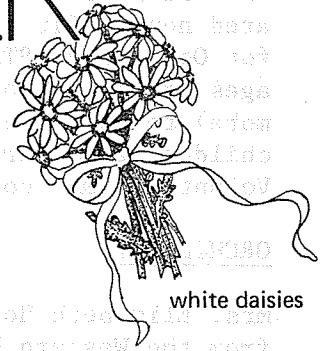


THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1976



white daisies

chicory

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

This bicentennial mid-summer, look at immigrant flowers. The U.S.A. is a melting pot of plants as well as people, and the Prairie Path is a perfect place to observe these pioneers.

Most of the plants are annuals. They quickly take over disturbed areas — with their shallow roots and lots of seed, but little encouragement from a seemingly hostile environment like a railroad bed — to provide color for hikers and food for birds and animals.

How did they get here? Some seeds were brought on purpose — such as *chicory*, which was raised commercially in the south long ago. Other seeds and cuttings were brought as reminders of home — such as *purple loosestrife*, *bell flower*, and *oxeye daisies* — and then became garden escapes.

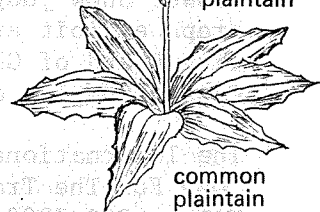
The blue of chicory, whose root gives that distinctive taste to New Orleans coffee, reflects the summer sky. Bell flower likes the shade. Purple loosestrife brightens the wet ditches along the PATH. And many are the summer brides with daisies in their bouquets.

Some flowers came along with corn and wheat seed — such as *bind weed*. Not long ago, tropical plants were found growing along a river in the northeast. Botanists discovered a factory upstream recycling tires that had been used in Vietnam. The seeds had come in the mud in the treads and washed downstream.

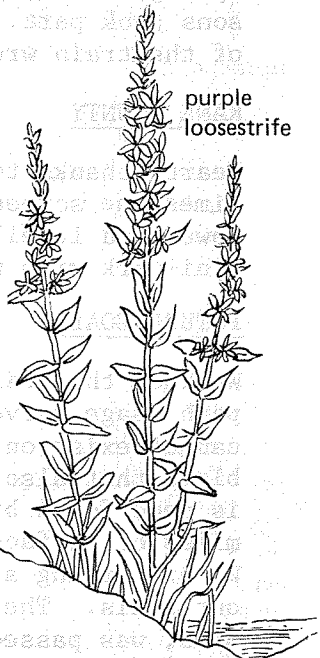
Queen Anne's lace (or wild carrot) was used as an herbal medicine. The purple flower in the center was used as a cure for epilepsy, and tea from the whole plant for jaundice and gout. Birds love the carrot, and parsnip, seeds. May Watts called the *common plaintain* the white man's footsteps.



English plantain



common plantain



purple loosestrife

purple bell flower

Queen Anne's lace

NEW PROJECT

The Brain Tumor Research Association and the Illinois Prairie Path, both volunteer operated non-profit organizations, will work together for mutual benefit this fall. Planned for October 9, BTRA will hold a "Work-a-Thon" on the Prairie Path. Volunteers of all ages are being sought to ring doorbells for pledges and donate their time (one hour or more) to help clean up the Path. Brain tumors are the second highest cause of death in children from birth to 15 years. Help this worthy cause and benefit the Path as well. Volunteers may contact Mrs. Earl Felske 858-7053.

ORCHID 1976

Mrs. Elizabeth Holmes, Prairie Path Corresponding Secretary, received an Orchid Award from the Western Communities Architects Association "for Ecological Progress" as shown in her dedication to the Path since its inception in 1963. The title "Corresponding Secretary" in no way reflects the many aspects of her job that requires almost daily attention. Her effort has been and continues to be vital to Path development. Liz was one of nine recipients selected from 79 nominees, under the "Orchids & Onions" environmental awareness program.

BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES

The DuPage County Board, in a formal resolution, extended congratulations to the Illinois Prairie Path for its inclusion in "Horizons On Display".

Flower Show judges awarded the Prairie Path the Brown Rosette (95 points) for its photograph exhibit at the bicentennial flower show, "Yester Year", sponsored by the Coordinating Board of Glen Ellyn Garden Club. The exhibit now hangs in the cafeteria of the County Complex on County Farm Rd., Wheaton.

The International Back Packers Assoc. has extended its bicentennial clean-up program "One For The Trail" until December 31. Please report any hours you have worked to Dick Wilson 299-7882 or Louise Headen 668-3125.

SPRING OUTINGS

In spite of heavy rains, 15 sturdy souls together with three leaders participated in the Spring Bird Walk. The Wildflower Walk fared better. It was a sunny day and about 50 persons took part. The walk was conducted east of Washington Street in Wheaton to the site of the train wreck in Glen Ellyn. A good variety of prairie plants was observed.

KANE COUNTY

Hearty thanks to the Forest Preserve Commission for the spreading of a second layer of limestone screenings on the Path from Route 25 north to Kenyon Road. Their crew has also mowed and levelled an area next to the old Clintonville station (South Elgin) where a mini-park with picnic tables will soon be established.

FUTURE GOALS

We know the Prairie Path is beloved by bicyclists, hikers and other outdoor fans. Our path usage survey of last summer gave us the statistics. Unfortunately the Prairie Path cannot exist on love alone. Heavy rains wash out the surface, there are drainage problems that also wash away the gravel, and the wear and tear of use takes its toll. There is need for a bridge, automobile barriers and funds for the completion of about five miles of surface improvement. We need money...quite a lot of it...something like \$75,000. We are trying all possible sources without much success. Please continue to help us reach our goals. The Amendment allocating \$75,000 to the Prairie Path, attached to House Bill 3403, was passed by the Senate - but was vetoed by Governor Walker.

PATH DAMAGE

The Northwestern Railroad seems to have a little trouble keeping its trains on its tracks. For the second time in recent years a derailment occurred on a curve at the western boundary of Glen Ellyn, paralleling the Path. This time two freight trains were involved: damage estimated at \$2,000,000. Victim of the accident - about one-fifth of a mile of the Illinois Prairie Path when heavy machinery roared to the rescue down our r/w. Path surface was gouged and vegetation uprooted. A claim for \$2,000 to regrade and resurface that area has been sent to District Claim Agent of the CNW.

REMINISCENCE - from an Oak Park member of long-standing:

"I am enclosing a contribution to the May Theilgaard Watts Memorial. I was glad to hear about this, for I knew her in 1917 at the Camp Fire Camp in Michigan. She was not a camp counselor, but was Guardian of another group of girls. I was 13, just out of grammar school, and to us she was 'Tillie' Theilgaard. She was very generous with her time and knowledge. At night, after Taps, when the Camp was all quiet, three or four of us were permitted to carry our cots into the open, placing them close together. Thus, comfortably gazing skyward, Tillie gave us our first lesson in Astronomy. I have remembered this all these years -- nearly sixty. I just thought you might like to know.

Cordially yours, LaVerne Benoit"

HELP WANTED - MALE OR FEMALE

Volunteer help is needed to assist the Membership Chairman and the Corresponding Secretary, on a regular basis. The work includes answering mail and telephone messages, preparing promotional pieces, getting out the Newsletter and other mailings, etc. It is interesting work and has opportunities for creative effort. Please write to Mrs. E. R. Holmes, Illinois Prairie Path, P. O. Box 1086, Wheaton, IL. 60187.

CHANGES

Bobbie Lively, Newsletter artist, nature lecturer and guide at many Path outings, has resigned from the Board of Directors. She is pursuing a new career and finds she cannot do both. We will miss her, but hope she will rejoin us later. Taking her place as Newsletter artist is Henrietta Tweedie of Wheaton. Henry's beautiful drawings and nature notes are on the front page of this issue.

In Memory of GUNNAR A. PETERSON - 1915-1976

Only the handful of us who were active in the early formative struggles of the Prairie Path would remember the vital role played by Gunnar Peterson. Here, for the record, is a partial list of what he did for us:

As Executive Director of the Open Lands Project from 1963 to 1975, he provided secretarial services for all of our first mailings. He contacted "key" officials in both Washington and Springfield, and in Cook, DuPage and Kane Counties. He coordinated ideas and material to produce our widely shown ten-minute film strip. As Path Advisor, he arranged and chaired meetings at which we could present the Path project to county supervisors and municipal leaders. Two of his former students at George Williams College diagrammed the entire CA&E right-of-way in topographical detail. In 1971 he helped achieve designation for the Path as part of the National Trails System. With humor, wisdom and enthusiasm, GAP won the battles to save Goose Lake Prairie, Volo Bog and Beall Woods (to name only three); then in 1975 he accepted the challenge of becoming the first coordinator of outdoor recreation in Nova Scotia. He and his wife were well settled on their island farm in Janvrin Harbour, West Arichat, when a heart attack caused his death on June 7th. We mourn the loss of our friend, while we rejoice in his outstanding contribution to the cause of genuine Conservation in America.