

CALENDAR

GIBRALTAR BAY UNIT (GBU) DETROIT RIVER INT'L WILDLIFE REFUGE

28820 E. River Rd.
Open to the Public
Daily, Dawn to Dusk

Frog & Toad Survey Training

Fri, March 31 @ 7:30 pm
GBU (see pages 8 & 12)

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Sat, Apr 22, 1:00 – 4:00 pm
Centennial Farm

ISLAND WIDE CLEAN-UP

Sat, April 29 @ 9:00 am
Centennial Farm

GARLIC MUSTARD PULL

Sat, May 6 @ 9:00 am
Meridian School Parking Lot

AIRPORT NATURE AREA

Open, hosted by GINLC
Sundays, May 7 - Oct 29
1:00 – 4:00 pm
Enter through the GBU

»»» EVENTS »»»

continued on page 2



W.H. WAGNER

Yellow Trout Lily
also known as
Yellow Dogtooth
Violet, Yellow
Adder's Tongue



NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE Flowers, FINALLY!

BY VICTORIA MURPHY

Spring is making its way back to Grosse Ile and so with it come the wildflowers. You only have to take a walk through the Wildlife Sanctuary off of Thorofare Road to see many of the flowers native to Grosse Ile. Trout Lily, Trillium, Hepatica, May Apples and Jack-in-the-Pulpit are just a few of what you might see on a walk through the woods there. While there is a well-groomed path of wood chips that runs alongside the canal, entering from Horsemill Road, get a little wild on your own and venture off the path through the woods on either side of Thorofare and see what's blooming.

TROUT LILY: (*Erythronium americanum*) The Trout Lily is one of the first wildflowers to appear each spring. The single flower has a long anther with curled back petals. It shoots

up from a pair of mottled green and brown leaves that give the flower its name due to the similarity to the shape and color of a trout.



Trillium

B. BALL

TRILLIUM: (*Trillium grandiflorum*) Trillium is one of the most easily recognized spring flowers with its three-petaled white

— Continued on page 3



PRESIDENT'S
NOTES

SPECIAL DONORS

*In memory of
Keith Zook*

Lois Zook
John & Julie Busch
Manfred Egerer & Liz Hugel
Audrey Moore
Lorene & Joe Rapose
Barbara & Ralph Thayer

*Special thanks to
John Jackson
for funding the Salmon
in the Classroom program
which starts this fall at
Grosse Ile High School*

*GINLC is grateful to the
Wildflower Association
of Michigan for their
generous grant*

*Thank you
for your
contributions!*

Reflections From the President

BY PETER KANTZ

It is spring, time to get outside and observe nature awakening from its winter hibernation, delivering its annual promise of a fresh start. Flowers push up through the soil. Grass turns green. Trees sprout leaves and the elusive Grosse Ile snow bird returns from Florida.

GINLC's Board of Directors has been busy all winter preparing for the coming months: committees established, projects identified, plans made, and funds raised. It is now time to deliver on the promise of spring.

GINLC has close to 200 members. Our members have a wide variety of skills, interests and abilities. Most of our members are engaged, at some level, in the many projects, programs and stewardship events sponsored by the conservancy. It is these volunteers that enable GINLC to fulfill its mission of promoting the preservation, stewardship and understanding of the natural resources in the Township of Grosse Ile and the surrounding area. Articles in this newsletter will give you some idea of the activities we have planned for this year. If you would like to become involved or increase your level of involvement, please contact me at 734-558-2149 or email me at: info@ginlc.org. If you have the desire to help preserve the natural environment, we have a volunteer opportunity for you.



Thank you, BASF!

BASF has long been a generous supporter of GINLC.

BASF Community Relations Manager Marika Diamond presents a check to Dr. Liz Hugel, Senior Research Scientist, BASF. Dr. Hugel is a board member of the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy and Co-chair of the Education Committee.

MORE SPRING GINLC EVENTS...

BIRDS & BLOOMS

Sun, May 7 @ 1:00 pm
Wildlife Sanctuary, Horsemill
& Thorofare Rds.

HENNEPIN MARSH GATEWAY CLEAN-UP & INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL

Sat, May 13 @ 9:00 am
Meridian between
Paulina & Annette

INTREPID POND CLEAN-UP & TREE PLANTING

Sat, May 27 @ 9:00 am
Meridan & Intrepid

ISLANDfest

Parade: June 3 @ 9:00 am
GI High School parking lot
Booth support:
June 2, 3, 4 @ various times
Airport Hangar



Hepatica

A. REZNICEK

FLOWERS, continued from cover

flowers that sit upon a cushion of three leaf-like bracts. The white petals of the flowers will turn pink with age. The plants are fragile and flowers should never be picked as one can seriously injure the plant, preventing it from producing food for the next year.

HEPATICA: (also known as Liverleaf, Liverwort)

Hepatica belongs to the buttercup family of flowers. It has heart shaped leaves with three lobes at the base of the plant, and grows about 3 to 6 inches tall. Sometimes the leaves will be speckled brown or may be maroon on the undersides, hence the common name of Liverleaf or Liverwort. The flowers bloom in a clump and vary in colors from bright blue, white, or pink.



May Apple

A. CORRADO

MAY APPLE: (*Podophyllum peltatum*, also known as Mandrake)

May Apples grow to about 18 inches tall in large colonies of plants with umbrella-like leaves that shelter the white flower that hangs below. The flower turns into a crab apple sized edible fruit in the early summer. May Apple seeds and rind are not edible, and are considered to be poisonous. Resin from the root of the plant is used for the treatment of warts, and test are underway for using it as a possible treatment for cancer.

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT: (*Arisaema triphyllum*, also known as Indian Turnip)

The leaves of the Jack-in-the-Pulpit form in groups of three growing together at the top of one long stem produced from a corm. What we see as the flower is a tall stalk (spadix) that grows inside a hooded cup (spathe), forming the "Jack." The real flowers are tiny, green or yellow dots that line the spadix. The plant grows from 1 to 3 feet tall. In the fall, the spathe falls off and is replaced by a bunch of bright red berries. The Jack-in-the-Pulpit is a longed lived perennial that can live for more than 25 years. Native Americans harvested the roots of the plant for food.

All photos courtesy of UM Herbarium



Jack-in-the-Pulpit

A. CORRADO

*The earth
laughs in flowers*

Ralph Waldo Emerson



SUMMER GINLC EVENTS...

**MERIDIAN TRAIL HEAD
CLEAN-UP & SIGN
REPLACEMENT**

Sat, June 10 @ 9:00 am
Meridian across from school

**KOLBILJAK PRESERVE
CLEAN-UP & DEAD TREE
REMOVAL**

Sat, June 10 @ 9:00 am
Thorofare north of Highland

WETLAND WILDLIFE

Sun, June 25 @ 1:00 pm
GBU & Airport property

SUNRISE PARK CLEAN-UP

Sat, July 22 @ 9:00 am
Grosse Ile Pkwy & E. River Rd

EVENING EXPLORATION

Sat, July 22 @ 7:00 pm, GBU

Grosse Ile's Botanical History

BY ANTON REZNICEK, Curator and Assistant Director,
University of Michigan Herbarium

Through its situation at the mouth of the Detroit River, Grosse Ile has been visited and inhabited since the earliest days of Michigan's settlement, and a number of botanical luminaries have visited the island over the years. The island played a role in the first collecting stop of one of the most momentous periods in Michigan's botanical history.



J. KELLY

On February 23, 1837, shortly after Michigan achieved statehood, the legislature authorized the First Geological Survey, to provide for the fledgling State "...an accurate and complete geological survey..." The First Survey was the famous pioneer scientist Douglass Houghton's conception of what was needed to start Michigan's development

as a State on a firm scientific footing, and we are very lucky that he had the ear of enough legislators, and Governor Stevens T. Mason, to bring the Survey into being. The Survey was to include several departments, one of which was botany. Houghton, naturally, was appointed by Governor Mason as State Geologist to head the Survey.

The first field expedition of the Survey, with Abram Sager in charge of the Botanical and Zoological Departments, set out from Detroit in June of 1837. Their first stop was collecting plants at the mouth of the Detroit River, from June 12 to June 20. Based on surviving plant collections, the party collected at Brownstown, Gibraltar, and Grosse Isle. At Grosse Ile, in particular, we know of about half a dozen collections – several common plants, a pondweed, *Potamogeton pusillus*, a forest dwelling bedstraw, *Galium obtusum*, the native cow parsnip, *Heracleum maximum*, and common or ground juniper, *Juniperus communis*. More interesting are two plants that are much less common in Michigan; the very rare and beautiful bright red fire pink, *Silene virginica*, and the uncommon puttyroot orchid, *Aplectrum hyemale*, neither known to be still extant on Grosse Ile. These latter two conservative species attest to intact rich woodlands and woodland openings present in the early days of the island, even though habitats on the specimen labels are vague ("damp woods" for the orchid, and "dry clay soil" for the fire pink). Maybe you can find them to put them back on the botanical map for Grosse Ile.





GINLC volunteers at work. Far left, top to bottom, Betsy Kantz and Victoria Murphy remove invasive buckthorn from the Hennepin Marsh Gateway Preserve. Eric Michael wields a chainsaw at the Kobiljak Preserve. Sam Warner and Mike Williams install a split rail fence by the Photo Blind at the GBU. Center, tools, John Leon and Jack Wood remove a deteriorating platform at the Quarry Pond at the GBU. Below, Intrepid Pond in the fall.



Stewardship

BY PETER KANTZ

I've been asked; what does GINLC do in regards to stewardship? A complete answer would require far more space than is available here, so I'll provide just a few examples.

GINLC stewards the Gibraltar Bay Unit (GBU) of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This involves cutting the grass, maintaining the existing trails and making new trails, removing invasive plants, such as honeysuckle, buckthorn, garlic mustard and phragmites, taking down old fences and putting up new ones, maintaining the rock gardens, installing picnic tables, benches and signs. Last year GINLC constructed a photography blind and ADA trail on the shore of Quarry Pond.

GINLC stewards a number of Township owned properties, such as the Airport Wildlife Refuge, Sunrise Park and Intrepid Pond. The work done at these properties is similar to that done at the GBU. In the past few years, GINLC has installed a bench, signage, boulders, spotting scope and patio at Sunrise Park. We have also planted trees and bushes at Sunrise Park, Intrepid Pond, Centennial Farm and the High School.

GINLC owns close to 200 acres of property, all of which are monitored and maintained. Several of our properties have been enhanced to allow easier access by the general

public and improve the educational experience. Examples are: the board walk, observation platform, signage and bike rack at Hennepin Marsh Gateway, the trailhead with kiosk, bench and bike rack on Meridian north of Rucker, the

“GINLC stewardship activities are diverse and require volunteers with a variety of skills”

trees planted at the Kolbiljak Preserve on Thorofare and the trail with signage around Intrepid Pond.

Larger construction projects are generally contracted out. Smaller construction projects are often accomplished by sponsoring Eagle Scout projects. GINLC has partnered with scout groups, school groups, church groups and other civic minded organizations on stewardship activities that benefit the community.

GINLC stewardship activities are diverse and require volunteers with a variety of skills. Physical labor is often involved but organizational, planning and grant writing skills are also needed. If you'd like to be involved in stewardship please contact me at 734-558-2149 or email me at info@ginlc.org.

Practice Healthy Lawn Care!

Yes, you can have a lush green lawn that is safe for your family, pets and nature. Here are the steps:

1. Test your soil to find out if you need fertilizer. Get a test mailer from the MSU Extension, www.msusoiltest.com.
2. If your test comes back that you don't need fertilizer, DON'T USE IT!
3. If the test comes back that you need fertilizer, use the right kind – NO or LOW PHOSPHORUS, only SLOW RELEASE, NO WEED & FEED, and STAY AWAY FROM THE RIVER! (15-25 feet)
4. Mowing – CUT IT HIGH (3") & LET IT LIE (Leave the clippings on the lawn.)
5. Water between 10am and 2pm, max of 1/2 to 1" per week, and do not overwater.
6. CORE AERATION is the best thing you can do for your lawn. (Not with golf shoes.)
7. NO DE-THATCHING TOOLS –they cut through connections between parent grass plants and new grass plants.

Even better, reduce the amount of lawn you have to only what your family needs to play on, and replace with native plants. Monarch butterflies need you to plant milkweed plants! (See article on page 11.)



Homeowners' Impact on Our Environment

BY BERT URBANI

We all know that humans beings impact the natural world in many ways. On Grosse Ile we are blessed with an abundance of natural resources, and we have taken many steps to protect them that are far ahead of many other communities. For example, our Open Space program has protected nearly 600 acres of land in its natural state for the enjoyment of residents and the benefit of wildlife. We also have curbside recycling, a service that makes it easy for us to reduce the amount of trash we send to landfills and contribute to the reuse of materials. And we don't use coal-tar sealants on our bike paths.

Here are a couple ways that individual homeowners can protect our environment, which we have discussed before, but which are worth revisiting.

Just Say NO To Coal-Tar!

A negative accompaniment to warm weather is the arrival of coal tar sealant companies working on local driveways and parking lots. Coal tar pitch is a known human carcinogen and is banned in many places in the country, including nearby Van Buren Twp.

According to scientific studies, coal tar releases toxic emissions, called Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons, or PAHs. The smell of tar is noxious and unforgettable, and means that toxic molecules are entering your family's lungs. PAH-laden dust contaminates our bare feet, our shoes and our pets' paws, and is tracked into our homes and washed into the Detroit River.

There are healthier alternatives to coal tar pitch sealants for driveways and parking lots. In fact, Grosse Ile Township hires a company that uses an asphalt sealant for our bike paths and parking lots. Unfortunately, that company does not do residential work. But safer alternative latex-based sealants are available for Do-It-Yourselfers at big box hardware stores like Home Depot and Lowe's, and a local company, King Kurb, does residential work with the latex-based sealant.



**Maybe Kermit was wrong
– *it is easy being green!***

**Come to the Earth Day celebration on
April 22 for more tips! (see page 12)**

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

2016/2017
NATURE &
WILDLIFE
PHOTO CONTEST

We are looking for photos taken locally that inspire us to appreciate and steward our environment: the air, water, land, resources, wildlife, and ecosystems. Any local high school student is eligible to enter.

CATEGORIES

Wild Critters

My Park Pic

Waterway
Magic

PRIZES

\$100 / GRAND PRIZE

\$50 / FIRST Place in each category

\$40 / SECOND Place in each category

\$25 / THIRD Place in each category

DETAILS

- Enter starting 12/01/2016. Deadline 5:00 pm, Wednesday, May 10, 2017.
- All digital contest, in color or B&W. Use the highest resolution possible for clarity and publication.
- Contest is limited to one entry per category. Maximum of 3 per student.
- Enter at www.ginlc.org. Click on "Photo Contest" for entry form.

My Park Pic

BY JOHN LEON

Usually I'm right on time to join the other volunteers on the regular Monday morning Stewardship events when we keep the Gibraltar Bay Unit trails mowed, invasive species removed, and clear out the debris where the beavers are trying to block the pond culvert. However, one Monday this past fall I arrived at the GBU an hour earlier than required. Since I had to leave by 11am, I came at 8am. (Please, no snickering from those who know that 9am is an early day for me.)

A surprise was in store for me as I looked over at Quarry Pond and counted 8 or 9 Great Blue Herons in the trees, reflected in the still water. As stunning as that was, I knew I had to get to work mowing the paths in the prairie. When I got to the paths, I thought there was a low fog hanging over the Little Blue Stem grass, but what I was seeing was the early sunlight reflected off the dew hanging onto spider webs and the tops of the stems. There were so many webs that the prairie looked to be connected into one giant lace



JOHN LEON

art object. Closer inspection showed rainbow upon rainbow throughout the whole field!

I thank all those who work so hard to preserve this little special pocket of nature that is so close and available to us all. Please join us for Monday Stewardship, 9am-12pm at the GBU.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Unfortunately John is not eligible for the **Take It Outside** contest, being a 1963 graduate of St. Anthony's High School. To be eligible, entrants must be in the Class of 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020 at a local high school.



Help us Survey Frogs this Year!

Spring 2017 will be our third season surveying breeding frogs at the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge! Last season we recorded Western Chorus Frog (left), American Toad, Green Frog, and Bullfrog. Surveys are conducted weekly, late March through June just after dusk, when the frogs begin calling for the night during their breeding season. This is a fun citizen science project that contributes valuable data about our local amphibians. **Our first public survey and training will be held on Friday, March 31 at 7:30 pm.** All are welcome!

For more information please contact Natalie Cypher at GINLC. education@gmail.com or 734-624-7993. — Natalie Cypher

NATUREWATCH.ca

GINLC's Partners Shine at Annual Meeting

BY BERT URBANI

The 2016 GINLC Annual Meeting was the place to be on Nov 12, as a full program was provided, replete with great door prizes. Attendees were brought up to date on the many activities their conservancy was involved in during the year, as well updates on GINLC's valuable partnerships that bring so many benefits to island residents.

GINLC President Peter Kantz introduced Eagle Scout Wayne Sawka. Wayne and GINLC board member Pamela A. Frucci have been working to preserve what is left of what should have been one of Grosse Ile's finest Heritage Trees, a 350-year-old white oak that was cut down on 5th Street some years ago. Pam and Wayne arranged the removal of a one-foot-thick, five-foot-diameter slice of the stump and Wayne proceeded to preserve it. He sprayed 12 coatings of high gloss polyurethane varnish on the front and sides, and about 3 layers on the back. The stump was then mounted on a stand by I.I. Enterprises in Wyandotte and it has been placed in the lobby of the Township Hall. Wayne is researching key dates in Grosse Ile history and is planning on adding information to the stump



Left: Eagle Scout Wayne Sawka. Right: Cliff St. Pierre, GINLC 2016 Conservationist of the Year Award recipient

to connect the dates with the tree rings.

Pat Nielsen and Lenny Pusdesris of the Grosse Ile Open Space Committee presented information about several Open Space properties and the trails and amenities that await island visitors. Pat's presentation is on the GINLC website under Education.

Disproving the biblical verse that "No prophet is honored in his hometown," the 2016 GINLC Conservationist of the Year was awarded to Grosse Ile's own Prophet of Open Space, Cliff St. Pierre. Cliff has been an active member since its inception and is its original appointed chairman. In the early 1990s many residents and Township Board members realized that continued uncontrolled development of Grosse Ile would jeopardize the natural character of the community and over-extend the capacity of its infrastructure. To correct this potential problem, in 1994 the Township Board established an Open Space Program to purchase vacant lots and deed restrict them to ensure they remained in their natural state. They also established a committee to oversee the lands, maintain them and provide



"The Open Space Program...has protected nearly 600 acres of land to date, for the enjoyment of nature for all Grosse Ile residents, present and future"

analyses and information to the Township Board as required. Voters approved two millages, one to purchase land to be protected, and one to maintain the lands. Both millages have been allowed to expire but funds remain in both accounts. Presently there are more than 100 acres of privately owned vacant land that are suitable for protection under the Open Space Program. Through the will of the voters, this innovative and forward-thinking program has protected nearly 600 acres of land to date, for the enjoyment of nature for all Grosse Ile residents, present and future. Congratulations, Cliff, and many thanks for all your efforts to preserve our island's beautiful natural areas.

Jody DeMeyere, Visitor Services Manager of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge brought us up to date on the latest happenings at the Refuge Gateway across the Trenton Channel. Construction on the Visitor Center and the Fishing Pier and School Ship Dock is continuing. Everyone is getting anxious for a Grand Opening sign to appear. Jody expressed frustration that she couldn't provide a date for the opening since the



Detroit River Int'l Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Manager Jody DeMeyere

estimated dates have come and gone many times. Building on the former industrial site has proven to be more challenging than expected, and weather and other delays have slowed progress. Nevertheless, lots of exciting things are happening around the Refuge. The deer hunt program at the Refuge Gateway property last fall was a success with a lottery for bow hunters. Some lucky hunters could practically walk from home to their hunting blind. As we all know, the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Refuge on E. River Rd. on Grosse Ile is open 365 days a year

now. There are frequent nature programs there through the Refuge staff and GINLC, and Summer Sundays are still hosted by the GINLC to allow visitors access to the Airport Property as well. The many other units of the Refuge are in a variety of conditions of use as Visitor Services plans are developed.

Denise Zielinski and the Membership Committee outdid themselves obtaining wonderful door prizes. Please patronize these generous local businesses: E & J Kitchen, Extra Special Baskets, Grosse Ile Golf & Country Club, Hungry Howies, Hawthorne & Vine, The Round House BBQ, Sibley Gardens, The Waterfront Restaurant & Lounge, Whiskeys on the Water, and Wine Dotte Bistro.



KROGER CARDS

Enroll your Kroger Plus card to benefit the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy! Go to www.kroger.com/communityrewards to enroll or re-enroll. (Be sure to renew in April!) Thanks!



AMAZON SMILE

Don't forget to smile — Sign up for Amazon Smile! Select Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy as your charitable organization, and then 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products will be donated to GINLC.



GREG HUMME

Winter Programs Minus the Winter

GINLC held two educational events this winter season. In mid-January a nice group of folks came out to Westcroft Gardens for our "Winter Birds of Westcroft" program. It was a warm and foggy winter day so bird ID was tough through the fog, but our highlight of the afternoon was a beautiful Red-tailed Hawk perched in a nearby tree.

On February 12 we met at Gibraltar Bay for "Winter Ways of the Bay." Although the day was quite warm and spring-like, we observed several signs of winter wildlife and discussed how these animals survive the winter, including Praying Mantis, Muskrat, and Cottontail Rabbit. No matter the season, there is always something to observe in nature!

Join us for our upcoming programs this spring! For more information contact Natalie at GINLC.education@gmail.com or 734-624-7993.

— Natalie Cypher

GINLC WELCOMES NEW AND RETURNING BOARD MEMBERS



Alan Cavrell grew up on Long Island, NY. He attended the University of Maryland where he received a BS in Television and Film Production. After working for a NYC ad agency, he was recruited by EDS [Hewlett Packard] where he has worked for the last 32 years. Alan, his wife Gloria and their son, Andrew, moved to Grosse Ile six years ago. Andrew is now a junior at GHS. The open space on Grosse Ile was one of the reasons the Cavrells chose to live on Grosse Ile. Alan has been an election inspector for GI Township and a GI Rowing Club Trustee. He enjoys the outdoors and landscaping, always planting and moving things around to create a more natural setting. As an active volunteer of GINLC, Alan would like to build more awareness and encourage participation from the community.



Fred Pepper Growing up, Fred was fortunate to have a mentor, an uncle, who had the patience to take him on treks through dry river beds looking for fossils. His grandfather took him fishing on the still waters of the Red Cedar River. Those activities spurred his interest in nature, and later on, he became active in scouting, hiking and the Royal Oak Forestry Club. Fred's career as a Teacher and a Principal spanned 36 years. Among his many accomplishments, Fred developed a Nature Center at Greenwood School in St. Clair Shores. In 2001, Fred moved to Grosse Ile and soon became actively involved in GINLC committees and later a Board Member. In 2007, Fred received the "Conservationist of the Year" award in recognition of his many contributions. After spending the last few years mainly with the Rotary Club, he is looking forward to returning to help the GINLC accomplish its future goals.



Steven Schweickart grew up on Grosse Ile and is a 2001 graduate of Grosse Ile High School. Throughout his youth, Steven joined family members in GINLC volunteer activities. His uncle, John Schweickart, was one of the GINLC founders. Steven currently resides off island. He and his wife Katarina have a three-year-old daughter and are expecting their second child this Spring. Steven serves as a financial advisor at Merrill Lynch, and is an active volunteer in many local organizations including Downriver Council for the Arts and the Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber of Commerce.



GINLC board members at the 2016 Annual Meeting

THANK YOU TO RETURNING BOARD MEMBERS

Courtney Solenberger-McNeill, Denise Zielinski, and Susan Harrison were elected to new three-year terms.

AND THANK YOU TO RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

Many thanks to Dawn Dubnicka, Keith Fusinski, Ingo Hasserodt, Jim Kenyon, and Carol Machuga, with much appreciation for their work on the GINLC board. Ingo stays on as Vice President of Land Acquisitions.

Save the Monarchs!

BY PAMELA A. FRUCCI

According to an article in the Environmental Defense Fund's winter 2017 magazine, the population of the monarch butterfly, which winters in Mexico, has decreased from 910,000,000 in 1996 to 334,000,000 in 2006 to 57,000,000 in 2014. This adds up to a staggering 90% decline in just two decades.

This colorful butterfly weighs less than a dollar bill but can fly 2,500 miles. Why the extreme decrease in population? The article lays the blame on development, farmers changing butterfly habitat to cropland, climate change, and pesticides which kill the only food the monarchs live by – milkweed! Female monarchs only lay eggs on milkweed leaves and monarch larvae eat only milkweed leaves.

EDF specialist Audrey Archer states, "We need 1.4 billion milkweed stems returned to the environment to stabilize the monarch butterfly, but we can't get to 1.4 billion without the help of farmers." EDF's 10-year goal is to form a partnership with large-scale farmers to restore two million acres of monarch habitat to make sure there's a future for the species.

Local residents can help restore the monarch butterfly population by planting milkweed on their property. The combined effort of individuals and large-scale farmers entering into a cooperative effort with EDF are keys to the survival of the monarch.

For more information on how to help the monarch go to edf.org/HelpMonarchs.

ANOTHER BENEFIT OF TREES

BY INGO HASSERODT

With the general concern about rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, it is good to know that each community can do something about it. It is supposed to require an acre of mature woods to compensate for the carbon footprint of about 16 people. With at least 700 or more acres of woodlands, not counting the large number of mature and growing trees on residential properties, and around 10,000 inhabitants on the island, we are doing very well. This is reason enough for communities to encourage planting trees on any vacant piece of land and to worry less about perfect lawns.



*Above: Marsh or Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, does well in wetlands and rain gardens.*

MONARCH PLANTS

BY BERT URBANI

There are many types of milkweed plants that are good for monarch butterflies. As Pam notes, monarchs lay their eggs on milkweed plants because that is the only food the caterpillars eat. Milkweeds contain a chemical that is toxic or unappetizing to predators. Adult monarchs will feed on other nectar plants, including asters, zinnias, and coneflowers. A "Monarch Way Station" should include lots of milkweed and other nectar plants.



*Butterfly Weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, is an attractive native plant in the milkweed family that is the popular choice for gardeners*



*Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*, grows 3-4 ft tall*



Adult male monarch feeds on a butterfly bush flower

Don't miss these *April* events!

FROG & TOAD SURVEY TRAINING

Friday, March 31, 7 pm
Gibraltar Bay Unit (GBU)
28820 E. River Rd.

- Learn about southeast MI species and why it is important to survey them
- YOU can learn to identify them!
- Become a CITIZEN SCIENTIST and contribute valuable scientific data about our local frogs!
- Register with Natalie Ray Cypher at GINLC.education@gmail.com or 734-624-7993



EARTH DAY ON GROSSE ILE

Saturday, April 22, 1- 4 pm
Centennial Farm

- Celebrate Earth Day with Parke Lane Elementary, our first Michigan Green School!
- Learn from GI Twp experts about recycling, water conservation & waste water
- GI Twp Police medicine collection program (only pills, no needles, inhalers or liquids)
- Kids Activities – pond study, make an Earth Day pendant, and more!



TO RECEIVE EVENT NOTICES & NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL, CONTACT US AT INFO@GINLC.ORG



To sign up for a work party call, PETER KANTZ 734-558-2149

To make a donation call, JOHN LEON 734-671-0125

Non-Profit Organization
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GROSSE ILE, MI

To Promote for the public benefit the preservation, stewardship and understanding of the natural resources in the Township of Grosse Ile and surrounding area

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