



The Chinquapin

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Winter 2011/12

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

NATURE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

To continue receiving our newsletter "The Chinquapin" (beginning with the Spring 2012 edition), you need to be a paid-up Associate, Supporting or Patron 2011/12 Nature Society member. If you receive a hardcopy of this newsletter, please check your label to see if you still need to pay dues in order to be a 2011/12 member.

There are four membership levels. General Membership is free and with it, you get Nature Society schedule updates e-mailed to you at least once a month. Associate Membership cost \$5 per year and gets you the above benefit along with four newsletters mailed to your household quarterly. **If you want, we can e-mail it to you instead. With e-mail, the print quality of the newsletter is better and the photos are in color.** Supporting Membership is \$10 & up per year and gets you all of the above benefits plus being listed a supporting member in our newsletter. Patron Membership is \$50 & up per year and gets you all of the above benefits plus two private nature walks a year, listed as a patron member in our newsletter, an

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What We Have Been Doing 2010/11

By Bob Muller & Ted Vickers

Looking back, the flooding problems in Cummington began in the late 1950's. Eventually, the excess water killed most of the wildflowers the park was created for. Work done several years ago helped to alleviate the flooding in the eastern section of the park. During the winter of 2010, a drainage system was installed in the west section of Cummington. We could not tell if it worked because that spring, the park was dry. This past spring was not dry but Cummington was. This is the good news that we have been looking for. It's been over 50 years, but we may have finally solved the park flooding problem. Now it will take several years of observations to see if anything in the seed base will come back and grow. Up to now, we have not done a lot of trail building or maintenance in Cummington because of the flooding. But, because we think we have solved the water problems in the park, we are going to start lining up new trail projects.

There were two Eagle Scout projects that took place in the arboretum. They involved removing Buckthorn and English ivy, the creation of a rain garden, putting up tree identification tags and building new trails. In Tenhave, another Eagle Scout project involved the relining of the Sandbar Trail, adding a bench on the Peninsula Trail overlooking the pond, cutting out a substantial amount of buckthorn and other invasive species from the area around the pond, and clearing the Sassafras Trail of large fallen sassafras and black cherry logs that weighed several thousand pounds.

John Delise, the Arboretum Director, has

organized a crew of gardeners that work on assigned plots, keeping any new invasive weeds out of the arboretum. His crew has planted hundreds of plants in this area, including flowers and trees. John also has a group that attacks more difficult arboretum jobs like the continued cutting down of buckthorn.

The meadow area of the arboretum is now where all of our future July and August nature walks will be held. Both nature parks (Tenhave & Cummington) are forests. With the arboretum, we now have an area to interpret the environment of a meadow. Our original goal of having a collection of all of Michigan's native deciduous trees in the arboretum and Tenhave Woods is getting very close. The six species we now need will prove to be harder to get (Pumpkin ash, blue ash, red mulberry, rock elm, swamp cottonwood, pin cherry). All of them may have to be grown from seed as they are so rare in Michigan. But, one milestone has been reached. We now have the entire oak species native to Michigan. With the arboretum being in the city with the name "Royal Oak", Bob feels that this is important to have them all.

In June, the City put in a concrete pad for a storage shed alongside the north wall of the Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior/Community Center. The shed will store garden tools, wheel barrows, hoses and other items necessary to maintain the arboretum. See the next page for an update on the status of the shed.

A big surprise this summer was the

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appearance of two painted turtles in Dragonfly Pond. It will be interesting to see if they can winter over. We do have reports from people that they were catching turtles in the pond in the 1950's when they were children. Both parks now seem also to have a garter snake population. We are sure that the successes of toads breeding in our restored ponds have provided a food source that attracts the snakes.

Our educational programs are moving forward, with our Education Director, Chris Ethridge, at the helm. This past year, we did several home school programs in Tenhave Woods for 3rd & 4th graders. The programs seemed to be well received. These programs included a Tree & Seeds program and an Owl Hoot. We also did a Tree & Seeds program for a group of preschoolers. Chris went to Jane Addams Elementary in February and did a 20 minute program on "The Five Senses & Observing Wildlife" for the entire school (kindergarten thru 5th grade). We will continue to slowly add more programs. Teachers at Royal Oak Middle school are still regularly

giving extra credit to students that attend our nature walks and speaker programs. For the second year in a row, the entire 5th grade class from Jane Addams Elementary school came to Tenhave on the last day of school for pond life and other nature activities.

Other activities this past season included filling Tenhave's bird feeder throughout the winter, putting on our 6th Annual Fundraiser that was held in April and holding our 5th Annual Open House in early May. Our total program turnout this year was the highest it has ever been, with over 2,000 children and adults attending our speaker programs, nature walks, and educational outreach programs!

The Nature Society urges you to get out and visit Cummingston, Tenhave & the Arboretum whenever you get the chance, so as to keep abreast of the work being done to make those three areas more viable. Also, please check out our Royal Oak Nature Society Facebook page for continual updates & photos on what is going on in our two nature parks and the arboretum.

Our shed (adjacent photo) where we will be storing our arboretum equipment and supplies, was assembled and put up on November 5. It is 8' by 10' in size and is sitting on a 10' x 10' concrete slab. The shed is situated alongside the north wall of the Community/Senior Center.

Our thanks go out to Richard and Andrew Stoll and George Robacker for taking the time to put the shed together. Hopefully, it will take care of our storage needs for years to come.

We are still in need of some shelving. If you know of anyone who might have some to donate, please have them contact us. See the last page of this newsletter for contact information.



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invitation to our pre-Dream Cruise picnic (evening before the Cruise) at Gunn Dyer Park and one free ticket to our annual fundraiser.

If you want to be an Associate, Supporting or Patron member, please fill out a membership form (page 5) and mail it along with a check to the Nature Society. Please list other household members you want included as Nature Society members (no extra cost). Also, please be sure to mark the appropriate box in order to receive your newsletter by either regular mail or e-mail.

Through your donation, you will be helping to cover the costs to produce our newsletter and will also be assisting in funding educational programs that we provide. Donations are always tax deductible.

If you only want to be a General Member, please e-mail us the information asked for on our membership form (p.5) & send that information to: naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us.

Your membership whether General, Associate, Supporting or Patron, will help to strengthen the Nature Society.

SPEAKER PROGRAMS

*Our monthly general meeting/speaker programs are now held at the **Royal Oak Middle School** (formerly Dondero High School). The school is located at 709 N. Washington, between 11 Mile Road & Catalpa (11 ½ Mile). The meeting/program will be held in the auditorium or "Gathering Place", both of which can be reached via the school's south-east entrance. At our monthly Wednesday meetings from September to June, we present speaker programs that are usually slide shows focusing on various natural history topics. If you watch nature programs on PBS or the Discovery Channel, this is better because you can meet with the speakers afterwards and ask questions. The general meeting begins around **7:25 pm**, with the speaker program following several minutes later.*

"Mount St. Helens Revisited" is being held on **December 7th**. On May 18, 1980 at 8:32 am, Mt. St Helens (in the state of Washington) exploded. In minutes, over 200 square miles of timber had been leveled and 57 people were dead. In the years following that eruption, Mt St Helens has taught scientists a lot about geology and biology. Come join guest Gordon Lonie, retired Sterling Heights Naturalist, for a look at Mt St Helens then and now. Gordon visited the area in 1992 and again in 2004.

"Urban Mushroom Gardening" is being held on Wednesday, **January 4th**. Dr. David Susko, Associate Professor of Biology University of Michigan- Dearborn, will discuss the new Mushroom Garden Project underway at the University of Michigan-Dearborn's Environmental Interpretive Center. He will review the roles that fungi play in nutrient cycling in ecosystems and the techniques that can be used to grow edible and medicinal mushrooms in backyard gardens.

"Fishes of Death Valley" is being held on Wednesday, **February 1st**. It may sound strange, but almost every small piece of water in the Mojave Desert has fishes. Often they live nowhere else on earth except in those small water holes. The Devils Hole Pupfish has the smallest range of any vertebrate in the world. After the last ice age, the Death Valley area was filled with huge lakes like the Great Lakes, but the climate caused them to slowly dry up. As they did, most of the fishes died. But some evolved to fit the new environments. Come and learn from Bob Muller, Royal Oak Nature Society Naturalist, about some of America's most endangered and unusual wildlife.

Nature Society Arboretum – Volunteers and Cooperative Groups Get Credit Where Credit is Due

by John DeLisle

The Royal Oak Nature Society Arboretum has a track record since day one of having community groups assist in our restoration of native plant communities. The Boy Scouts have, and continue to be our biggest ally in the fight against invasive shrubs and vines. We've had a few garden volunteers and some very generous plant donors from 2008-2010. But, in 2011, the Royal Oak Nature Society has been helped by several outside volunteer conservation and gardening groups that have gone beyond special projects.

Of first note, is the national native landscape grassroots organization – **WildOnes Native Plants Ltd.** Many Nature Society volunteers, including myself, are members of the WildOnes Southeast Michigan chapter. The WildOnes, like many Nature Society members, are passionate about spreading land ethics and showing folks why and how native plants are being installed in public

and private landscapes throughout the region in sites like the Nature Society Arboretum. Many WildOnes have been generous plant donors, such as **Sally H.** who gave us Short's Aster and **Gayle R.** who brought out a few folks from Seven Ponds Nature Center to help plant donations from Ann Arbor WildOnes' Plant Rescue. In 2011, I wrote and received a \$250 grant from WildOnes Seeds for Education Program to enable the purchase of Oak Openings species, as well a Biohedge for the south border of our Backyard Wildlife Habitat Garden. Some of the volunteers who did the planting and are fastidiously assisting me in monitoring and watering the plants, are WildOnes members. We are grateful to WildOnes for their monetary, consulting, and volunteer support.

The WildOnes Ecoscaper training program, and the Treekeeper and Naturescaping programs from the

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NATURE WALKS

CUMMINGSTON PARK: Park & meet at Leafdale & Torquay

TENHAVE WOODS: Park in lot at Marais & Lexington Blvd. and meet at the Lexington Entrance (300 feet east of parking lot). For the Owl Hoots and Full Moon Walk, park & meet at the Marais/Lexington lot.

Wearing boots while in the parks is recommended in the winter & spring months. Using insect repellent and dressing appropriately is advised from late spring to the end of summer.

"Mammals of Tenhave" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Sunday, **December 4th**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Come and learn about the mammals that live in Tenhave Woods. We will look for signs of these mammals and have skulls and skins with us to help describe them and how the live.

"Owl Hoot" is being held at **Cummingston** on Friday, **December 16th**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. We will walk into Cummingston and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

"Winter Nature Walk" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Saturday, **January 14th, 2012** beginning at **2:00 pm**. Park Lexington & Marais & meet at the Lexington entrance.

"Owl Hoot" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Tuesday, **January 24th**, at **7:30 pm**. Park & meet at the Lexington/Marais lot. We will walk into Tenhave Woods and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

"Full Moon Walk" is being held on Tuesday, **February 7th**, beginning **7:30 pm** at **Tenhave Woods**. Park & meet at Lexington/Marais lot. Experience the woods at a time of day that the park is normally closed. You never know what you may hear and see when the light levels are low. Bring a small flashlight.

"Winter Nature Walk" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Saturday, **February 11th**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Park Lexington & Marais & meet at the Lexington entrance.

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Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority teach sustainable landscaping. From these programs, our own legion of conservation gardeners, the **Royal Oak Ecoscapers**, was born. It is this group that has had the greatest hand in truly transforming the arboretum from an invaded, brushy buckthorn thicket old-field, into native plant community gardens, which reflect Royal Oak's original natural state – orchards of oaks, seas of Switch/Bluejoint/Indian grasses and Blazing Stars/Sunflowers/Coneflowers with many more succeeding wildflowers. It is the observation, planning, weeding, and watering efforts of the following Royal Oak Ecoscapers you can thank for the beauty of the birds, the flora, and the hum of pollinator life that links it all together. Ecoscapers include **Adam & Jess Huttenstine, Amy Burnham, Donna Kuchapsky, Joyce & Mike Puppan, Fred & Linda Kaluza, and my wife Theresa**. We were fortunate to have plenty of rain this spring. But, without the efforts of this committed group of ecological gardeners with their plant identification and invasive control skills, we would not have been able to protect all the plants and keep them thriving. Thank you!

Thanks as well go out to a few very special cooperators who graciously post our Arboretum plantings and

workdays on their email lists and websites. **Connie Manley** from the Southeast Michigan WildOnes and **Lillian Dean** of Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority always send e-mails of our Nature Society Arboretum events to their constituents. Lillian has taught tree identification and urban forestry practice for two years in the Arboretum. The **Hardy Plant Society**, led by Vinsetta Park resident **Barb Johnson**, granted the Nature Society \$100 for entrance signage, which the Nature Society board is currently designing with a local sign shop. The **Stewardship Network**, whose goals to foster ecological restoration through nature volunteers have also posted our events on their calendar. The Network has also yielded to the arboretum, a couple of U of M graduate students who marked all the buckthorn and invasive shrubs that the Boy Scouts have cut down. We also thank **Ruth and Richard of Oakland Wildflower Farm**, who have donated about \$100 worth of plant material over and above what we purchased from them.

Our Ecoscapers & I feel fortunate to have worked with and been helped by wonderful biologists, armchair and professional, who have truly made the Nature Society Arboretum bloom and buzz with the colors and sounds of life. Please come out and see us!

2011 Dream Cruise Wrap Up

The Nature Society made \$825 this year by collecting parking fees at Gunn Dyer Park from 6 to 8:30 pm on Friday & nine hours on Saturday (August 20). If it wasn't for the damaging storm that came through around 5 pm on Dream Cruise day, we would have probably come close to achieving our best profit ever. This year, we offered a one time \$15 entry fee per car that allowed people to drive their cars in and out of the park as many times as they wanted to.

The Nature Society wants to thank the following people for volunteering their time at this year's Dream Cruise: **Bob Muller, Ann Bobiney, Ted Vickers, Ann Holcomb, Don & Joyce Drife, Bonnie Michalak, Mitzi Hoffman, Ann Holcomb, Jack Kerby, Mary, Dennis & Regis Kleiss, Richard & Pat Stoll, and Helen & Connie Cost.** Also a big thanks goes out to **Greg Rassel** and his crew for getting the park ready for us.

Once a year, this becomes an easy way for the Nature Society to make some money. The city of Royal Oak sets everything up and all we have to do is collect the entry fee and direct people to available

parking spots.

Hopefully, when Dream Cruise rolls along next year, you might consider joining our volunteer crew for a few hours to help the Nature Society collect a few bucks that will help pay for future expenses/projects.



August 19, 2011 Pre-Dream Cruise Picnic

NATURE SOCIETY'S 7th ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Our next annual fundraiser is scheduled for Friday, **April 20th, 2012** at the Royal Oak Elk's Club. Please **SAVE THE DATE** and get more details in our next newsletter

(Spring 2012) and also from our website beginning in early 2012.

The Nature Society's old Group Facebook page is being terminated by Facebook. Please continue your support by checking out our new Facebook page & becoming a fan of the Royal Oak Nature Society.

New page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Royal-Oak-Nature-Society/22809523388256#!/pages/Royal-Oak-Nature-Society/228095233882566>



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Royal Oak Nature Society Membership Form

Please make check payable to: **Royal Oak Nature Society**
MEMO: **Membership**

Mail completed form & check to:
Royal Oak Nature Society
1600 N. Campbell Rd.
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Names (household members): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

1 year Household Membership
(September-August)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General (free) | Receive newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (\$5) | by: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (\$10 & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular mail OR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$50 & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail |

NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

Please contact us if you would like to become actively involved with one or more of our teams:

Stewardship: Maintains a trail system and enhances the overall park experience at Tenhave Woods & Cummington Park.

Communications: Publicizes organizational activities to the general membership and public through various mediums and performs any other forms of communications required by the board.

Education: Provides outreach and liaison to outside individuals, groups and schools to promote environmental education.

Fundraising: Is responsible for the fund-raising efforts of the Nature Society, which includes the coordinating and organizing of the Annual Spring Fundraiser & other fund-raiser programs approved by the board.

Programming: Is responsible for setting up the speaker programs, workshops and all of the nature programs within Cummington Park and Tenhave Woods.

Ways & Means: Investigates means of grant solicitation and then follows through accordingly.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Don Drife (248-528-0479)

Vice President & Arboretum Stewardship: John DeLisle (248-672-7611)

Treasurer & Ways & Means: Helen Cost (248-549-9423)

Recording Secretary: Nancy Vickers (248-549-5366)

Tenhave Woods Stewardship: Dena Serrato (248-542-2820)

Communication: Ted Vickers (248-549-5366)

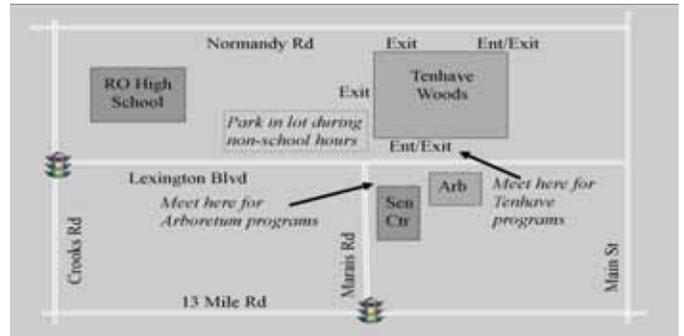
Education: Chris Ethridge (248 229-9335)

Program: Bob Muller (248-398-0195)

Newsletter: Ted Vickers

Engineer: Richard Stoll

Cummington Park, Tenhave Woods, and the Arboretum



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummington Park trail maps, please go to our web site (listed below under our tree logo), link on to "Park Locations" and then "Map for park trail locations"

The Royal Oak Nature Society is a nonprofit education and stewardship group working within the city of Royal Oak's two nature parks, Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park. Our mission is to foster awareness and usage of these two natural areas. We accomplish this by providing stewardship for the continuing improvement and maintenance of them. In addition, we are in the process of creating an arboretum in Worden Park East. We also offer a wide range of natural history educational programs.

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