



Ancient Oaks Seedlings

Spring 2017



Upcoming Events & Activities

Birds and Blossoms



*Oak Ridge Marsh Nature Park,
500 Lions Dr., LZ
Saturday, May 20, 2017
8:00 to 9:30 AM*

It's never too early to think spring. Shut your eyes and imagine woodlands full of birdsong, dappled sunlight, and delicate spring flowers. You can put yourself in the scene by joining our Maytime walk in the woods. Help us plan by registering through the LZ Parks and Rec Dept. for class



#637975-A.

Bee Balm Seeds Now Available

When Mayor Poynton signed the Mayors Monarch Pledge, we committed, as a village, to help the declining Monarch butterfly population. Bee Balm (Wild Bergamot) is a lovely lavender member of the mint family and a favorite of all kinds of pollinators. Milkweed seeds are also still available.



Make your yard a butterfly favorite! Now is the time to plant and AOF is offering a free packet of seeds just for the asking. Email us and we will send you a packet with planting instructions.

info@ancientoaksfoundation.org

Mark Your Calendars...

July 14 *Farmers' Market*

Meet us in Paulus Park and find out what we're up to for the summer!

July 21 *Fabulous Fireflies*

Friday, July 21, 7:30 pm to 9 pm

Join us for nature's own light show! It's hands-on adventure for kids of all ages. More details coming,

Recent Events & Activities

Trivia Night

Thanks to all the folks — fun, smart, and generous — who filled the room for our trivia night event. The evening was a rollicking good time and a great success for our organization.



Thanks also to the many local people and businesses that helped make the event special:

**Ruta Troutman-@Properties, Barrington
Casten Auto Boady**

Lake Zurich Tire and Auto

Beelows • Bella Lukes- • Biaggis, • Blue Violet Salon • Chili's, • Copper Fiddle • Craving Gyros • Foglia YMCA • Holiday Inn Express • Jersey Mikes Subs • Jewel • Jimmy Johns • Kate Zweifelhofer • Mary Kay Cosmetics • Lovers Lane • Makray Golf Club • Marianos • McDonald's • Natural Expressions • Old World Bakery • Orchard Prime Meats • Pizza Hut • Raceway Car Wash • Smashburger • Timothy Grant Jewelers • Trader Joes • VoLZ Parks Department • Wines for Humanity

Rain Gardens in the Home Landscape

Suffering from a soggy garden? At the Ela Library on April 5 Greg Rajskey of True Nature shared examples of well-designed rain gardens and gave advice on developing and maintaining these mighty mini-ecosystems.

(left: the raingarden at Paulus Park, cared for by AOF)



Owl Walk

Curious people filled the Paulus Park Barn on a dark, cold January evening to learn about owls, especially the owls that call Lake Zurich home. They met a live owl learned about how these fierce flyers live, and walked through the park in search of these fascinating predators.



Ongoing Projects

Kuechmann Park

626 N. Old Rand Road

Restoration continues at the oak woodland in Kuechmann Park. This winter volunteers have been busy clearing invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle, allowing more sunlight to reach the forest floor and benefit the native grasses and flowers that we have planted. The brush we cleared was converted to woodchips, and the village did a great job of refreshing the trail using the new woodchips. A lot of people have been making their way down the inviting new path. Eighteen months ago, the path was overgrown and nearly impassable. Since then we have cleared the path, freed some of the big oaks from the buckthorn thickets surrounding them, and added signs to clearly identify the trail. Eagle Scout projects this spring will create some additional improvements.

Oak Ridge Marsh Nature Park

500 Lions Drive

Clearing continues at the Nature Park as well., but with a difference. In addition to volunteers going after the usual suspects (buckthorn, multiflora rose, honeysuckle), McGinty has been taking out dead and dying ash trees. They also performed a controlled burn for sections of this park on April 7. Burns are done to control invasive species and to clear out unwanted brush and debris. Spring is definitely on the way!



Membership

Do you know somebody like you who cares about Lake Zurich's woodlands and natural areas? Please tell them about Ancient Oaks Foundation! Different levels and types of membership are available or you can give a one-time donation. We accept checks made out to Ancient Oaks Foundation or you can use the secure PayPal account found on our website. Visit ancientoaksfoundation.org for information about our 501(c) 3 tax deductible sponsorship levels.

Contact Us

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If You Find a Wild Baby...

In the animal world, springtime is baby time. If you find a wild baby in your yard, resist the urge to take it home and raise it yourself. Wildlife species require very specialized care. Without that expertise, even the best intentions can lead to tragedy. Additionally, for health and safety reasons that affect both human and animal, it is against state and federal laws to do this.

A baby found alone is not always an orphan.

If the baby or babies appear alert, warm, and healthy, chances are good that the parents are either out gathering food or staying away from the nest so they don't attract a predator (including you) to their young. Leave them alone!

Mom will take her healthy babies back.

Many people believe that if they touch a baby animal, their human scent causes the mother to reject it. This is never true. Those babies represent a huge investment of time and energy for the parents. They do not abandon them just because they smell funny. Did you find a bay on the ground? Put the young back in the nest if the location is known, replace any disturbed nesting material, and leave.

Remember: Not every baby animal is going to make it to adulthood, but their best chance of surviving and thriving in is with their parents.

The Ant and the Bloodroot



Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria Canadensis*) is one of the first flowers to appear in the spring. With its showy white flowers and attractive foliage, it



brightens the woodland floor for a brief two weeks. The flowers – open in sun, but closed at night or if it's cloudy – bloom for only 1-2 days. Afterwards, each flower is replaced by a seed capsule that becomes enlarged, turns yellow, and splits open to release its seeds.

Naturally enough, the seeds fall to the ground beneath the parent plant. This is not an ideal location however. Bloodroot grows in colonies, so there is already a lot of competition for space, nutrients, and sunlight. As a result, plants have developed seeds that take advantage of nature's movers – wind, water, insects, and animals – to move their seeds to more suitable sites. For Bloodroot, the answer is ants. And what do ants get from this partnership? Food.

The process has a name: *myrmecochory*, from the ancient Greek for “circular dance.” Here's how it works. The ants aren't interested in the seed itself. Instead they are attracted to a treat attached to the



seed – a lipid and protein-rich appendage called an *elaiosome* (Greek for “oil” and “body”). The ants somehow manage to find these seeds soon after they fall and carry them away to

snack on the elaiosome. The seed is discarded.

Consider... The seed has now been moved away from the parent plant and deposited in an ant trash pile, ideal for germination and safe from predators. It's not far – only inches, maybe feet – but between them, the ant and the bloodroot have opened up a new frontier.



Burning Questions

WHAT is a controlled burn?? For millennia, our native woodlands, wetlands, and prairies were visited regularly by wildfires. Today we use fire as a tool to manage and maintain existing natural areas.



WHY do a controlled burn?? We use fire to remove invasive species so that fire-tolerant native plants can thrive on a greater share of available resources. At the same time, the burn helps restore nutrients to the soil and clears forest debris.

WHERE do we burn? Woodlands, prairies, and wetlands are perfect natural communities for controlled fires.

WHEN do we burn? The months from mid-October through early April cover the main burn season. Leaves have fallen and grasses are dry, providing fuel for the fire.



Most plants are in their winter dormancy; new growth has not yet begun the frozen ground is hard enough to accommodate any heavy equipment that might be needed. Temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction are among the conditions that are assessed before a burn begins.



WHO performs a controlled burn? The local fire department issues burn permits. Credentialed professionals perform contained burns.

Seeking New Board Members

We have openings for additional Ancient Oaks Foundation Board of Director Members. Experience in natural resources is not necessary, just an interest in impacting your community while contributing to this dynamic conservation organization. Contact Judi Thode at info@ancientoaksfoundation.org for more information and an application packet.



Facts of Life: Northern Cardinal

For flash and style, it's hard to beat the male Northern

Cardinal. Even the brown females sport a sharp crest and warm red accents. Because cardinals stay around all winter, they're especially eye-catching amidst the season's snow and bare branches. In spring and summer, their calls and trills are a constant reminder of who's really in charge of the neighborhood.

Breeding season starts in March. One courtship behavior you might see at your birdfeeder is *mate feeding*. The male cardinal picks up a seed, approaches the female, and the two momentarily touch beaks as she takes the offering.



Before nest building starts, the pair take a week or two to visit possible nest sites. The two calls to each other and hold nesting material in their bills as they assess each site. An ideal site is hidden in dense foliage about 1-

15 feet off the ground. Nests are often wedged into small branches of saplings shrubs, evergreen trees, or even blackberry brambles.



The female does most of the nest building, although males sometimes supply building material. With her beak, she crushes twigs to make them pliable, and then turns in the nest using her body and feet to bend and push the twigs into a cup shape. The finished nest (3 inches high, 4 inches across) has four layers: coarse twigs covered in a leafy mat, lined with grapevine bark and a final layer of grasses, stems, rootlets, and pine needles. It typically takes from 3 to 9 days to build the nest which is used only once.



The female lays 2-5 eggs and is the only one to sit on the eggs. Incubation lasts from 11-13 days; during this time the male brings her food and protects their territory. Both feed the young for the 9- 11 days before they leave the nest. With her first brood launched, the female goes on to build a new nest and incubate her second brood of the season. Meanwhile, the male continues to feed the first brood for up to two weeks more, bring food to his incubating mate, and fend off intruders.



Spring Verse

Spring Thunder

Listen, The wind is still,
far away in the night --
See! The uplands fill
With a running light.



Open the doors. It is warm;
And where the sky was clear--
Look! The head of a storm
That marches here!

Come under the trembling hedge--
Fast, although you fumble...
There! Did you hear the edge
of winter crumble?

Mark van Doren

Spring Pools

These pools that, though in forests, still reflect
The total sky almost without defect,
And like the flowers beside them, chill and shiver,
Will like the flowers beside them soon be gone,
And yet not out by any brook or river,
But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.

The trees that have it in their pent-up buds
To darken nature and be summer woods -
Let them think twice before they use their powers
To blot out and drink up and sweep away
These flowery waters and these watery flowers
From snow that melted only yesterday.. Robert Frost