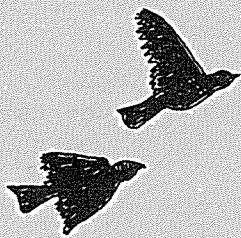


THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1979



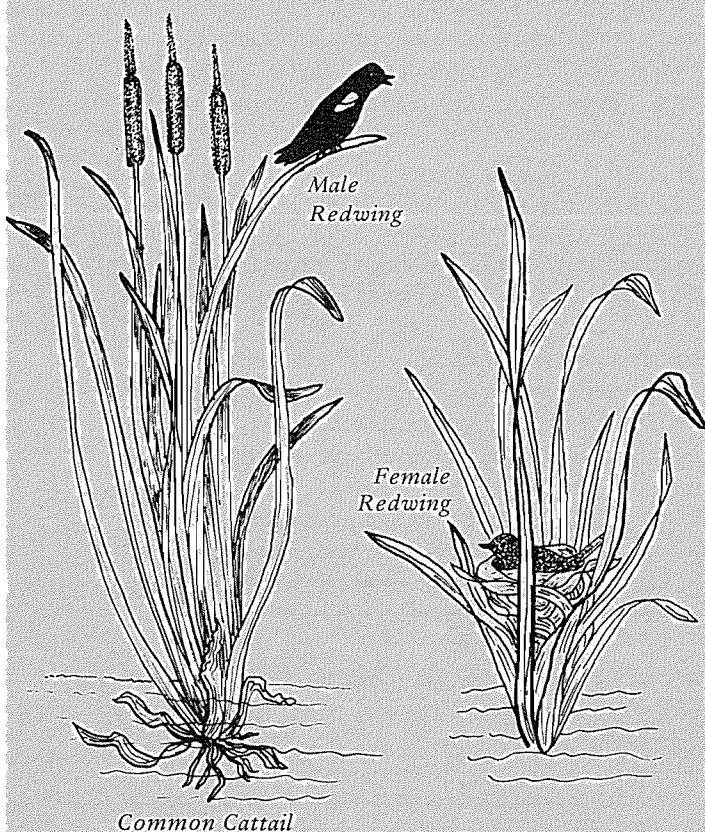
WHAT TO LOOK FOR: CATTAILS

Cattails with tall, stiff, flat leaves grow along the Prairie Path wherever there is shallow water. Most often seen is the *common cattail*. The *narrow-leaved cattail* differs from the common by the space between the spikes of flowers.

In both, the top flowers are staminate and release clouds of golden pollen which fertilize the lower brown pistillate flowers which form the cattail itself. The ripened seeds are surrounded by fluff which often hangs on 'till spring.

"The Supermarket of the Swamp" was Euell Gibbons' title for the cattail. The young stalks can be eaten as a vegetable, the early flowers like corn; the pollen makes a flower, the tuberous roots a starchy material; the long leaves can be woven into mats and chair seats; and the fluff of the seeds has been used as stuffing for mattresses, furniture, and life rafts.

Cattails are the favorite nesting place of *red-winged blackbirds*. These birds tolerate man, bicycles, noise, etc., and are increasing in population--with many having two to three families a summer. *Bitterns* are rare and hard to see as they blend in with the scenery in a cattail swamp.



RAISED EYEBROW DEPARTMENT

"You plant 'em, we'll cut 'em down." was the flip rejoinder made by Elmhurst City Manager, Robert Palmer, to a plea from Gene Pomerance that city mowers use restraint when cutting along the Prairie Path east of Poplar Ave. In a letter to Palmer, Pomerance wrote:

"For quite a few years your crews have cut only along the street and along the gravel path. That seemed, and still seems to me, to be a good compromise between the weed haters and those who prefer a natural aspect.

During that time, tree seedlings have sprouted naturally and -- because too many were elms -- some of us have been putting in maple seedlings and larger trees of several species. I have personally kept the trees trimmed and spaced so the area would not be a jungle. We volunteers have also put in shrubs and small evergreens.

A couple weeks ago your crews cut everything from the gravel path to the street, saving only the tall trees they could see. In the process they cut a bank of shrubbery I had been developing and also untold tree seedlings. This week they cut more of the area near Poplar Avenue and cut down a 20 inch tall spruce. Forsythia and honeysuckle may look enough like weeds so it is understandable how a mower driver can cut them down, but a spruce -- which is an evergreen -- does not look like any weed you or I have ever seen.

My plea includes the suggestion that your crews be better instructed.

Cordially,
Eugene C. Pomerance

We think that Mr. Palmer's attitude is something less than cooperative toward the development of the Prairie Path. It might even be said to fall into the category of vandalism. The plantings along the Path were done by volunteers putting their time and funds into what could be regarded as a city beautification project at no cost to the taxpayer. We think the Prairie Path members in Elmhurst should know about this and may wish to express their objections to such a back-of-the-hand attitude of their city manager.

MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

- Lombard - \$2000 has been budgeted by the village for Path surface improvement.
- The bridge over Finley Road has been started and will close a long existing gap on the Prairie Path.
 - There was a mini-clean-up at Westmore by the Boy Scouts.
 - The Old Main St. R.R. platform will be removed and replaced by plantings. The Lombard Park District has budgeted \$1000 for this purpose.
 - Garbage cans have been donated by the Lyons club and placed at Main St.
- Wheaton - The city has resurfaced the main branch of the Path from Glen Ellyn - Wheaton limits. Repairs have been made on the north branch which was resurfaced a year ago and resurfacing has been done on the north branch from Lincoln St. to Jewel Road. The Path within Wheaton is now in excellent condition.
- Unknown benefactors have been quietly at work picking up trash along the Path.
 - The deep cut in the Path, reported in the Spring Newsletter, has now been rebuilt and restored to its original condition.

Wheaton - Through a program promoted by the Wheaton Park District, car barriers have been installed at Prairie Path intersections in Wheaton. The program was made possible by the State Conservation Department that provided 80% matching funds used to cover labor costs and installation. Labor and installation was done by the Youth Conservation Corps. A donation of \$2000 from the Wheaton Rotary Club supplied the necessary local funds. The Wheaton Public Works department assisted with the construction of the barriers.

FALL ACTIVITIES -- RAIN OR SHINE

Bike Hike - Sunday, September 23, 9:00 A.M. Meet at members' Room, 611 Delles Rd., Wheaton. (2 blocks west of West St. on Roosevelt Rd. at Rathje Park) Bike Hike will be 15 to 20 miles. Route will be southwest to E.J. & E. tracks toward Eola Rd. and return. Lunch in McDowell Woods. Bring lunch and drink. Leader: Jerry Glenn 393-1618.

Work Day - Saturday, October 6, 9:00 A.M. Repair of steps over tracks west of Prince Crossing Rd. on the northwest branch. Please bring shovels, buckets, pry bars if available. Work gloves are essential. Also bring lunch and drink. Leaders: Ralph Franzen and Jean Mooring. For further information call Jean Mooring 469-4289.

Annual Fall Hike - Sunday, October 21, 9:30 A.M. Meet at the south end of St. Andrews Golf Club Parking lot on east side of Rt. 59 at the Prairie Path crossing. (Golf club is on Route 59 just north of North Ave.) Hike is approximately 10 miles. Will go to Pratts Wayne Woods and return to starting point. Bring lunch and drink. Leader: Dick Wilson 299-7882 (6 to 9 P.M.)

CORRECTION

Prairie Path Nature lady and artist, Henry Tweedie, who has been doing such a fine volunteer job for the Newsletter, wishes to correct an error she made in the Spring Newsletter. She claims she got her grecks mixed up and asks that you please replace dicot and monocot with dioecious and monoecious.

NO NEWS FROM THE COUNTY

The appeal made to the county for help (see spring newsletter) has had little or no response from the DuPage County Board. Smiles yes, and some of the members did go on an inspection tour. When it was suggested that some fresh screenings be put down one supervisor - who owns a horse - said that it really didn't need it because horses didn't like it too smooth. Horse traffic on the Path is minimal. About 87% of the Path users are bicycle riders, hikers and joggers all who need a well kept surface for safety and comfort.

PRAIRIE PATH TEE SHIRTS NOW AVAILABLE

- Good quality white cotton, short sleeved, knit shirts. Green trim on neck and sleeves. Prairie Path logo on left front. Sizes: Children - medium and large; Adults - small, medium and large. Extra Large special order. Each \$5 plus \$1 for handling and postage. Please send check and order to Hillside Cyclery, 4049 Washington St., Hillside, IL 60162.

- Prairie Path Patches \$1 each.

- The Illinois Prairie Path - a guide by Helen Turner. Gives history, geology of Path. Many illustrations of wild flowers, trees, animal tracks seen on the Path. Each \$1.25. For quantities of 10 to 20 \$1 each; 20 or more \$.75 each. For Patches and Book please send order to Illinois Prairie Path, Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60187.