Address Label



The Gilbertson's had a Queen Rusty-patched bee this spring! By Norma



Trout Lily in bloom. Cannon River Wilderness Park.



2018 Storm damage at Cannon River Wilderness Park. Photo by Michelle Johnson



Spring Azure Butterfly - note clubbed antennae, upright folded wings. Photo by Barb Bolan



Bloodroot surrounded by Virginia Waterleaf.
Cannon River Wilderness Park. Photo by Michelle