



# THE PRAIRIE BREEZE

August/September

Notes from Save The Prairie Society

Vol 294



**You are invited to help celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of STPS.**

From our purchase of the first three prairie lots to witnessing and fighting for the creation of a protected preserve, we have been there: stewarding the Prairie, educating the public, welcoming visitors, and heralding the beauty of this native land.

## PRAIRIE HERITAGE CELEBRATION

[ **Saturday, September 19 from 10 to 2 PM** ]

**Featured Guests: Wolf, Coyote, Skunk, and Porcupine**

Residents of Big Run Wolf Ranch

Learn about their habits, traits, life cycles, and their role in the environment.

Arrival time 10 AM



### ENJOY:

- Free Cake and Ice Cream
- Music from 11:45 – 1:45**
- Quilt Display
- The Cook County Forest Preserve Dist.**
- Raffle Baskets
- Prairie Tours**
- Genealogy Display and Advice
- Brats and Hot Dogs**
- Prairie Art Display by Alice Barnes
- Face Painting**
- Insect Safari



**Something For Everyone**

**The Grounds of the Prairie House - 11225 Constitution Dr., Westchester**

Invasive Plants Beware!



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 from 1- 4 PM**

Time to help our unique and biodiverse Prairie survive into the future.

Meet at the Prairie House on the Northern edge of Wolf Road Prairie.

We will supply the tools and refreshments.

For further information, call 708-562-3280.



### AN ABUNDANCE OF GENTIAN

Three years ago, John Banaszak had volunteers spread gentian seeds that had been gathered from the southwest section of the Prairie, to an area close to the northern edge of the Prairie, east of the Prairie House. The fruits of their labor can now be viewed from the path leading south from the House parking lot. The pictures at the top of the page taken by volunteer/photographer Fidencio Marbella are of a closed gentian (L) and a cream gentian (R). Both were once easily found in Cook and DuPage Counties.

### IN PRAISE OF GOLDENRODS

Late summer into fall, we and the bees have the benefit of several species of prairie goldenrod producing an overlapping succession of nectar-rich flowers. Right now the grass-leaf species is dominant while the stiff-goldenrod's flowers are starting to open. Many other species will soon follow. Eye candy for us and sustenance for the bees and other pollinators.

Because goldenrod is such a prodigious producer of nectar and pollen, it becomes a late season magnet for bees, wasps, moths, butterflies and some beetles. Of all our Prairie's goldenrods, it is the stiff-goldenrod that attracts the most insect attention. During late August, early September, it is not unusual to see bees, butterflies, and wasps taking advantage of a patch of flat-surfaced goldenrods at the same time. Lucky for them this member of the aster family can be found throughout the Prairie and is thriving in the Prairie House garden.

\* \* \*

What Beekeepers Know: The honey produced from goldenrod nectar is dark with a strong taste. The goldenrod's pollen has been analyzed by researchers whose studies show that it is rich in minerals and protein with a substantial fat content, just what pollinators need as the weather turns colder and the days shorter.

Myth Breaker: Goldenrod is often blamed for late summer allergies, when ragweed is the real culprit. Here's why – they both produce pollen at the same time of the year, but it is the ragweed's light airborne pollen that causes so many to sneeze. Goldenrod's pollen is heavy and sticky. It depends on pollinators for dissemination, since it is too heavy to be borne on the air. Unfortunately, doctors still include its pollen in their scratch tests, and many do indeed react to it. But it is unlikely that you will ever ingest it while enjoying the outdoors.

Health Benefits: Many of today's herbalist recommend goldenrod for various ailments. The Ojibwe word for goldenrod translates as "sun medicine." The genus name solidago means "to make whole." Both Native Americans and early settlers believed this golden plant had healing powers.



This bee is visiting one of the best sources of pollen on the Prairie: Stiff-goldenrod,

**Factoid:** The early Greeks referred to pollen as "life giving dust," and according to the U.S Department of Agriculture, it contains every nutrient required to sustain life, the nutrient content varying from one species to another.

# ***THE PRAIRIE BREEZE***

*August/September*

*Notes from Save The Prairie Society*

*Vol 294*

*F. Marbella*

