

Green!

By Mary Jo Ostenberg

It just seems to explode overnight. A few warm, sunny days, a nice rain, you wake up one spring morning and it just hits you in your eyeballs. It's GREEN.

Just when you thought winter with its browns and grays and washed out yellows would never end GREEN is there to greet you.

And not just any green. It's that special glorious green

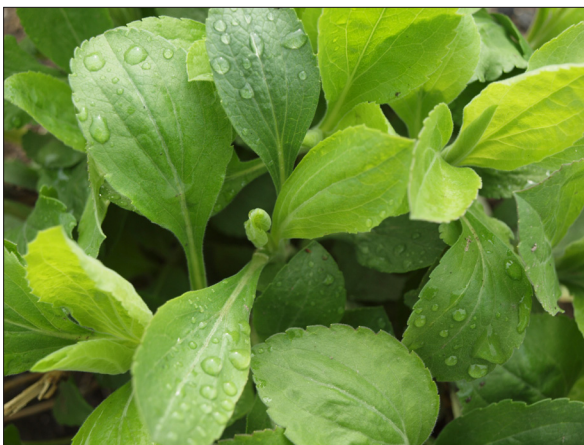


Photo by Mary Jo Ostenberg
Cliff Goldenrod growing in Mary Jo Ostenberg's yard.

reserved just for spring. That new life, just starting, fresh, everything is possible GREEN.

I truly believe it would be impossible to count all the variations of this simple primary color.

There is the new green of emerging maple tree seeds, the brilliant green of grass on a recently burned pasture, tiny elm and hackberry tree leaves, the in-your-face green of invasive bush hon-

ey-suckle, the green shades of wild columbine and dandelions. There's the deep, dirty green of the algae blooming in my gold fish pond and the same green just a tad different on the bullfrogs waking up from their winter slumber.

The leaves on the lilac bushes, the new growth on the fir trees, lichens on a dead maple in the front yard, the asparagus shoots in my garden all com-

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Photo by Mary Jo Ostenberg
Snow on the Mountain, *Euphorbia marginata*, is also in Ostenberg's yard.

bine to form a grand mosaic of greens that shimmer with the sun, deepen with the shade and swell with the rains. Everywhere we turn nature's gift

of green shouts spring. We made it!

Later we might have occasion to enjoy the greens of a Luna moth, a sparkling dragon fly, June beetles, caterpillars, more frogs, hummingbirds, perhaps the green sky that warns of danger and the green eyes of a loved one, maybe even green baby poop (I'll spare you that picture). We'll watch our lawns and pastures turn different shades of green as nature puts everything through its paces. We'll watch our new little green tomatoes and strawberries. Green lettuce, kale, chard and cabbage will grace our gardens. Herbs and greens such as sorrel, sage, basil, oregano and mint, all different shades of that same simple primary color



Photo by Mary Jo Ostenberg
Another native plant turning green is Wild Columbine.

will dazzle our taste buds.

Everywhere we look we can find the gift of green.

Kermit, it really is easy being green.

And then... there's yellow!

2015 Class Makes Trips to Loess Hills and Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge

By Charles Bramlage

The 2015 class of the Loess Hills Chapter has been on several excursions. One was to actually go to Loess Hills. This trip was led by Jim Pierson, Missouri Department of Conservation. He talked about geologic history and native plants



Photo by Brent Galliard
Cory Kudrna leading the tour of Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge.

on the hills.

The other field trip was led by Cory Kudrna, showcasing the workings of the Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge.



Photo by Charles Bramlage
Jim Pierson points to something on the ground while the class looks on.



Most of the 19 members of the training class made it on these field trips. Their names and cities they are from are listed as follows: Debbie Butterfield (Kidder), Bob Dever (Kansas City), Sarah Farsace (Kansas City), Brent Galliard (St. Joseph), Sue Ann Knight (Plattsburgh), David Laderoute (St. Joseph), Kimberly Ann LaFollette (Plattsburgh), Heidi McCullough (Parkville), Darrell Magee (Stewartsville), Larry Miller (St. Joseph), Tracy Miller (St. Joseph), Morton Nelson (St. Joseph), Raylene Perry (Edgerton), Steven Perry (Edgerton), Sherri Rundy (Grant City), Bridgette Sander (St. Joseph), Michael Sander (St. Joseph), Margaret Slayton (St. Joseph), and Ginger Turner (Kearney).

Kenyon Green Memorial at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge

By Gerry Crawford

This memorial is a tribute to Kenyon Greene, who was a member of the

loved. He worked to improve it and preserve it.



A view of the sign honoring Kenyon Green and his work at Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Gerry Crawford

Osage Trails Missouri Master Naturalists Chapter from 2008 to February of 2013 when he passed away suddenly at home.

Kenyon was a diligent volunteer at Squaw Creek, devoting several hundred hours of service on the prairie he

Master Naturalists formed a committee to design a plan for the memorial.

A sign was designed around the theme of “Four Seasons on the Prairie with Kenyon Greene.”

A committee composed of Corey Kudrna from Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Gary House from Osage Trails Chapter Missouri Master Naturalists, and Cliff Amos and Gerry Crawford from Loess Hills Chapter Missouri

season. Cliff Amos combined the pictures and tutorials, per the design plan, to create a digital composition and arranged for professional printing of the 3’ by 4’ sign. Amos also built and donated an Aldo Leopold bench. Gary House provided a commemorative plaque which is installed on the bench.

Kenyon’s wife, Barb, and daughter Kathy, were at the December Eagle Days event for a previewing of the sign and bench. It was an emotional time for all with Barb and Kathy Kenyon expressing heart-warming thanks and appreciation for the memorial and its message of tribute to Kenyon.



Kenyon Green’s wife and daughter stand beside the sign honoring him. Photo by Gerry Crawford



The Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge show the bench location outside the center. Photo by Gerry Crawford

The sign includes pictures of Kenyon, scenes of the refuge prairie depicting the four seasons, and related tutorials describing highlights of each

Corey Kudrna, Gary House and Gerry Crawford have since permanently installed the sign and bench along the sidewalk to the front entrance of the headquarters building at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge.

Thanks for accomplishment of the memorial goes to the mentioned individuals and others, including members of Friends of Squaw Creek for their financial support. Additional funding from Friends of Squaw Creek will be used to acquire native wild flower seeds to be sown on Kenyon’s beloved prairie as another way to preserve its natural beauty.

Bats, Belize, Fringed Prairie Orchids and Spelunking

By Ann Thorne

Dr. David Ashley learned about caving and Missouri bats on the same day. He was teaching a three-week class in the Ozarks when a guest speaker pointed out that he could go spelunking with him where there were lots of bats in the caves of the Ozarks. That was all it took get him into the caves. He had done his master's dissertation on Mexican free-tailed bats at Bracken cave in Texas, studying the parasites that live on bats. That cave has 40 million bats. One of his fellow researchers told him the best research time was at dusk, standing in front of the cave. Ashley was curious, so he was there at dusk when all 40 million bats flew outside.

When Ashley returned to Missouri Western, he was convinced that being inside Missouri caves would give him opportunities to do further research. He also knew



Photo by Ann Thorne

Dr. David Ashley stands in his office surrounded by bats that his family gives him each year. The yellow bat was given to him by a former student.

that a professor at Missouri Western taught a class in spelunking. He asked the professor if he could sit in on his class, and the professor asked Ashley if he would like to teach it instead.



Photo by David Ashley

A long eared bat in a hole in Skaggs Cave. This bat is on the endangered species list.

Ashley took off his belt, and pushed it through the opening in front of him, so that another person who had gotten through could pull. The woman behind him put her feet against his and pushed. The two together pulled him through the narrow passage. He had pain in his chest afterwards, so he went to the doctor to see if there was damage. He had broken two ribs and fractured three more.

In addition to field trips in Mis-



Photo by David Ashley

Two students standing in mud in Skaggs Cave in southern Missouri.

He did, although when they went spelunking he asked an expert to go along to be sure he knew enough about caving.

Caving can be intense. One time when Ashley was in Carroll Cave in southern Missouri, he crawled into a narrow passage and got stuck.



Photo by David Ashley

A class snorkeling in Belize. If students are not strong swimmers, they can wear a life jacket.

souri, Ashley also takes classes to Belize. He currently teaches it as Biology 220, which Ashley sees as "quality ecoteer-



David Ashley stands on Helton Prairie in front of a light to locate what are the pollinators.

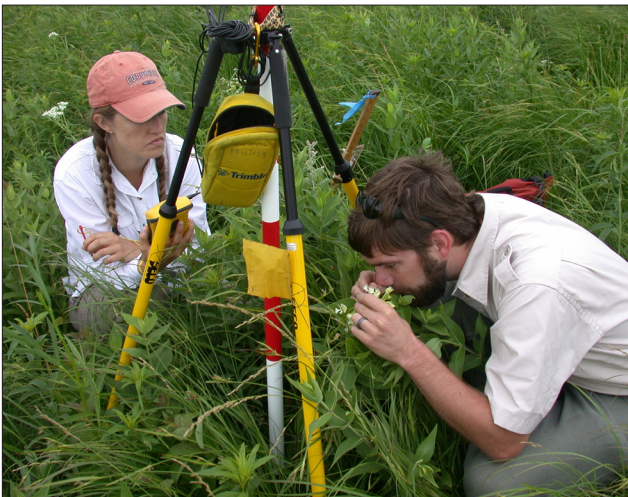


Photo by David Ashley

Steve Buback, Missouri Department of Conservation, smells the Fringed Prairie Orchid while another researcher looks on.

ing.” The class goes to different ecologies throughout Belize. A guide takes the students on a path so they can know the medical purpose of the different plants. The class also snorkels and scuba dives, as long as the diver is dive certified.

Fringed Prairie Orchids are another of Ashley’s interests. A biologist at St. Louis University asked Ashley to look for Fringed Prairie Orchids in northwest Missouri. The two went together to look. The year had been very dry, so they did not find any. But there were stakes in the ground where they had been, and they measured several distances to see where others had been. A year later, Ashley went back with a class and saw many of them. He was particularly interested in what the pollinators are. He currently believes that the hawk moth is the primary pollinator. But he plans to do more research on the pollinators. Currently Ashley uses GPS to locate where the plants exist,

which is much easier using a stake.

Ashley is a talented guy. When not looking at bats or orchids, he rides motorcycles and makes beer with his son, called Bad Ashe Beer.

Officers of Loess Hills Chapter 2015

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Logo (on front)

Laurel Defreece

Loess Hills Calendar

Pallid Sturgeon

March 23 - April 15

April 23

Steve Buback will talk about sedges 6:00 PM MDC

April 26

Arbor Day

May 1 - 3

State Conference

May 10

Wings Over Weston

Pallid Sturgeon Survey

By Gerry Crawford

Three of the Loess Hills Chapter “wormy” volunteers, Cliff Amos, Bill Blackledge, and Gerry Crawford, met two Missouri Department of Conservation



Loess Hills members who attended: Bill Blackledge, Gerry Crawford, and Cliff Amos.

Fisheries Biologists, Adam McDaniel and Kyle Winters, at the Nodaway Island Access on the Missouri River for the purpose of surveying for the endangered Pallid Sturgeon.

We used eight trot lines, each having 40 dropper lines with circle hooks baited with night crawlers. The biologists brought a big deep sided river jon boat with a 200 hp outboard.

We caught a good number of fish. The seven lines yielded a total of 65 fish consisting of: two Channel Catfish; sixty Shovelnose sturgeon; one hybrid (Pallid and Shovelnose cross); and two Pallids. This number was better than average, according to the biolo-

gists; and they were pleased. All the fish were measured and weighed and the data entered into an onboard computer system with a program designed for this purpose. When a Pallid was caught we also measured: the water depth; current velocity; GPS location; and several other details related to each fish. The fish were examined for a small plastic chip placed under the skin to see if the fish was stocked from a hatchery. We also looked for a clipped scoot (scale under the skin), and presence of a spaghetti tag and tag data (previously caught fish). Fish were “wanded” for presence of

an implanted PIT chip, and a possible tracking device which had a 40 day life. If wild fish were caught or fish missing these devices, the appropriate device was installed prior to release. All the data for each fish was meticulously recorded in the computer system. Then, each fish was handled gently and all were released alive back into the river. Both of our



Gerry Crawford returns the fish to the water after it is measured for length and weight, PIT chip, and tag data have all been placed.



The fish is weighed, a PIT chip is inserted and several other details are recorded before the fish goes back into the water.

Pallids were hatchery fish and probably not quite of breeding age. Larger adult breeders are retained and taken to a hatchery to become brood stock for future stockings. Stocked fish are about 8” in length. The two we examined were about 24” long and were stocked around 2006.

When the last line had been recovered, we returned to the boat ramp about 5 miles distant and took a lunch break. After the brief break we returned to the boat and the rebaiting the hooks with night crawlers. Then we returned to the river and reinstalled the lines with the freshly baited hooks in likely locations such as behind wing dikes and ripped break lines where a “shear” is created in the river’s current, where the fish like to gather. This fascinating study has been on-going for about ten years.