

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWS LETTER
 Fall 1969

WHAT TO SEE

Helen Turner - Editor

Over all the country the march of the seasons is followed eagerly, from the first timid signs of early spring through the explosion of early summer. Then, as the weeks pass, the flowers grow bigger and brighter, deeper in color, until now, in October, the whole countryside is waving its banners of scarlet and gold, the leaves of our native trees.

The plant physiologist tells us that the color is due to a yellow chemical, *carotene*, and a red pigment, *anthocyanin*, that appear only when the *chlorophyll* fades from the leaves.

The ecologist tells us that this change occurs when days are bright and clear and nights cool, and that we are fortunate to be one of three places in the world with this climate.

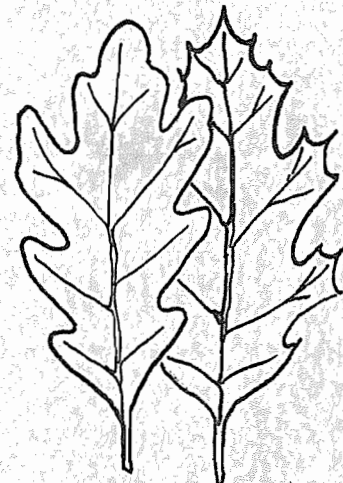
The poet sings the praises of "October's bright blue weather".



Staghorn Sumac

Along the Path, from end to end, the most brilliant color is in the leaves and fruit of the *sumac*.

Through the upland woods these two *oaks* are the best in color. The *red oak* is more brilliant, the *white* a more muted dusty red.



White Oak Red Oak



Gray Dogwood

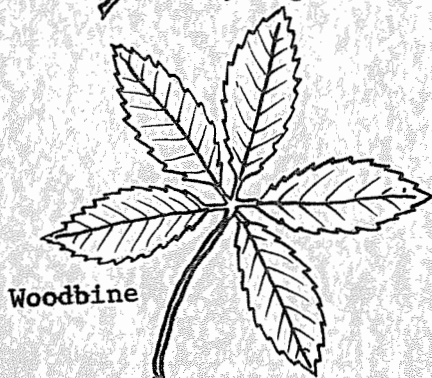
Almost as widespread as the sumac is the *gray dogwood*. It makes a smoky red ruffle along the Path.

The *wild rose* is common along the prairie edges. Both the rose hips and the leaves have a good red color.



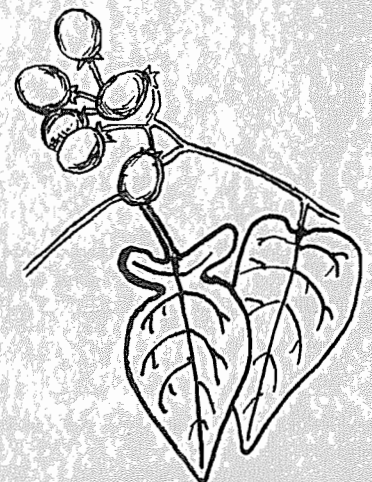
Wild Rose

Woodbine turns a brilliant red. So does poison ivy! But poison ivy has only three leaflets and the *woodbine* has five.



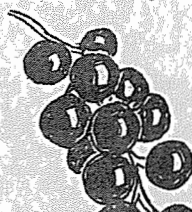
Woodbine

Nightshade, very common, has purple leaves and red berries.



Nightshade

Many fruits are very colorful too.



Grape

WORK OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

Elmhurst Last month in preparation for meeting with the Jaycees, I walked again, with Barbara Lewis, the two miles of the Prairie Path in Elmhurst. I found it even more inviting than I expected. Even the two disturbed sections, west from Spring Road and east from Poplar, were fringed with sunflowers, sumac, and gray dogwood, just beginning to turn autumn red. These two sections are destined to be developed as play and park areas. The center portion, between Spring and Poplar, still harbors a good piece of prairie, incredibly lovely on that clear September day. The Jaycees, with Mr. Chybik as chairman, have undertaken the task of coordinating the efforts of the Path volunteers; scouts, Camp Fire Girls, garden clubs, and interested individuals; the city government; and the park board of Elmhurst. They expect to put down a four-foot gravel path for easy walking and cycling from Salt Creek to the toll road. The landscaping for the east and west half-mile stretches was designed by Mrs. May Watts and has several unique and delightful features. When the plans that have been submitted to the city council are effected, Elmhurst will have a place set aside, not for parking, but for walking, for study, for play or just for wonder.

Lakewood Last spring the Friends of Our Native Landscape who maintain the section of the Path east from highway 59, constructed a "council ring". It is located in a cut in the north bank, sheltered from the wind, a resting place dedicated to Jens Jensen.

Item This fall three more people have adopted sections of the path for maintenance.

ACTIVITIES

Annual Meeting The annual meeting of the Prairie Path members will be held at the Morton Arboretum in the Thornhill Building at 2 p.m. on Sunday, November 2. We are delighted to tell you that the speaker will be Mr. William Rutherford, Director of the Illinois Department of Conservation. The meeting is for members only but memberships will be available at the door.

Members Walks About forty people met on September 27 for a walk led by Dr. Warren Keck. The next walk will be on October 18.

Talks As an indication of how active our principal speaker, Mrs. Sindt, has been, she has driven more than 2,000 miles within the county to meet with groups this year.

Area Meetings The Glen Ellyn meeting, held September 12, was sponsored by The Friends of our Native Landscape. It was well attended.

OLD AND NEW

Old Is someone interested in taking care of the Prairie Path booth? This will mean storing it and making it available to any organization wanting to use it. Storage space required, about 4 by 4 by 3 feet. Write Box 5, Wayne, Illinois 60184.

New A 32 page booklet, a guide to the natural history of the Prairie Path is now available. It has illustrations of more than 100 varieties of trees, flowers, animal tracks; also suggested walks, maps, a bird list, and much more. Text and illustrations are by Helen Turner. Price \$1.00 postpaid. Send your orders to Miss Helen Turner, 125 S. Brainard Street, Naperville, Illinois 60540. Special price on orders of more than 20.