

# Weekly Wild Wednesday

August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

What a Week of "Nature in all spaces!"



What a FUN week! Dotty and Bill hosted a Pull and Pizza Party for the mullein that had crept into the lower areas of one of their prairies!

We enjoyed every moment of the gorgeous day!

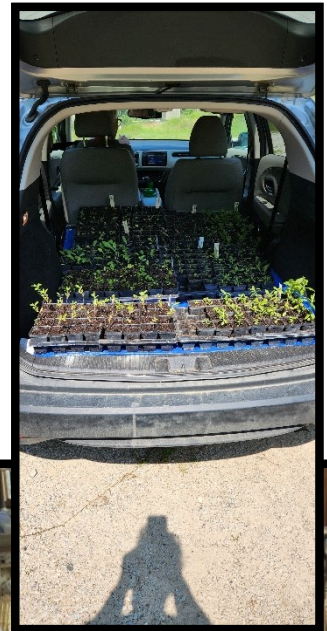


It was Dotty's Birthday, and we were so lucky to share the celebration with her!

We love you, Dotty!



← Rex brought our attention to the Roundheaded Bush Clover he saw on a later hike with a slightly white head--He checked it out with a closer look! This is the very FIRST time we have EVER seen the actual blooms on this subtly blossoming plant! In seedhead all Fall and Winter it is a stunner, but who knew the blooms would be so gorgeous in a super close up photo? Thanks, Rex!



Cheri and I up-potted the milk jugs from the 'Winter Sowing Success' that Coral shared last week, and now they are on their way to the Stewart Plant Nursery (aka front porch) to grow up for the Fall Plant Sale! Local ecotype seedlings! Yippee!!!!

Thanks Coral and Cheri!



1 down, 47 million to go!







A gramma and a grama

MMS 12:48 PM

Haaaaaaaaaaaa!!!

Dawn and Dotty (and a whole BUNCH of other people) headed to the Iowa Prairie Conference at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory in Milford for the weekend! What fun! Perfect weather! We will learn all the details and share more of their adventures!

What a host of opportunities were offered!!

A keynote address about Cayler State Preserve will be given by DNR Ecologist John Pearson. Topics for additional education sessions include prairie fens, prairie and soil restoration, area archeology, prescribed burn cooperatives, and an update on the farm bill and Iowa Nature Summit. A Friday afternoon visit to area Prairie Strips will be held prior to event registration. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in guided hikes/outings that showcase special and unique area fens, wetlands and prairie remnants. Saturday evening outings include a Queen II excursion to learn about restoration of shoreline, a visit to Excelsior Fen/Dugout Creek Complex and Freda Haffner Kettlehole. Sunday outings include a birding adventure, musings by Connie Mutel, author and prairie enthusiast, on Iowa's Fragile Giants and Fragile Landscapes, a visit to The Prairie Flower (area native seed dealer), an Oak Savanna restoration, Kirchner Prairie and a hike at Cayler Prairie.

← We had never seen goldfinches clustered on the Anise Hyssop prior to this day! Are they eating insects or seeds? We hope insects, as this particular Anise has to go, it's the wrong kind, drats...



Taking advantage of the FIRST bloom, this bumblebee and another (bee? fly?) next to it could hardly wait for the Field Thistle to start blooming! Cheri spotted another one blooming on the property-- but we have not seen it yet!



This really cool native plant goes from 1 foot tall --- --with heavy brome competition--- to over 7 feet tall in fertile soil! Xerces printable below!

<https://xerces.org/publications/brochures/guide-to-iowas-native-thistles>







The Sioux City Garden Club and many of the other visitors to 'The Wild Mess in Progress' learned about duckweed! This cool plant does ALL the filtering for your native pond, and leaves crystal clear water for frogs and wildlife without ANY filtering system! Up close and personal, this super cute plant does a GREAT job but it takes a bit to get used to the look! Grow, Duckweed!!

## Duckweed: Don't let it ruffle your feathers!

Is your pond or lake covered in green? Naturally, most people assume green on a lake or pond is algae, but often the green on top of your water is actually duckweed.

Also known as duck's meat or water lentil, duckweed is actually tiny, free floating native plants. The plants are found in clusters of leaves, each with small roots that hang down into the water. It can form thick green blankets on the water's surface which is why it is often mistaken for algae. Duckweed is found in quiet waters of ponds, lakes and streams and will rarely become abundant on waters with frequent wind or lots of wave action.

Looking at the water from a distance, it's hard to tell if its duckweed or algae. Get closer and you will either see tiny individual smooth green dots with little roots forming a mat (duckweed), or a mat of fuzzy algae with no indistinguishable pieces.



Duckweed is an important part of the food web in lakes and ponds, providing food for waterfowl and other birds. It also provides shelter and food for small aquatic bugs which can be seen darting here or there between the root systems. These bugs are then food for fish. By creating a mat on top of the water it keeps algae and mosquito breeding under control, provides shade to keep the water below cool, and even cleans the water. In fact, duckweed is used at many water treatment plants to help purify the water.

As duckweed provides benefits both to water quality and the wildlife many residents enjoy, it should mostly be left alone. On occasion, duckweed can get too thick, and shade out larger, submerged plants. Yet, it reproduces so rapidly that effective control can be difficult. So relax and enjoy the green topped water, it means your lake or pond has life and a self-cleaning capability.

*Wishing you a week filled with "Nature in all spaces!"*

