



Lake View's Nature News

Newsletter of the Lake View Nature Center

Fall
2005

LVNC gardens and the drought

Although the Chicago area has finally received some long-overdue rain, the entire Midwest is still suffering the effects of a multi-year drought. Lawns are brown, flower beds are dry,



Although the grass in the foreground is brown and dormant due to the lack of rain, these native wildflowers in the Butterfly Garden are doing just fine. In this picture, the sweet coneflower is in full bloom. In the background, the heath aster and stiff goldenrod are getting ready to bloom.

and even some trees are having a hard time. The usual solution to dry weather is to simply turn on your sprinkler, but in recent years many people have been turning to an alternative: gardening with native plants. Prairie plants are well adapted to survive the extreme range of conditions that plants face in this area with very little care. They can tolerate hot, dry summers as well as freezing winters. Their roots can reach ten to twenty feet beneath the surface in search of water. In contrast, Kentucky bluegrass, a common yard grass, has roots that only go down two to three inches.

It takes a few years for a prairie garden to become established but after that they typically do not need to be fertilized or watered, even in a major drought. Native plants are also resistant to many of the diseases and pests that affect common garden plants. An established prairie garden is truly

Continued on p. 2...

Look inside for...

Featured animals:

Goldenrod gall fly

Special pull-out section for kids

Fall classes and programs

LVNC Notes...

The Passport to Adventure program ends on Labor day but there's still time to pick up your prizes and certificates. Deadline for pickup is October 17th.

Pictures for the Thanksgiving coloring contest can be picked up after October 17th. They will be available at the Nature Center, Fitness Center, Heritage Center or online at www.obtpd.org.

The Nature Center will be closed:

September 5
October 3
November 7
November 24-25
December 5
December 24-25
December 31
January 1
January 3

Picnic in the Park

Saturday, July 16 2005



On Saturday, July 16th, one hundred and thirty people braved the hot weather and predicted thunderstorms to enjoy LVNC's annual "Picnic in the Park."

Kids (and even some adults) had fun crawling through the fifty-five foot long inflated caterpillar and



scaling the portable climbing wall. Participants also tried their hands at casting for targets with fishing equipment, and fastball pitching at a speed-pitch booth.

The nature center was open for browsing and a craft project.

After dark, everyone settled in on the lawn for an outdoor showing of the movie "Shark Tales."



Drought (cont. from p. 1)

"low maintenance." Most people mow or burn their "prairie" once a year to clear out the old stems, but that's pretty much it!

Native plants also provide food and shelter for birds, butterflies, and other desirable wildlife.

For more information on the drought and native plant gardening:

www.drought.noaa.gov (Nat'l Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration)

www.drought.unl.edu/dm (Drought Monitor)

www.for-wild.org (The Wild Ones)

www.inhs.uiuc.edu/inps (IL Native Plant Society)

Look for our new informational signs in the Butterfly Garden, Teaching Garden, and Sensory Garden this fall.



Funding update

We are happy to announce that we have now received our funding allocation from the state of Illinois for fiscal year 2004-5.

Again, we want to thank our supporters who made donations and called their representatives. You really made a difference!

Closed Mondays

The Lake View Nature Center will be closed on the first Monday of each month. As our attendance has grown over the years, we have found that we need a day now and then for projects and exhibit repairs that are difficult to do with visitors and classes in the building.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and hope you will stop in to visit on any other day.

Creature Feature: Goldenrod gall fly

Some of the last prairie flowers to bloom at the end of summer are the goldenrods. While admiring the showy bright yellow flowers, many people notice that many of the goldenrod plants have large swollen areas on their stems. These swollen areas are called galls, and each gall is the summer home of a small fly.

Galls are actually growths of the plant itself, produced as a reaction to the physical damage of the egg-laying or feeding. Some gall-makers also give off a chemical that enhances the gall development.

About 2,000 kinds of galls are found in North America. They may occur on any part of the plant: stems, twigs, leaves, fruits, or roots. Galls are most commonly caused by flies or wasps, although some are caused by mites, beetles, moths, or even worms. Each species typically produces a characteristic shape and size of gall on a particular species of host plant.

This common goldenrod gall is caused by a small fly known as the goldenrod gall fly (*Eurosta solidaginis*). As its common and scientific names suggest (goldenrods are in the genus *Solidago*), this fly's entire life cycle is associated with goldenrods.

The female goldenrod gall fly lays her eggs on young goldenrod shoots in the late

spring. She lays one egg on each plant. The egg hatches after about ten days and the larva burrows into the stem. As the plant grows through the summer, the gall enlarges to more than an inch in diameter. The fly larva grows as well, feeding on the soft tissue inside the gall.

The larva overwinters inside the gall. It produces a kind of antifreeze that lets it freeze solid without damage. When the weather begins to warm up in the spring, the larva "wakes up" and continues its development.

A few weeks later the adult fly emerges and immediately begins searching for a mate. They have to hurry because they only live for about two weeks. They do not feed as adults.

The adult flies mate and find a new goldenrod plant to lay eggs on and the cycle begins again.



To get a look at a different kind of gall, check out the swamp white oak trees in the garden area. Many of the branches are covered by small, dark growths that look a little like acorns. These growths are actually galls known as oak bullet galls and are caused by tiny (2-3 mm) wasps.

Goldenrod and allergies?

This time of year many of us suffer from the sneezes and sniffles of hay fever. Goldenrod, because of its bright yellow flowers, often takes the blame. In fact, goldenrod pollen does not cause hay fever because it is too heavy and sticky to be blown on the wind. Goldenrod plants are pollinated by insects that carry the sticky pollen as they travel from flower to flower feeding on nectar and pollen.

The real culprit behind hay fever is ragweed, a common plant with inconspicuous green flowers that blooms at the

same time. Ragweed plants produce large quantities of pollen that is light enough to be carried on the wind.

There are two species of ragweed in this area: common ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*) and giant ragweed (*Ambrosia trifida*). Common ragweed tends to be low and can be easy to overlook, but giant ragweed can be more than six feet tall.

Ridding your backyard of ragweed can help, but it may not eliminate your hay fever. A single ragweed plant can produce more than a million pollen grains per day that can travel great distances on the wind. Ragweed pollen has been found four hundred miles out to sea.



Lake View Nature Center
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Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

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Hours

Lake View Nature Center

Monday to Friday – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
(Closed the first Monday of each month)
Saturday and Sunday – Noon to 4:00 pm

Terrace View Park

Open sunrise to 10 pm

For more information

Lake View Nature Center (630) 941-8747
Heritage Center (630) 627-6100
Fitness Center (630) 574-0420

www.obtpd.org

Staff

Becky Lambert	Supervisor
John Stoddard	Naturalist
Liane Knight	Program Coordinator
Karen Ritter	Environmental Educator
Deanna DeChristopher	Environmental Educator
Shawn Hrabacka	Program Assistant

Fees

The Nature Center is free to the general public.

Donations are appreciated

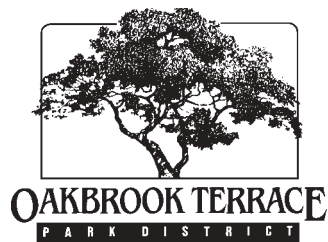
School and Community Groups

The Lake View Nature Center is an excellent place to explore the natural sciences. We offer programs for all ages and grade levels. Check our web site at www.obtpd.org for more details.

Fees for these in-house programs are as follows:
\$4.50 per participant
\$45.00 minimum group charge

Call the Nature Center at (630) 941-8747 for more information or to schedule a program.

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please call us at (630) 941-8747.



Lake View Nature Center

Fall 2005

George's Gossip

It's Harvest Time!

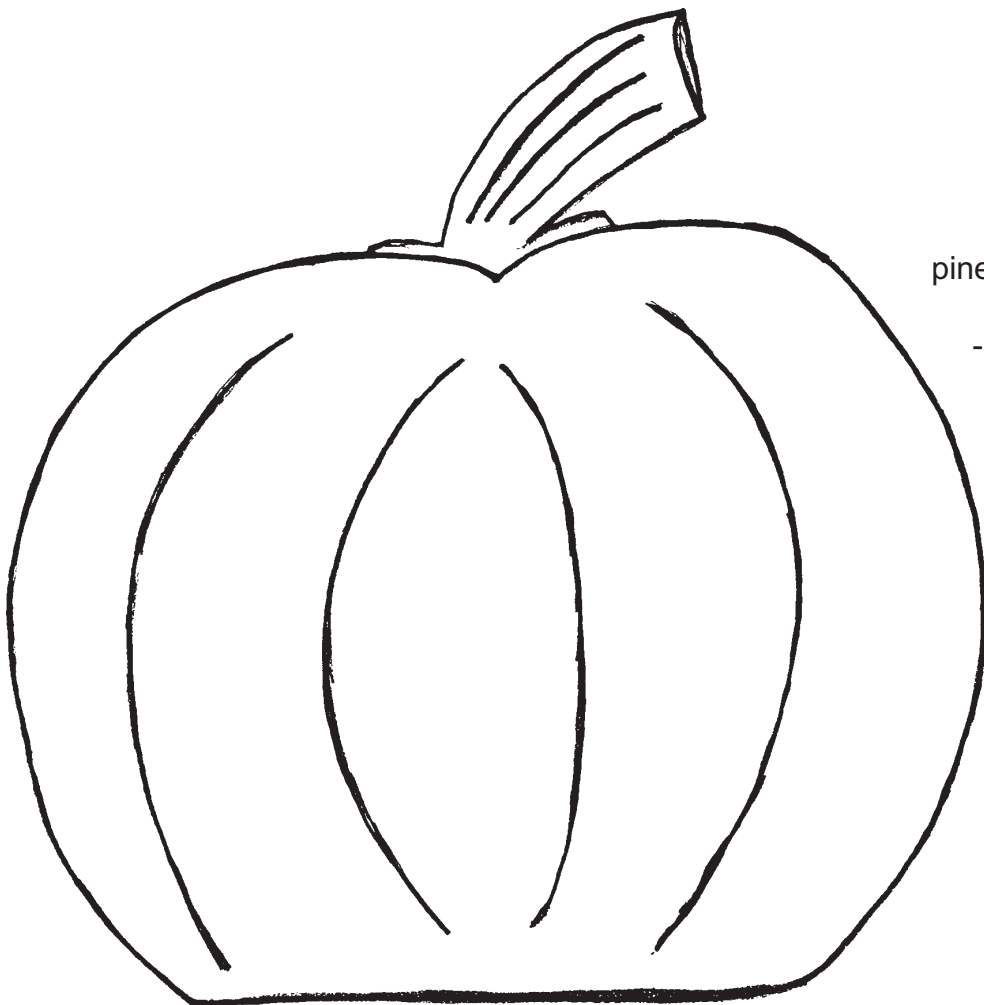
To some kids Fall means back to school, candy, and monsters. To other kids Fall might be leaves, rain, and cool weather. What does Fall mean to you? To scientists and gardeners Fall means harvest or pumpkin and apple time!

Why are scientists (called horticulturist) and gardeners interested in the fall harvest? There are many reasons, but the most important reason is to see who can grow the biggest vegetables and fruits and how the grower got the food so large.

Decorate a Pumpkin or Apple

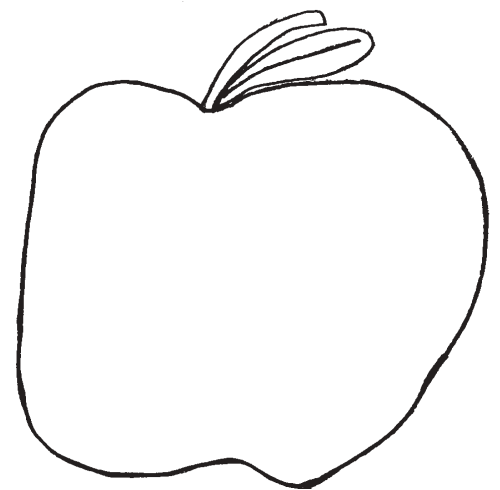
Color or draw a face on the pumpkin and apple.

You can then use the face as a template for carving your pumpkin or apple.



Decorating tips...

- use radishes, celery, broccoli and pinecones on toothpicks for mouths, eyes, and other features
- carve your pumpkin a few days before Halloween so it does not mold



Some Cool Things to Do as the Weather Cools...

Visit a corn maze
Go apple picking
Hold a pumpkin festival at home
Bob for apples



Take a walk to enjoy the changing leaves

Come to the Nature Center on November 19 for our Fall Open House

For more ideas and locations visit <http://www.obtpd.org> and www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/pumpkins/



Try This Simple Recipe for Maple Apple Crisp

REDIENTS:

5 apples - peeled, cored, and sliced
3/4 cup maple syrup
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup rolled oats
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 pinch salt
1/2 cup butter, room temperature



DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
2. Place apples in an 8x8 inch baking dish. Toss apples with syrup.
3. In a separate bowl, mix together flour, oats, sugar, and salt. Cut in butter. Stir until mixture is crumbly. Sprinkle mixture evenly over apples.
4. Bake at 375 degrees F for 35 minutes, or until topping is golden brown. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Preserving Fall

This fall work of art was done by
Muhammed, Age 4
He glued leaves to the paper to
create animals and decorated
them with markers.