

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER
Spring 1971

WHAT TO SEE - THE MIRACLE OF SPRING!

Almost overnight the winter gray has changed to vibrant green. In those sections of the Path where plots of prairie still persist, the grass and flowers which will grow tall and bold by September are beginning a vigorous growth. Now sprinkled within these greening remnants of the once vast prairie are the spring flowers. More than a century ago an English traveller, Captain Basil Hall, wrote "The flowers are so delicate and elegant as apparently to be distributed for mere ornament." Like the flowers of the forest, they must mature before the struggle for sunlight becomes too great.

If you are alert you will find these "gems of nature" in a number of places, especially where our Path parallels a railroad. You seldom see them in gardens; prairie flowers do not transplant readily.

Prairie phlox: rose-pink . . . blooms from May to July.

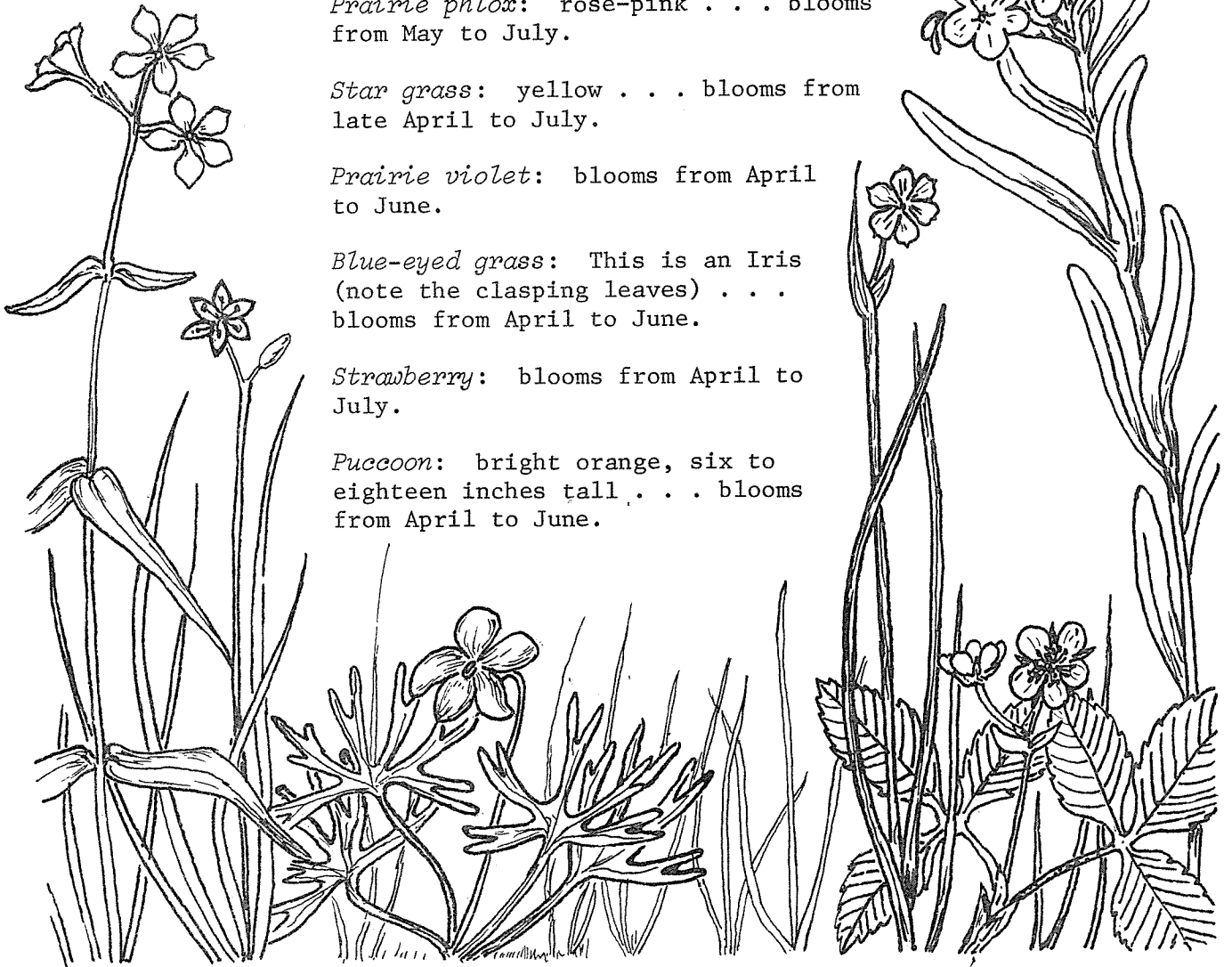
Star grass: yellow . . . blooms from late April to July.

Prairie violet: blooms from April to June.

Blue-eyed grass: This is an Iris (note the clasping leaves) . . . blooms from April to June.

Strawberry: blooms from April to July.

Puccoon: bright orange, six to eighteen inches tall . . . blooms from April to June.



Prairie phlox *Star-grass* *Prairie violet* *Blue-eyed grass* *Strawberry* *Puccoon*

WORK OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

In 1963 when Mrs. Watts dreamed of a footpath on the old C.A.&E. right-of-way, she had visions of a 54 mile path, from the Des Plaines to the Fox River, crossing parts of three counties. DuPage was the first county to purchase the property and grant us a lease for its 30 miles. Thus was born the Illinois Prairie Path. Now we have hopes for the other sections. These are the current developments.

DuPage County. As you know, the Path was inspected last May by men from The Department of the Interior to determine whether it would qualify for designation as a National Recreation Trail. Since then we have been trying to correct its shortcomings. We have secured permission to cross private lands and railroads. We have a crossing over the East DuPage River. But one stipulation was a matter of time. We had to have assurance that the life of the Path would be at least 10 years. In this matter YOU have been our hard-working volunteers. You have written to, called on, telephoned to, and sent telegrams to your Supervisors in land-slide proportion. Many of you attended the meetings of the Board of Supervisors. And your efforts paid off. The motion (with some stipulations which we can accept) to extend the lease allowing us the necessary 10 years was passed 18 to 6. Your Prairie Path Board of Directors thanks you.

Kane County. Mr. R. E. Corrigan, supervisor of land acquisition for the Illinois Department of Conservation, met with The DuKane Valley Council on February 24. As a result of this and many previous meetings the State is in the final stages of purchasing the Kane County section of the right-of-way. The money has been appropriated. The plan is to lease the land to the County which will in turn lease it to the park districts of the Fox Valley cities. It will then be a part of The Illinois Prairie Path. Any questions about Kane County should be directed to Mr. William Masters (phone 232-8548); he is the Prairie Path chairman for Kane County.

Cook County. Interest in the acquisition of this section is picking up. Mrs. Gloria Brady, representing the Committee for Ecological Action, has been meeting with the mayors and other officials of the towns west of the Des Plaines River. Petitions expressing support for the Path are being circulated locally and interest is running high. They hope to have the land acquired by the State Department of Conservation.

MEMBERS' WALKS

There will be two Members' Walks led by naturalists this spring. The first one will be on April 24 led by Mrs. H. R. Lively. The other, during bird migration, will be on May 22. It will be led by Mr. and Mrs. Mooring. Details as to places and times of meeting will be sent to members in a separate mailing.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Clean-up. Once more we are faced with a tremendous "spring house-cleaning." There will be many crews of all ages, from clubs, schools, scout troops, and civic groups working from now 'till mid-May. Why don't you join one . . . or organize one? How about an Earth Day project?

Membership renewal. May 1st is the start of our fiscal year and you will receive your renewal notice soon. Last year we issued well over 800 membership cards. If you joined after January 1, 1971 you are paid up until May 1, 1972.

Volunteers. We could use more help in the Members' Room to answer the phone or welcome visitors. If you can give one or two afternoons a month please telephone 665-5310 any afternoon.

Need help? Do you need help in identifying twigs, leaves, flowers, even rocks? Bring them to the Members' Room, 616 Delles, Wheaton, any Friday afternoon between 12 and 4 p.m.