

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

SUMMER, 1982

Burr Oak



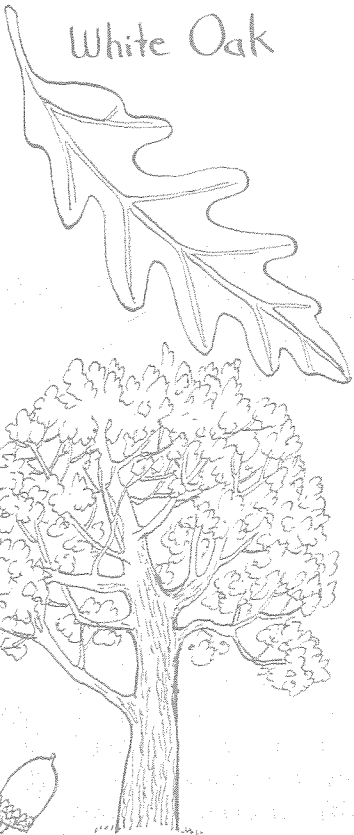
What to look for - Oaks

Summer is the time to identify our native oak trees. Many oaks grow on or near the Prairie Path, and all four of these oaks are common in Cook, DuPage and Kane Counties.

Burr oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) is known for its tough corky bark, large round-tipped leaves divided by a deep middle cut and branches that remind one of sharp elbows. The branches end with many rough twigs. The acorns peek out of a shaggy cap. With the corky bark burr oaks could withstand prairie fires so many of them are very old.

White oak (*Quercus alba*) is the state tree of Illinois. It is more graceful than the burr oak and its bark especially towards the top of the tree is silver and smooth. The leaf has rounded tips with shallow lobes and the long sweet acorns sit in small cups. The white oak is disappearing from our cities because its shallow roots can't stand disturbances, not even a lawnmower.

White Oak

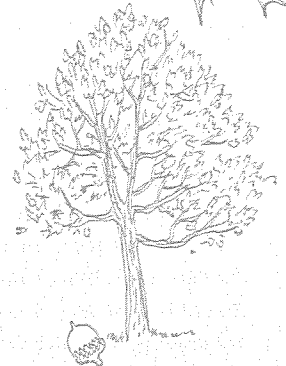


Red oak (*Quercus rubra*) is majestic with its up-reaching branches. It can easily be identified in the winter as its leaves stay on and on. . .The leaves have pointed tips, the acorns are large, bitter, and fit into a shallow cup. The leaves turn a deep copper red in the fall.

Red Oak



Many people have planted Pin oaks (*Quercus palustris*) since they are faster growers than most oak trees. Pin oaks need iron to keep from turning yellow in the summer. Related to the red oak the pin oak leaves are smaller and have sharp bristles on the tips but look like the red oak. The acorns are small versions of the red oak. The fall color is a beautiful red.



Pin Oak

ARDMORE STATION TO BE RESTORED

On April 17, Prairie Path friends and representatives of various Villa Park civic organizations met at the old Chicago, Aurora and Elgin station on Ardmore Avenue to begin the time-consuming task of restoration. In one morning the enthusiastic volunteers gutted the building and removed the decayed modern paneling and ceiling tiles to reveal the original tongue-in-groove wooden walls and ceiling still in excellent condition. Plans are to restore the building to its turn-of-the-century appearance and, if all goes well, to have it ready late this summer as a way station for Prairie Path bicyclists, hikers, and joggers.

One of those who pitched in to help was John Sinibaldi, a Villa Park trustee, who said the project has the warm approval of the village board. "It represents the first mode of public transport in Villa Park," he explained. "Many fine stations along the C.A. and E. were just bulldozed and destroyed, so it's nice to see this one being restored."

Patty Christophersen, representing Villa Park's Historical Commission, said that the picturesque cobblestone and brick station was built in 1910 and served the railroad well until operations ceased in the late fifties. Long neglected, the building was finally purchased in 1976 by the Villa Park Bicentennial Commission, together with the larger C.A. and E. station at Villa Avenue for a total price of \$8,000. On July 4, 1976, the two stations were dedicated and turned over to the village. The Villa Ave. station is now the home of the Villa Park Historical Society. The Ardmore station, though smaller, is actually older; and in November, 1980, it achieved the distinction of being listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as one of only fourteen such sites in DuPage County.

"It's going to take a lot of work," said Dick Diebold, Prairie Path Board member and professional cabinetmaker, who is organizing and directing the restoration. "The building is basically sound though, and we're finding a lot of nice things like the beaded wood paneling, the old copper-plated hinges and other hardware, the latticed windows, and the large stone fireplace. We need the volunteer help of skilled tradesmen, especially electricians, roofers, masons, glaziers, plumbers and carpenters, to keep costs down. Landscaping and plantings will also be needed to beautify the exterior. When we're through, this will be a real showplace!"

The Ardmore Station Restoration Committee announces that donations to help this long-awaited and inspiring project may be sent to the Ardmore Station Restoration Fund, Villa Park Trust and Savings Bank, Park and Princeton, Villa Park, Illinois 60181.

WALK BIKES AT WESLEY BRIDGE!

Recognizing that the Wesley Street and Manchester Road intersection presents the multiple traffic hazards of a narrow bridge, steep hill, and blind curve, the City of Wheaton recently passed an ordinance forbidding left turns on Manchester for southbound vehicles. Because this intersection is part of the Prairie Path Wheaton Detour, southbound Path cyclists will no longer be able to make their accustomed left turn but will have to turn right on Manchester and go around the block to Liberty, approximately one-third mile out of their way. To avoid having to ride so far off the Path, we recommend simply walking the bike over the bridge and across Manchester because pedestrians are, of course, allowed to turn left. This whole confusing situation will be eliminated on the day when our own Prairie Path bridge is made usable again.

LINCOLN MARSH WORK DAY

Eleven Board members and friends turned out on a sunny but cool May Day to repair a severe erosion problem at the bridge over Winfield Creek. This project was initiated by Nancy Hesler, who trucked to the site the six railroad ties needed to shore up the embankment. The only materials purchased by the Path were the railroad ties and 3/4 inch reinforcing rods. The necessary fill consisted of broken concrete donated by longtime Path member Ron Olsen, and several tons of dirt and gravel scrounged on site. Total cost of this Path improvement: \$75 approximately. To complete the day's planned activities, Board members Bob Hargis and Jean Mooring installed fourteen new HORSE TRAIL signs at St. James Farm. It is hoped that equestrians will stay on their own separate trail, which is now clearly marked, so that the damaged limestone screening surface will have a chance to be smoothed out for bicycling.

SPRING WILDFLOWERS DELIGHT

Board member and science teacher Larry Sheaffer led twenty-five amateur botanists through a natural garden of woodland wildflowers the afternoon of Sunday, May 2. The air was balmy and many flowers were at their peak in the wooded area north of the Path at Longfellow in Glen Ellyn. Masses of rue anemone, trout lily, and mayapple covered the forest floor, interspersed with red trillium, yellow and purple violets and white toothwort. Because spring has been cool this year, a few bloodroot and hepaticas were still blooming while jack-in-the-pulpit, meadow rue, Greek valerian, and wild geranium had not yet unfolded their young leaves. Most of these plants were prized by the Indians and early settlers for their medicinal values, Larry explained. He reminded his listeners that digging up even one plant might irreparably damage all. Instead of picking flowers the group picked up a bagful of litter, obeying the nature lover's motto: Take only pictures; leave only footprints.

LOMBARD FRIENDS HELP PATH

Lombard's section of the Prairie Path is one of the best, thanks to the efforts of several local residents. One of these is octogenarian Herbert Handle, whose property adjoins the Path at Lincoln. For years Herbert, with the help of some of his neighbors, has maintained the section between Main and Elizabeth. This neat mini-part now serves as an example of a style of Path development considered by many to be especially appropriate in an urban setting.

Another Lombard fan of the Prairie Path is James Linhart, who lives on Hickory and walks his big collie, Buffy, on the Path every day. He monitors the entire section between Main Street and Hill Avenue on the west side of the DuPage River, picking up trash as he goes. He reported to village authorities when he saw the Davey Tree Company truck damage the Finley Road bridge; and he is also the mysterious benefactor who anonymously donated a new trash barrel for the Mooring family section east of Hill Avenue.

Good friends like this are truly the backbone of the Path because they care for it like the treasure it is. Certainly the Path in Lombard has never looked better.

PATH CLEANUPS

Saturday, April 24, was the official spring cleanup day for all the municipalities through which the Path passes. The last week in April is the best time for this because there is little foliage to hide the winter's accumulation of litter.

In Lombard Donna Albee coordinated the work as usual. She reports that four individuals volunteered to help plus fifteen different groups, including troops of Boy Scouts, Junior Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Brownies. Bags were provided by the Lombard Noon Lions Club. In addition Lombard's section now has all new signs and freshly-painted trash barrels. The Lombard Junior Women's Club donates the barrels and gives them an annual coat of paint.

Glen Ellyn's cleanup was organized by Weldon Johnson and Arnie Leder of the Environmental Protection Commission in consultation with Jean Mooring. The village forestry department provided a front-end loader and two trucks. Cub Scout Pack 51 and Girl Scout Troop 573 joined adult Path members and friends in gathering several truckloads of broken concrete, brush, junk and litter.

Wheaton's cleanup was directed by Bob Hargis and Larry Sheaffer in cooperation with the Environmental Improvement Commission and the Public Works Department. The County Highway Department also participated in the unincorporated areas south of Orchard Road. Bob says that hard-working members of Boy Scout Troops 364, 365, and 382 picked up an estimated 24 bags of trash plus some 20 piles of other debris.

In Wayne Joan Hamill reports that the youth fellowship of the Little Home Church by the Wayside cleaned the Path from Dunham Road to the underpass at North Avenue. Rik Alex provided a front end loader and the Wayne DuPage Hunt lent a truck, which was packed full of junk and then driven by Rik and Joan to the dump.

PRAIRIE PATH ACTIVITIES, rain or shine

- Sunday, June 6 – Hike in Kane County, Elgin Branch. This will be an 8-mile round trip to the model railroad museum at Kenyon Road. Meet at 9:30 a.m., far northwest parking lot, Pratts Wayne Woods. Bring lunch and drink. Leader: Dick Wilson, 299-7882.

- Saturday, June 12 – Work Day, to build steps at E.J. and E. tracks on Aurora Branch east of Batavia Junction. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Frontenac and Path (1/8 mile south of Diehl and one mile west of Route 59). Bring picks, shovels, wheelbarrows, pruning shears and saws; also lunch and drink. Leader: Paul Mooring, 469-4289.

- Sunday, July 11 – Prairie Wildflower Walk, to see the prairie in all its summer glory. Meet at 1:00 p.m., Elmer J. Hoffman Park in Wheaton (#11 on Prairie Path map). Leader: Larry Sheaffer, 665-4408.

- Sunday, July 18 – Bike Ride. 18-mile round trip ride to Glen Ellyn plus walk through prize-winning garden. Meet at 1:00 p.m. York Road and Path, #4 on map. Leader: Dick Diebold, 469-6465.

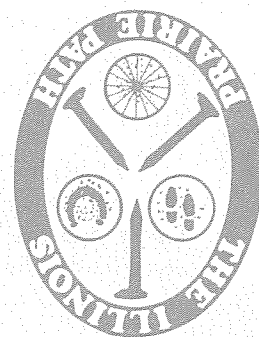
- Saturday, August 7 – Back Pack to Herrick Lake; camp overnight and return Sunday by 2:00 p.m. Meet at 12:00 noon at Glen Oak Country Club, #8 on map. Bring all your own food and gear. Leader: Dick Diebold.

- Saturday, Sept. 11 – Bike Ride to Kane County. Two days, 30 miles each day. Camp overnight at Fabyans Forest Preserve. Meet at 9:00 a.m., Saturday at Ardmore Ave. and Path, Villa Park, #7 on map. Return 2:00 p.m., Sunday. Leader: Phil Hodge, 627-7362.

– Jean C. Mooring, Editor –

DATED MATERIAL
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

P.O. Box 1086
616 Delles Road
Wheaton, Illinois
60187



Nonprofit Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Wayne, Ill. -60184
 Permit No. 7