

# GREEN SHEET

Your Personal Gardener News

*Issue #4*

## WELCOME

### **Wild Bird**

Welcome to our summer bird friends. We are on the verge of new and welcome arrivals. Ruby Throated Hummingbirds have been observed in Wisconsin so keep a watch out for them. The Orioles seem to arrive a few days later; it is time to put out the oranges and grape jelly. We had five breeding pairs visiting us last summer. Don't let your feeders remain empty for long or the birds may continue to migrate further north. There is a theory that the summer birds arrive when leaves start opening on the trees. With the opening leaves, the bugs start hatching. They, in turn, are food for many birds such as Warblers, Hummers, Orioles, Wrens.

We still have Pine Siskens at our Nyjer feeders. I guess they would rather eat thistle seed at \$1.50 per pound than birch catkins.

### **Nursery and Garden Center**

If you think the birds are busy, you should work in a garden center. Nursery stock is arriving, perennials are waking up and shortly our annuals, vegetables and herb plants will be available. As we did last year, we will have some select, locally-grown, organic vegetable plants for sale along with our herbs. (No, not me the plants.) For obvious reasons we always have some specials on herbs so keep us on your itinerary when shopping. The last frost in Wisconsin is difficult to predict; the full moon often marks a cold period. This year it comes on May 9th. Annuals do not grow until the ground warms up, so it does not pay to rush the season. Memorial Day is still appropriate for planting. If you live closer to Lake Michigan you can plant earlier, but you rarely have a warm spring thanks to the big lake.

Praying mantis egg cases are now available for those who enjoy hatching them. Great entertainment for the children and these beneficial insects reduce insecticide use.

Our featured plant this issue is the Ft. McNair Buckeye. This tree's cultivated origin is from a colonial tree in Williamsburg, VA. This Aesculus is a cross between the the Ohio Buckeye and Red Buckeye. The large pink panicles are a dynamic large pink flower up to 12 inches tall. Although it is a nut tree, it seems to be sterile and has not been observed to produce nuts, thus no mess. This has something complicated to do with the number of chromosomes. It needs full sun, but is adaptable to a variety of soils and is hardy. Unfortunately there is no fall color, but in the spring, interesting large buds grow and open into delicate compound leaves. A very slow grower and long lived.

### **Landscape and Arboriculture**

This is the most exciting time of the year for those who love flowering trees and shrubs. The weather we have had this spring, has compressed the flowering times. In other words, everything will flower over a shorter interval. The Star Magnolias and Cornelian Cherry Dogwoods are in bloom and the cool weekend will hold them a while. The Serviceberries (Green Sheet #1) are on the verge of flowering along with Eastern Redbuds (Green Sheet #2) and Buckeyes. Normally a couple of weeks separate their blooming. This weekend we received more rain than we wanted, especially if you own a garden center, but now it's time to enjoy the green grass and our signs of life, flowering plants.

Next issue I will have more on flowering shrubs; sorry to keep you in suspense.

Too late to prune Oaks now, wait until after August. It may take thousands of Emerald Ash Borers to kill an Ash tree, but it only takes one spore of the Oak Wilt fungus to kill an Oak tree. Which is more valuable?

### **Wine Selections**

We have labeled with 'Sandy Bottom Select' a few wines from Loduca Brothers that are very nice and reasonably priced. We will gladly offer a free sampling any time you are interested in trying them. You might want to consider putting your own label on these wines as an excellent business promotion, an anniversary announcement, or a wedding celebration; be creative.

Thanks for your patronage,

*Herb Rasmussen*



*Ft. McNair Buckeye*



*Sandy Bottom Nature Center*  
www.sandybottom.com