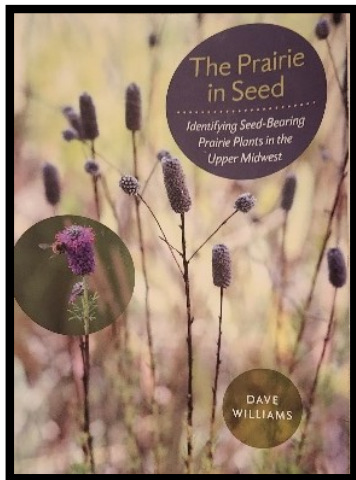


Weekly Wild Wednesday

December 11th, 2024

What a Week of "Seed Separating!"

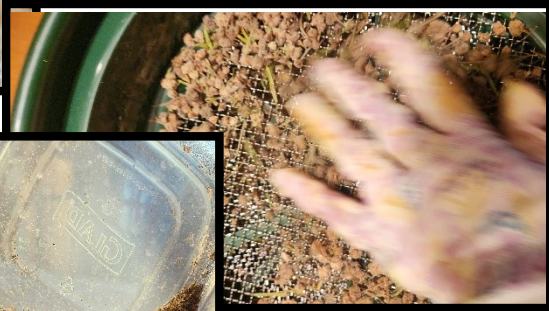


What fun learning techniques for separating seeds from their seed heads!

← This guide is SO valuable in learning about each seed, harvesting, and seed size and appearance! →



← Janet started this session with Mountain Mint, picking and snipping the seed heads from the stems.



Dotty and Marcie rubbed them through several layers of ever smaller sieve until we had nearly pure seed!



Then we poured them into jars with desiccant bags for long term storage. What fun! And it smells FABULOUS!! Mmmmmmm-MINT!!

Dotty said we got a little "Seed Silly"!



← Dotty thought of a marble rolling pin to crush the really tough seed heads on Penstemon and Foxglove!

Far left, Dawn and Nelle helped, too!



Most of the seed cleaning at TPC is done with equipment that isn't available to amateurs, however, I clean all of our small, remnant prairie collections by hand. Our TPC Tech Guide #2 includes "Simple and Effective Cleaning Techniques" for hand cleaning seed using commonly available materials. Here's a link to that: <https://tallgrassprairiecenter.org/resources/prairie-reconstruction/technical-publications>

I can think of a couple of items I would add to that guide now that I've been doing this for a few years:

1. a large (18x26") food service tray (with a lightly textured, non-slip surface) - seed and chaff often move at different rates down a slightly inclined tray as you tap or shake it; great for final cleaning of small batches of tiny, roundish seeds
2. a piece of ridged rubber traction matting cut to fit the tray - using gloved hands to rub seed across the ridges is amazing for releasing seed from most capsules and threshing off the fluff from asters, liatris, etc

Laura from Tallgrass Prairie Center helped with advice, and also reassured us that the seeds do NOT need to be perfectly separated from the chaff to be shared with our members and friends!

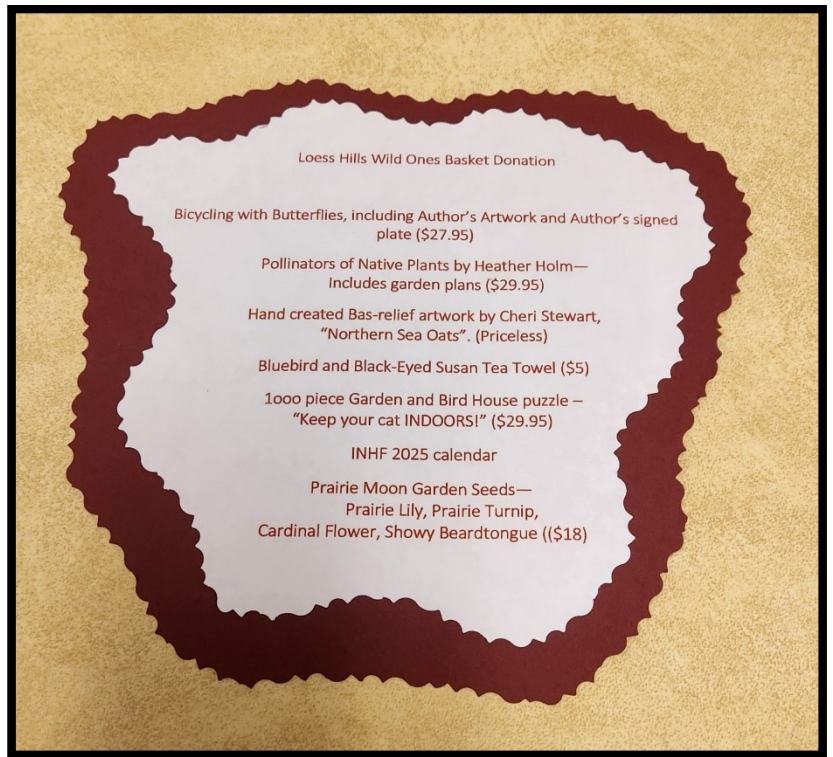
← Click for endless resources that are SO helpful!
Thank you, Laura!

On our counter and table for set-up we had:

Pens, scissors, tape, envelopes of various sizes, labels prepared by Marcie, sifters, spoons, various containers to sift and sort our seeds into, cookie sheets, magnifying glasses, seed guides and photos, Patch Kitty, jars, food grade desiccant pouches, gloves, unprocessed seeds, coffee, pencils, permanent markers, and...stuff we can't remember!



We made a basket for Loess Hills Audubon with a lot of fun items for their upcoming auction! They are our Partner for “Bird Friendly Iowa” which was awarded to Sioux City with President Marla’s spearheading!



Saving the BEST for LAST, we spent over an hour watching this ?Cooper’s Hawk? -----

Leaning in a guess towards ?Sharp-shinned Hawk? playing and bathing on the pond! It was a warm day, so some of the water melted on TOP of the ice, making a REALLY great skating rink. This cute guy would take a few steps, do the splits, hop around, take a bath, and start all over again! It was funny, fun, and so rewarding to have the time to really enjoy Nature with humor and amazement.



We have video, send your number and we can text it to you!

Find what you need, little Hawk, whatever you are, and please visit the ‘Wild Mess in Progress’ often!

We would love it if you made this your home!

Click link above for Sharp-shinned, or photo article (right) for more Cooper’s information! →

GOOD Natured

Cooper’s Hawks

Mature Cooper’s hawks are blue-gray above with orangish bars across the breast and a prominent ‘Cooper’s cap’ of darker feathers on top of the head. Immature birds however are brown and the upper breast is marked with crisp brown streaks. Both mature and immature Cooper’s favor birds as prey. Photo courtesy of Larry Lenard.

Wishing you a week filled with "Seed Silliness!"

