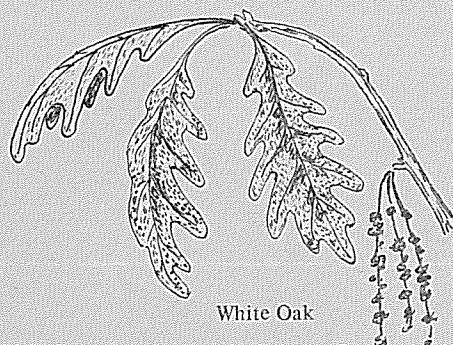


# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1973

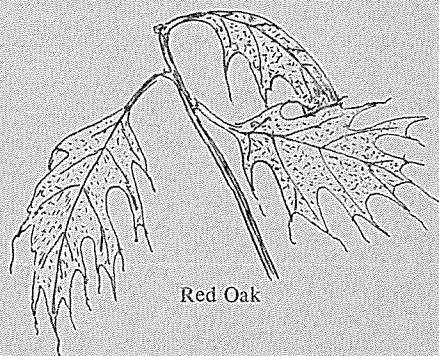
## WHAT TO SEE: HAIRS — THREADS — DOWN

It's spring again and we are all conscious of the re-birth of life . . . delicate new life, seeming to need protection, and often covered with hairs or down. Walk along the path through the woods and look at the new little oak leaves, curled and downy like a baby's hand.

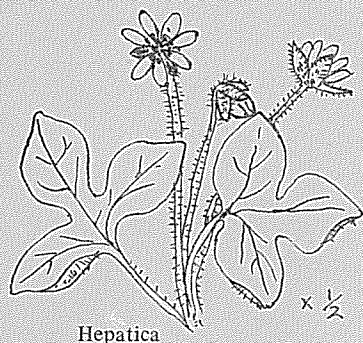


White Oak

Both the *red oak* and *white oak* leaves are colored pink or rose, a forecast of their beautiful red fall color. But long before autumn, the leaves will have shed their downy covering. The pioneers planted their corn when the oak leaves were the size of a mouse ear.

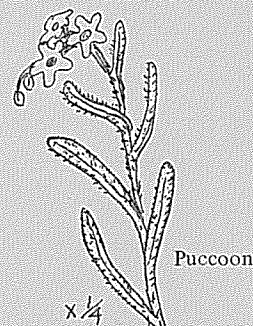


Red Oak



Hepatica

Some spring flowers of both forest and prairie are downy. The new growth of the *hepatica* pushing up through the center of last year's leaves is so covered with hairs that you may not be aware of the color of its stems and buds. The *puccoon* of the prairie is covered with hairs. Even the new leaves of the *mullein* seem soft, belying the woolly harsh felt of summer. This dense growth of hairs protects the leaf against excessive loss of moisture. And what grazing animal would relish all that felt?



Puccoon

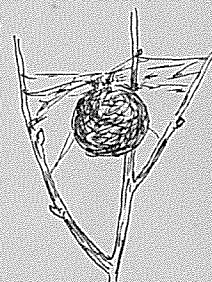
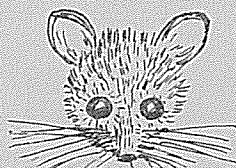
Some downy plants or animals are commonly used to symbolize spring; pussy willows and baby birds for example.

There are dozens of other hairy objects. The *dandelion* seed has a hairy parachute. The *nettle* has hairs that break on contact, exuding a stinging poison. *Cattail* down lines some bird nests. The hairy legs of *bees* collect pollen. *Spiders'* egg sacs are threads, some intricately spun into spheres, some soft masses of silk you may find if you look under loose bark or stones. You have all, at some time, walked uncomfortably into their aerial floats (parachutes) or their draglines.



Pussy Willow

And if you are very quiet and lucky . . . some evening you may catch a glimpse of the long whiskers of the *white-footed deer mouse*.



Egg Sac of Spider



It is with regret that we accept the resignation of *Bob Irwin* from the Board of Directors; he has contributed greatly with ideas and leadership. To fill this vacancy we welcome *Dick Wilson* who has served as chairman of the Projects Committee and as a walk leader.

## MEMBERS' WALKS

Members will receive notices of four spring outings. Tentative dates are:

Sat., April 28 - Nature walk in Kane Co. . . . Leader - Bill Nemec  
Sat., May 5 - Long hike. . . . . Leader - Bob Irwin  
Sat., May 12 - Bird walk . . . . . Leader - Paul Mooring  
Sun., June 3 - Bicycle ramble. . . . . Leader - Dick Wilson

## EXHIBITS

We were represented in two exhibits last month. Many colored pictures showing activities along the Path were displayed all during March in the *Chicago Public Library*.

This year at the *World Garden Show* at McCormick Place we did not have a booth, but the Violet Garden Club of Glen Ellyn set up a table called: Picnic Lunch on the Prairie Path.

## PROGRESS

*DuPage County*: On March 12 the Lombard Environmental Control Commission presented petitions to the Village Board recommending that they appropriate funds for the laying of a four foot path of screenings through Lombard. Paul Mooring showed slides picturing the need for and explaining the method of laying such a path. One week later the Village Board authorized an expenditure of up to \$6,000 for the project as recommended.

*Kane County*: The lease and operating plan agreement between Illinois Prairie Path and Kane County Forest Preserve District, covering the former CA&E right-of-way in that county, was signed by both groups on March 13 and will become effective upon formal approval by the Illinois Department of Conservation, owners of the land. The segment between Elgin and Wayne is the first to be improved and marked -- by Path volunteers, Forest Preserve staff (and equipment), and local officials and service organizations. Work begins this spring.

*Cook County*: The four communities through which the old right-of-way extends have ordered an independent appraisal of the value of the land. We hope to have good news for you in the next Newsletter.

## HELP - HELP

Do you have time and inclination to help us? There are many and varied tasks that need to be done; some one-time jobs, some on a continuing basis. Here are some of the projects waiting for willing hands, and hearts:

1. *Maintenance of specific sections*, long or short, in Kane County. This involves periodic inspection and clean-up.
2. *Re-stenciling of highway crossing signs* in parts of DuPage County where rain has washed off the letters. We have the paint and the stencil.
3. *Construction and operation of a walk for the blind* following the beautiful plan made by Mrs. Watts. Because of vandalism, this will require willingness to set it up and be present when groups of blind people want to walk. It could be a very rewarding project for a garden club, AAUW chapter, or service organization.
4. *Helping to spread screenings*, either on sections being repaired, or on parts being surfaced for the first time.

*If you can help on any of these projects, please send us a note. Our address is:*

*P. O. Box 1086, Wheaton 60187*

## MEMBERSHIP

You will soon be receiving your membership renewal form for the fiscal year that begins May 1. (If you joined after Jan. 1, 1973, your membership extends to May 1, 1974.) Thank you, growing membership, for your generous support.