

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1980

WHAT TO LOOK FOR. . . WEEDS

Imports. . .spring blooming flowers that came to North America from abroad. . .sometimes called aliens, sometimes called Eurasian weeds. Along the most traveled parts of the PATH are these tough, persistent, aggressive plants, producing lots of seed, greening over rough places, moving into any available open space, adapting to many conditions of shade, sunlight, and water.

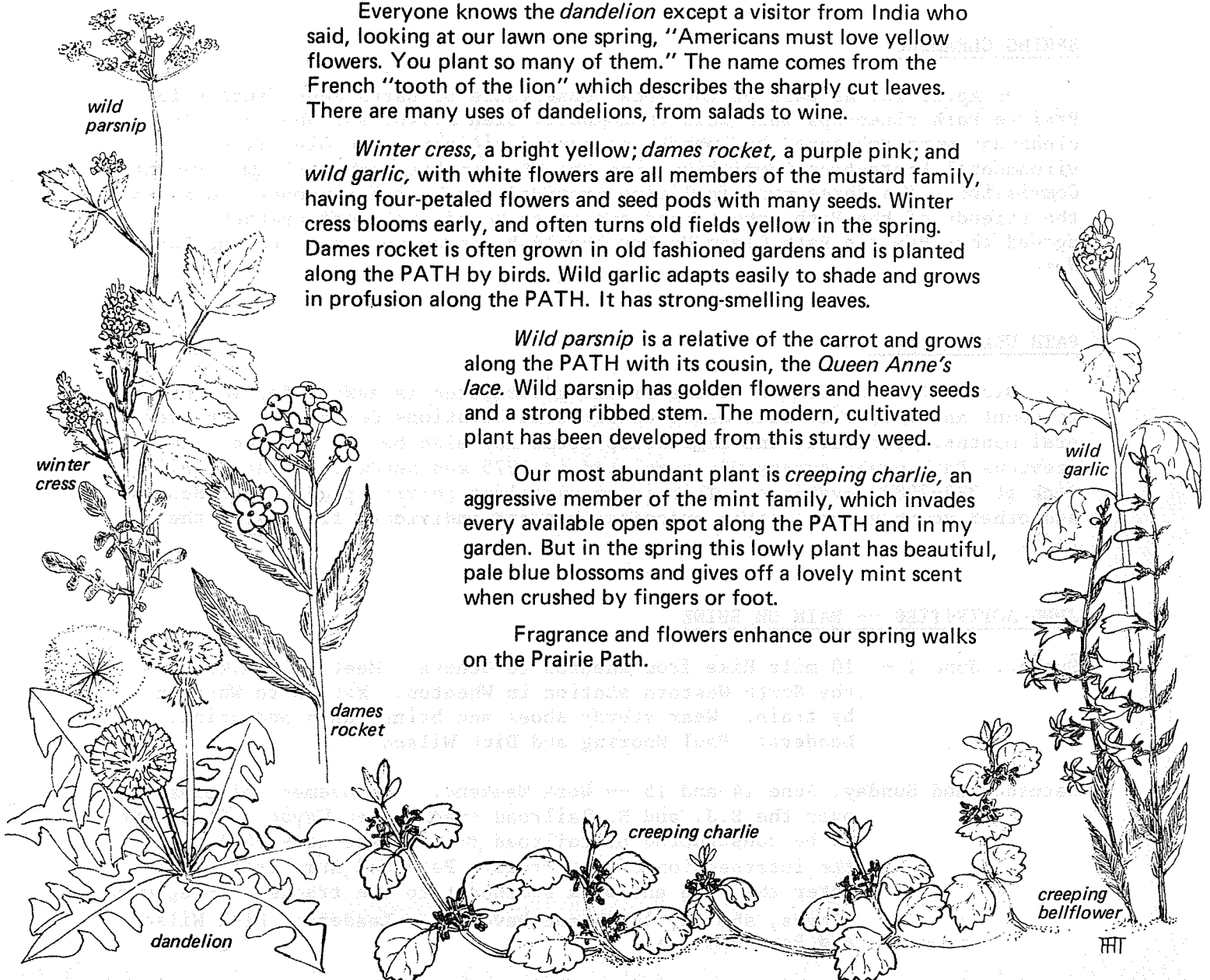
Everyone knows the *dandelion* except a visitor from India who said, looking at our lawn one spring, "Americans must love yellow flowers. You plant so many of them." The name comes from the French "tooth of the lion" which describes the sharply cut leaves. There are many uses of dandelions, from salads to wine.

Winter cress, a bright yellow; *dames rocket*, a purple pink; and *wild garlic*, with white flowers are all members of the mustard family, having four-petaled flowers and seed pods with many seeds. Winter cress blooms early, and often turns old fields yellow in the spring. Dames rocket is often grown in old fashioned gardens and is planted along the PATH by birds. Wild garlic adapts easily to shade and grows in profusion along the PATH. It has strong-smelling leaves.

Wild parsnip is a relative of the carrot and grows along the PATH with its cousin, the *Queen Anne's lace*. Wild parsnip has golden flowers and heavy seeds and a strong ribbed stem. The modern, cultivated plant has been developed from this sturdy weed.

Our most abundant plant is *creeping charlie*, an aggressive member of the mint family, which invades every available open spot along the PATH and in my garden. But in the spring this lowly plant has beautiful, pale blue blossoms and gives off a lovely mint scent when crushed by fingers or foot.

Fragrance and flowers enhance our spring walks on the Prairie Path.



PRAIRIE PATH DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Prairie Path surface of limestone screenings in most of the unincorporated areas of the County continues to deteriorate. The entire 10-mile DuPage County section from Wheaton to the Kane County line needs resurfacing and drainage improvements. Illinois Constructors Corporation, which has done work for us in the past, has bid \$110,000 (or approximately \$2 per linear foot) to do the job. Without substantial help from DuPage County, owner of the right-of-way, the Prairie Path Board of Directors has only one way to raise the money for these improvements: through foundation grants and contributions from friends. Foundations always look more favorably on an organization's request for funds if the membership has supported the project. Therefore, we are appealing to our members. If you consider this a worthwhile project, please send us your check, big or small, today. All donations are tax deductible. You may use the coupon at the bottom of page 3.

SPRING CLEANING

On April 26, as part of the local observance of Earth Week, successful Prairie Path clean-ups were held in Lombard, Glen Ellyn, and Wheaton. The clean-ups were sponsored by Lombard concerned citizens, the Glen Ellyn Environmental Protection Commission, and the Wheaton Environmental Improvement Commission. The three municipalities provided trucks and personnel to assist the friends of the Path, who turned out in spite of inclement weather. All agreed that Prairie Path Clean-Up Day should be an annual event during Earth Week.

PATH USAGE SURVEY

Dick Wilson on behalf of the Planning Committee is asking for volunteers to count and interview Path users at selected locations during the next several months. Brochures and membership forms may also be distributed. The previous Path usage survey was completed in 1975 and needs updating. Call Dick at 299-7882, evenings. This is an excellent service project for Scouts and other youth groups, civic organizations and individual friends of the Path.

JUNE ACTIVITIES -- RAIN OR SHINE

Sunday, June 1 - 10 mile Hike from Wheaton to Geneva. Meet 9:00 A.M. at the North Western station in Wheaton. Return to Wheaton by train. Wear sturdy shoes and bring lunch and drink. Leaders: Paul Mooring and Dick Wilson.

Saturday and Sunday, June 14 and 15 -- Work Weekend. Improvement of crossing over the E.J. and E. Railroad tracks near Wayne. Steps are to be constructed of railroad ties. Meet at 9:00 A.M. at the intersection of the Prairie Path and Army Trail Road. Enter the Path and walk southeast to the tracks. Bring work gloves, shovel, lunch and beverage. Leaders: Dick Wilson and Paul Mooring.

PERSISTENCE PAYS: A LESSON IN CIVICS

The members of Girl Scout Cadette Troop 108 of Elmhurst, advised by Troop Leader Susan Aisenbrey, have been expressing their concerns about the condition of the Path in Elmhurst to members of the City Council and the Public Works Committee for over a year. This spring city officials announced that they are discussing plans to work with the Park District during the summer to improve several portions of the Prairie Path. The Park District may eventually assume responsibility for Path maintenance in cooperation with the city Public Works Department. We think the outlook is excellent because the Girl Scouts have impressed the city officials with their well-planned and determined campaign. We congratulate these young citizens and urge them to continue to monitor the Path in Elmhurst. Our future is in good hands.

ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

The Illinois Prairie Path is one of the founding member organizations of the Illinois Environmental Council, whose professional staff effectively promote sound environmental legislation in Springfield. Current IEC issues of interest to Prairie Path members include the development of a statewide trails system, passage of a mandatory deposit "bottle bill" to control the litter so annoying to Path users, and the public acquisition of abandoned railroad rights-of-way for conversion to recreation trails. The IEC staff deserve special commendation for their expert help in achieving passage of the bill which provided the State's share of the money to purchase the Cook County extension of the Prairie Path last December. The enclosed introductory letter from IEC President Bruce Hannon and Executive Director Sandra McAvoy is being sent to all Path members. This is the Board's way of saying, Thank you, IEC. Keep up the good work!

PRAIRIE PATH TEE SHIRTS NOW AVAILABLE

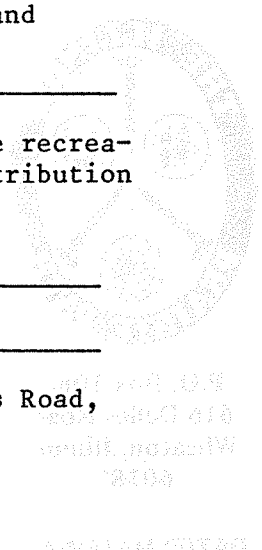
Good quality white cotton, short sleeved, knit shirts. Green trim on neck and sleeves. Prairie Path logo on left front. Sizes: Children - medium and large; Adults - small, medium and large. Extra Large special order. Each \$5 plus \$1 for handling and postage. Please send check and order to Hillside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

The Illinois Prairie Path deserves my support as a unique and valuable recreational asset for the people of northeastern Illinois. Here is my contribution of \$ _____ to the Prairie Path Development Fund.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Please return with your check to The Illinois Prairie Path, 616 Delles Road, Wheaton, Illinois 60187.





P.O. Box 1086
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60187

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