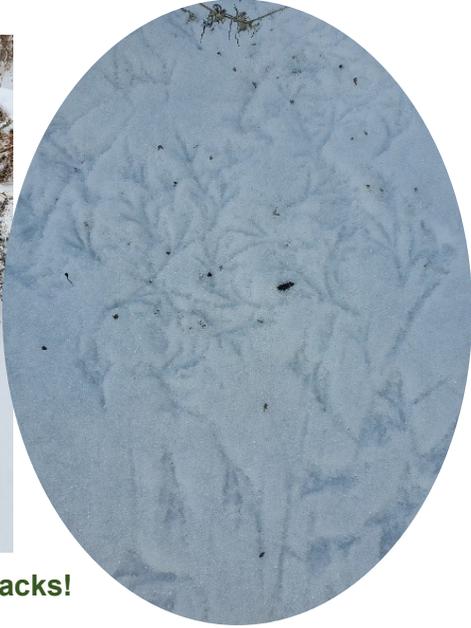


Weekly Wild Wednesday

For December 30th, 2020

Agape Community Garden-Sharing the Winter Love!





Birdie and Bug B&B-And Birdie Tracks!



Growing Deep Roots



The MAGIC of COLOR in Winter



Sharing Space with the Wild—Bird and Bunny Tracks!

Taking a stroll through the Agape Garden at 1421 Geneva Street in the Winter is such a treat—**The Prairie At Rest—But NOT Sleeping...** is so apparent! It is hard to believe that this beautiful, peaceful area is smack in the middle of a **BUSY Commercial and Residential Area!**



**But Indeed, it is! The peaceful and quiet atmosphere of
“Nature, Neighbors, & Neighborhood”
could not be more apparent!**

**Come, Bundle Up, and ENJOY the Winter Garden Experience at
Agape Community Garden!**

This History of the Agape Gardens was kindly submitted by Jeanne Bockholt!

“Our Roots Become One”

During the summer of 2020, the Agape Community Garden celebrated its second full year of bringing wholesome food and gardening experiences to community. At Agape's inception, Northwest Iowa Group of Sierra Club was invited to add an element of a nature park experience for all to enjoy.

Fast forward to fall 2020, nearly one third of the real estate has been set aside for wildlife habitat enrichment. Over one hundred native plants, most of which were provided by the Loess Hills Wild Ones, as well as four species of native shrubs have been established. These native plants provide food sources for beneficial insects and support songbirds and other cherished wildlife.

Interpretive signage is being expanded, benches have been added, and in 2019, eight family-focused nature activities were hosted by Sierra Club members. We continue to have many dreams to fulfill as we welcome many new friends to this place of discovery. It's a work in progress that is enjoyed by all involved!

“The Rooted Residents”

These plants do WHAT? For WHOM?

Agape Native Flowering Plants:

Aromatic Astor (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*) ~ Height: 1-3 Feet. Hosts several caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Seed attracts several bird species.

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) ~ Height: 1-2 feet. Hosts 15 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Seed attracts 18 bird species.

Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) ~ Height: 2-3 feet. Hosts 11 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects and hummingbirds. Attracts 4 bird species. Fluffy pappus is used as nesting material.

Common Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*) ~ Height: 2-4 feet. Hosts 25 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Seed attracts 6 bird species.

Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) ~ Height: 1-3 feet. Hosts 4 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds

Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*) ~ Height: 1-3 feet. Hosts 10 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects and hummingbirds. Seed attracts 6 bird species.

New England Aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*) ~ Height: 2-6 feet. Hosts 8 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Seed attracts 6 bird species.

Western Sunflower (*Helianthus occidentalis*) ~ Height: 2-3 feet. Hosts 58 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Seed attracts 15 bird species.

Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) ~ Height: 2-5 feet. Hosts 10 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects and hummingbirds. Seed attracts 6 bird species.

Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) ~ Height: 1-3 feet. Hosts 22 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Seed attracts 2 bird species.

Gray-headed Coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*) ~ Height: 3-6 feet. Hosts 2 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Seed attracts 6 bird species.

Meadow Blazingstar (*Liatris ligulistlis*) ~ Height: 3-5 feet. Hosts 7 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects and hummingbirds. Seed attracts 4 bird species.

Stiff Goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*) ~ Height: 2-5 feet. Hosts 88 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Seed attracts 6 bird species.

Swamp (Rose) Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) ~ Height: 3-5 feet. Hosts 11 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects and hummingbirds. Seed attracts 4 bird species. Fluffy pappus is used as nesting material.

Rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) ~ Height: 3-5 feet. When in bloom, rattlesnake master has few rivals for its ability to attract a diversity of insect visitors.

Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) ~ Height: 1-6 feet. Attracts birds, butterflies, hummingbirds. Provides nectar for many insects. All parts of plant are toxic to humans if eaten in large quantities.

Native Grasses:

Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) ~ Height: 2-3 feet. Root depth 8 feet. Hosts 11 caterpillar species. Seed attracts 4 bird species. Grass clumps provide nesting for ground nesting birds.

Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterocephalus*) ~ Height: 2-4 feet. Hosts 11 caterpillar species. Seed attracts 4 bird species. Also provides cover for Mourning doves and grouse.

Native Shrubs

American Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra canadensis*) ~ Height: 10-15 feet. Hosts 30 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Attracts 120 bird species. Provides nesting sites for birds. Flowers are fragrant. Fruit can be used for jellies, syrup, stews.

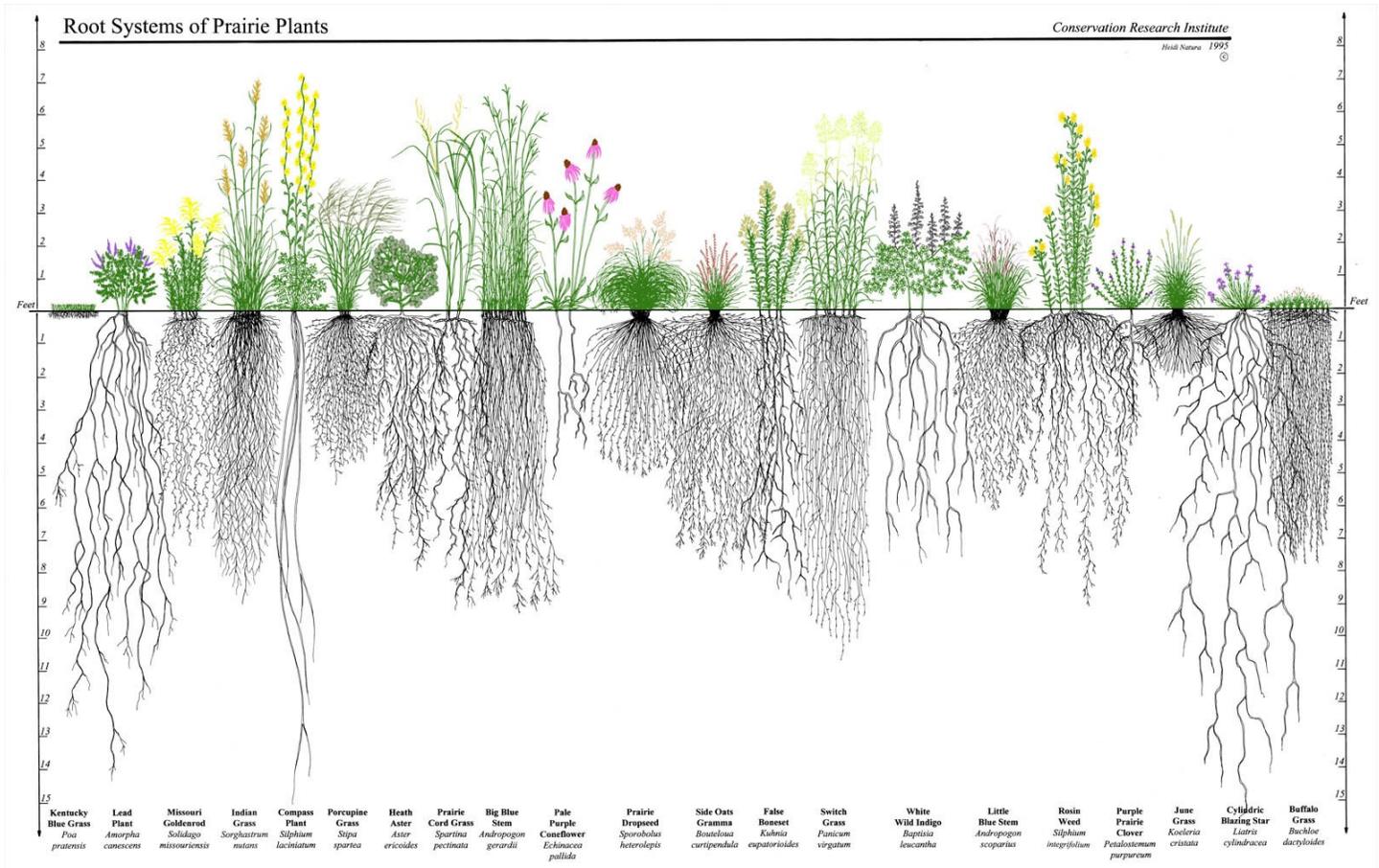
Serviceberry/Juneberry (species unknown) ~ Height: 15-40 feet. Hosts 94 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects. Excellent wildlife

plant. Attracts 42 bird species, and other animals. Ripe fruit can be eaten fresh or used in jams, jellies, and pies.

Wild/ American Plum (*Prunus Americana*) ~Height: 10-25 feet. Hosts 339 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects, and 2 bird species. Attracts 16 bird species. Provides nesting sites for birds. Plums are not a choice food for wildlife, but the plants provide valuable nesting cover. The fruits have tough, sour outer skins, but their sweet, juicy flesh is delicious, making excellent jams, jellies, preserves and pies. The plums can also be halved, then pitted and dried like prunes, spread in a thin sheet then dried as fruit leather.

Choke Cherry (*Prunus virginiana*) ~Height: 15-30 feet. Hosts 339 caterpillar species. Attracts 84 bird species. Fruit is used in jams, jellies, and preserves.

New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)~ Height 3-5 feet. Hosts 35 caterpillar species. Provides nectar for insects and birds. Attracts 13 bird species.



Roots ROCK! Here's the SCIENCE!

“Native plants sequester carbon in the soil for longer. A new study indicates native plants, despite their tendency to grow more slowly than exotic species like Pinus Radiata, are better at storing carbon in the soil for longer periods of time”.

Marc Daalder

www.newsroom.co.nz/native-plants-sequester-carbon-in-the-soil-for-longer

“Soil ecology: An ecosystem is a community of living creatures interacting with their nonliving environment. Ecology is the study of ecosystems. Healthy soils are home to thousands of different species of living organisms. Even though soil ecosystems require a microscope or magnifying glass to be fully appreciated, they are just as wild and dynamic as the easily observed one on the surface. The beauty of a perennial system like the tallgrass is that it continually recycles nutrients and builds more soil every year instead of losing it. The prairie is a self-maintaining system”.

Mark Muller, *The World Beneath Your Feet.*

Agape Community Garden
Loess Hills Wild Ones
Northwest Iowa Group Sierra Club
Can all be found on Facebook.

