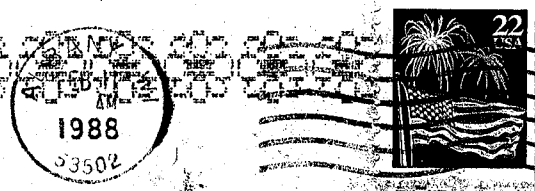
Southwest Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts (SWWPE)
c/o GARY ELDRED
1492 Sleepy Hollow Trail
Boscobel, WI 53805



GARY AND GAIL ADAMS
RR 2 BOX 63
SOLDIERS GROVE WI

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS (S.W.W.P.E.)

SWWPE NEWSLETTER #2

WINTER 1988

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS
MEMBERSHIP FORM*

NAME:_____

HOME ADDRESS:_____

CITY:_____STATE_____ZIP_____

OCCUPATION:_____

WORK ADRESS:_____

HOME PHONE:_____WORK PHONE:_____

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

_____$10 INDIVIDUAL

_____$15 FAMILY

_____$20 CONTRIBUTOR

_____$100 LIFE

_____$400 CORPORATE MEMBERS

* MEMBERSHIPS RUN FROM
APRIL 1ST TO APRIL 1ST
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS
AND RETURN WITH THIS FORM TO:

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS
C/O GARY ELDRED
1492 SLEEPY HOLLOW TRAIL
BOSCOBEL, WI 53805

PLEASE CHECK ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS IN WHICH YOU
MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP SWWPE:

___SEED COLLECTION

___WRITING NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

___RESTORATION PROJECTS

___MEMBER OF SWWPE BOARD

___HELP WITH CONTACTING MEMBERS
THROUG MAIL OR BY PHONE

___PARTICIPATE IN GROUP VISITS TO
PRAIRIE SITES

___HELP CONTACT AND SOLICIT DONATIONS
FOR SWWPE

___OTHER AREAS_____

_____
(PLEASE ELABORATE)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS

This newsletter is a vehicle to make members of the organization aware and interested in efforts of SWWPE. Realizing the seperation caused by distance, time schedules, and life styles, we hope this newsletter will stimulate involvement in a variety of activities pursued by SWWPE. We also hope the newletter will supply information generating feedback on the goals and activities the group is pursuing. The newsletter is also the main form of communications between members of SWWPE, as such information from members that could be used in the newletter is always appreciated. As a relatively new organization the SWWPE needs to know the ideas and interests of members to help formulate ways they might participate in SWWPE.

UPDATE ON SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIAST ACTIVITIES

SEED COLLECTION

220 pounds of seeds from various prairie species was collected during the months of August - October. Species collected included: black eyed susan, bergamot, yellow coneflower, wild quinine, culver's root, yellow baptisia, purple coneflower, rattlesnake master, silky asters, sedges, grasses, and several other species compiling a total of 35 in all. Plans for the seed include a project for restoration at the original homestead of John Muir.

PRAIRIE VIDEO TAPE PROJECT

A video tape introducing prairie restoration and the goals of the Southwest Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts is in the final stages of production. Volunteers working on the project include Jamie Goldsmith reporter for the Boscobel Dial, and George Vukelich noted radio personality from Madison. The video presentation will include early history of Wisconsin prairies, loss and threats to prairie land, management techniques, species identification, and information on SWWPE's programs and goals. The video is designed to be used to support proposals and funding application for projects proposed by SWWPE.

DONATIONS

A very generous donation of $4750 was graciously accepted by SWWPE from Helen and David MacGregor. This donation will be used to purchase 10 acres of high quality wet prairie. These

10 acres include a an ecological smorgasboard of plant life of wet prairie, sedge meadow, and cattail marsh. The purchase of this property will enhance survival of several threatened or endangered species. Gary Eldred donated $500 to SWWPE this money will help defray the costs of land purchase, video production, and other projects.

SEED COLLECTING

by Steve Curley

My seven year old son Jonah and I spent one of the last golden days of summer collecting bergamot seed tops. The lavendar blooms of bee balm we gathered had already turned to brown wasps nests, holding the promise of future growth on dying stalks.

Although the bergamot, also known as Oswego Tea was past full bloom, the pungent smell of the plant filled the thick warm air with its scent. The smell moved through the air as clouds rolled above overhead, playing a spotlight show of shadow and brightness on the hills surrounding the meadow near Lancaster.

Alice and Walter Merk and Gary Eldred invited us on this expedition and now, just before beginning our collecting foray, suprised us with buckets and seemingly oversized garbage bags for holding our efforts. A climb over a barbed wire fence soon led us to bergamot clusters which lay in a meadow between thistles, gooseberry, goldenrod and other plants all headed towards fall browness. Scattered throughout the collection sight were moist land mines left by recently grazing cattle.

Jonah began collecting with all the enthusiasm of a seven year old assigned a new and important adult task. His attention however quickly waned as spiders, insects, wild apple trees, and the intoxication of being outdoors on a warm summer afternoon caught him in their spell.

A few hours and a couple of nearly full garbage bags later we stopped for lunch. Our hands and clothing smelling like the inside of a spice merchant's warehouse. In the center of the meadow we ate and discussed future plans for seed collection, always a sense of quiet urgency underlying the conversation. The seeds we are collecting are from scattered remnants around Grant County, samples of once abundant prairie that covered much of this area.

My memories of the day revolve around watching my son as he found signs of nature all around him. Whether leaning over a spider trapping prey in its web, or smelling bergamot oil that stayed on his fingers through the rest of the weekend; perhaps wondering and just beginning to understand why four adults would spend a Sunday afternoon collecting seed. Maybe Jonah didn't completely comprehend or appreciate the motives or outcomes of the day's effort, but hopefully the day will begin to plant the seed of future preservation in his mind.

ROADSIDE COLLECTORS

by George and Suzanne

Hi we're Suzanne and George Brown you might have noticed us this fall along the roads in a field picking seed. We really enjoyed it and we're looking forward to the next outing. We hope to be able to get out next spring to gather some seeds from spring plants. Next fall we want to get seed orchards started out on our own property. We hope 1988 will see more people working to make the projects of Southwest Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts become a reality.

A PAIRIE SUNSET

Shot gold, maroon and violet, dazzling silver, emerald fawn,

The earth's whole amplitude and Nature's multiform power consigned for once to colors;

The light, the general air possess'd by them - colors till now unknown,

No limit, confine - not the western sky alone - the high meridian - North, South, all,

Pure luminous color fighting the silent shadows to the last.

Walt Whitman
1888

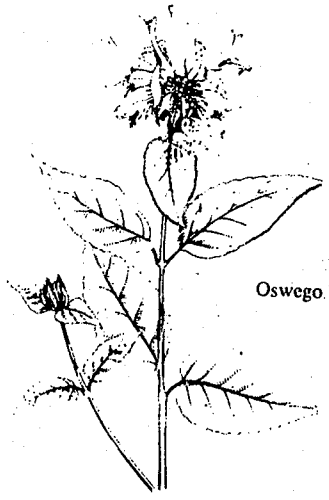
EXCEPTS FROM "THE HISTORY OF GREEN COUNTY - 1887"

A remarkable and beautiful feature in the decorations of the prairies is, that the summer flowers, after having for a season displayed their gorgeous variety, and turned up their glowing faces to recieve the glowing beams of the sun, as soon as autumn puts on her sober brown, and the airs of heaven breathe more mildly, they droop, die and instantly give place to a new galaxy of fine and beautiful flowers, particularily all varieties of chrysantemum, and a splendid drooping bush of flowers that looks as if it were covered with snowflakes; the autumn flowers are more delicate and less flaring than those of summer.

I have said that there is no mountain range in this district; extensive ranges of hills are found on the Wisconsin River, and in the northeast parts of the Territory, but the only hills in this quarter of the the country are the Sinsinewa mounds, the seat of Gen. George Wallace Jones, delegate to Congress, (these are near the Illinois state line) and the Platte mounds and the Blue mounds. These mounds serve as landmarks to the traveler over the prairies. The Platte mounds and the Blue mounds are about forty-five miles apart; the former comprising three, and the latter two hills. The hills, with the exception of the center one of the Platte mounds, are from 200 to 300 feet high, well covered with timber and generally capable of being cultivated to the summit. They are seen from almost every part of the Wisconsin land district, and independent of their being so much service to the traveler in the absence of roads and other landmarks, they are objects of great natural beauty; for although the prairies are by no means dead level, but are on the contrary are most rolling and undulating, and in many terms may be termed hilly, yet these mounds very agreeably break , and diversify the otherwise monotonous view of prairie and grove, however luxuriant it may be in soil and vegetation.

FEATURED SPECIES

BERGAMOT
(OSWEGO TEA, BEE BALM)



Oswego Tea

Oswego Tea, Bee Balm
Monarda didyma
Height to 3 ft. Stem stout, erect, branching, square in cross section, smooth or fuzzy. Leaves opposite, thin, petioled, conspicuously dark green to blue-green, rather long-pointed at tip and blunter toward base,

DIVISION ANTHOPHYTA. CLASS DICOTYLEDONAE

6 in. long and to 3 in. wide, with longest petiole to 1 in. long. Upper leaves and stems often tinged with shades from bronze to dark red. Substantial perennial roots.

Native of North America. Found from Quebec to Georgia, west to Tennessee and Michigan growing in moist places along roadsides or streams; in North Carolina found up to 5,200-ft elevation. About a dozen species of the genus to be found in North America including Mexico, with this best known in the East.

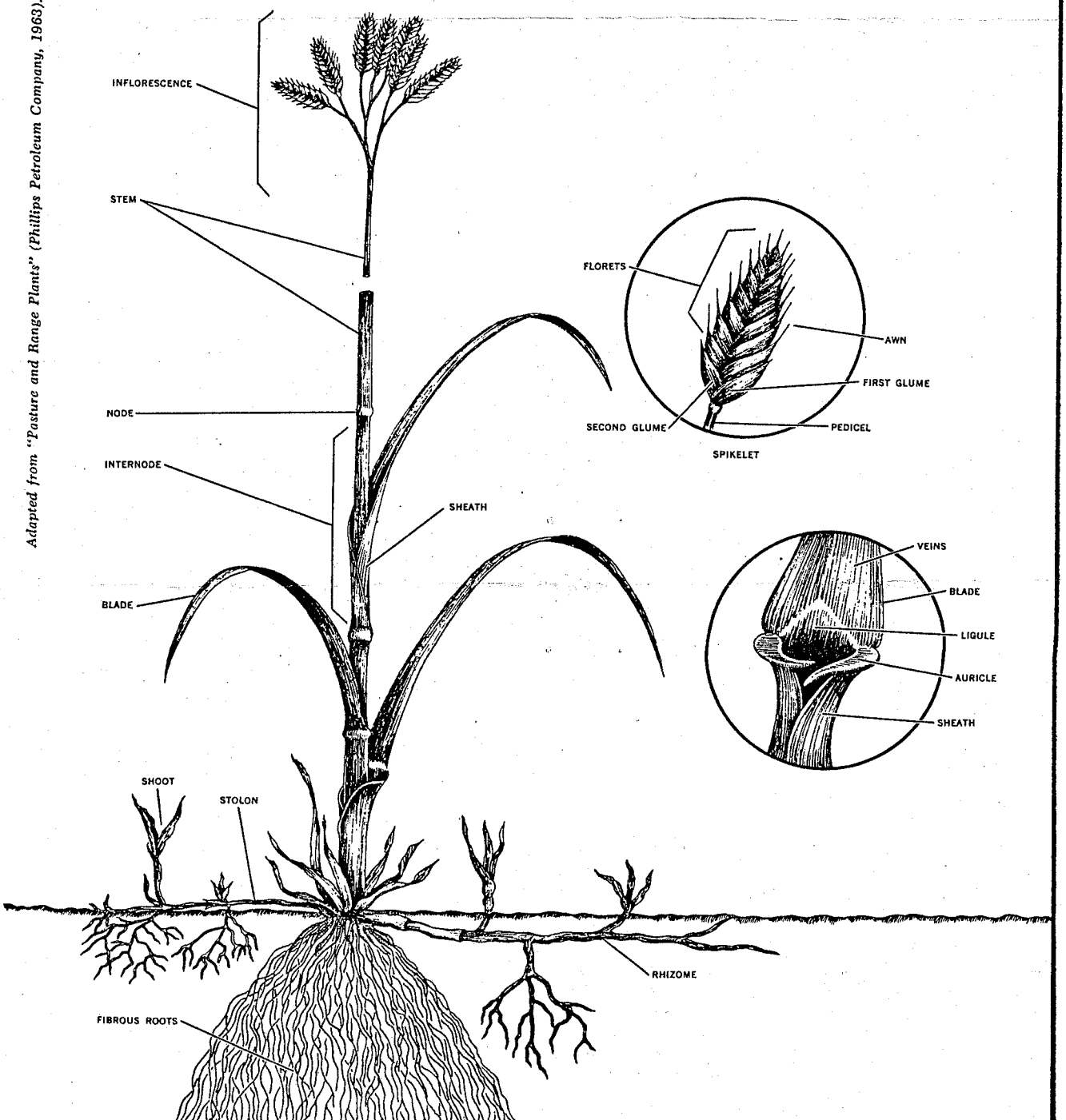
Flowers usually in only one terminal whorl to a branch or to a plant. Whorls supported by green bracts. Calyx green, smooth or fuzzy, with teeth about as long as the corolla tube. Corolla brilliant scarlet, to 2 in. long, with two stamens whose anthers extend beyond the upper lip although they are exceeded by the pistil. Very showy when flower head is in bloom.

A beautiful wild flower worthy of all protection but adjusting well to transplantation in suitable soil in gardens. Though native to East, it is raised as an ornamental over a much wider range. Easy to transplant.

Considered a good honey plant, with honeybees apparently seeking it wherever possible. As an ornamental it is popular for its late summer or early autumn bloom. A variety with large heads of salmon pink flowers; in the Middle West this species is supplanted largely by *M. fistulosa*, the wild bergamot, with pale blue or lavender flowers.

Bergamot *(Monarda fistulosa)*. 2'-3' tall. Blooms July-August. The pale lilac to pink-purple colored flowers are in a terminal cluster. Flower heads are 1"-2" across. Stems are square in cross section with paired, lance-shaped and toothed leaves. Found in all prairie types. (top half of plant)

FOR YOUR FILES



Adapted from "Pasture and Range Plants" (Phillips Petroleum Company, 1963).

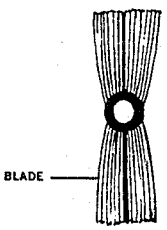
The Anatomy of a Grass

At first glance, most grasses appear to be very much alike. A closer look, however, shows that these interesting plants have distinctive and clear-cut anatomical features that will help you identify the various species.

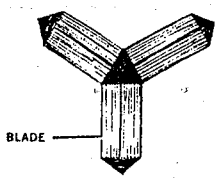
Grasses belong to a large subclass of flowering plants called the monocotyledons. You can recognize plants of this subclass by two easily observed features: first, almost all of them have *parallel-veined leaves*; second, all of them have a *single leaf*, or cotyledon, in their seeds. (These so-called seeds are more properly called fruits in all but a few grasses.)

There are only two other kinds of monocotyledons you might confuse with grasses—*sedges* and *rushes*. Sedges usually have solid triangular stems, and their leaf sheaths are not split. Although rushes have round stems like grasses, they are wiry and have many-seeded seed capsules. Grasses, unlike sedges, have round stems that are usually hollow between the nodes, and their leaf sheaths are always split. Unlike rushes, grass stems are not often wiry and—although there are many seeds on a spikelet—always have single seeds between two bracts, a *palea* and a *lemma*.

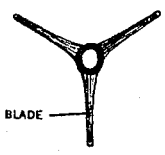
The major parts of a grass plant are shown at the right. Not all grasses have all the features shown. For example, many grasses do not have stolons; others do not have rhizomes. This generalized grass plant will, however, help you learn the names of the identifying features of the grasses. Some basic clues to grass identification are discussed on the following two pages.



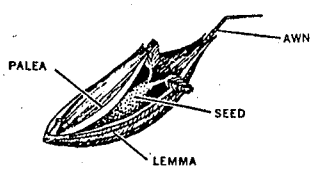
CROSS SECTION OF GRASS STEM



CROSS SECTION OF SEDGE STEM



CROSS SECTION OF RUSH STEM



GRASS FRUIT

SEDGE FRUIT

RUSH FRUITS

Adapted from "How to Know the Grasses" by Richard W. Pohl (Wm. C. Brown Company).