

A C R E S



QUARTERLY

SPRING • 1981
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Saturday

April 18 - EDIBLE WILD PLANTS: IDENTIFICATION AND PREPARATION - joint venture with Fox Island Alliance from 9:30 AM until 2:30 PM
Meet: at Education Building, Fox Island Park
Bring: Your lunch, \$1.00 fee per person
Field Guide to Wild Edible Plants by Lee Peterson, if you have a copy
T.J. McNitt and Judy Esterline, guides

Saturday

April 25 - Join Audubon for a day of birding at Salamonie Reservoir. Ted Heemstra in charge
Meet: 6:30 A.M., Ardmore Shopping Center, #24 or at Reservoir Hq. Office at 7:15 A.M.
Bring: Lunch and binoculars
At 4:00 P.M. - visit to Hanging Rock to pick up litter and inspect

Saturday

May 9 - Field trip to Kosciusko County to visit "Wildwood" and "Nature's Acres". Robert and Alice Frantz, owners of "Wildwood" and Bob Weber, naturalist, are in charge.
Meet: 9 A.M. at Ramada Inn parking lot on State Road #14
Bring: Lunch (and weiners to cook over open fire if you choose)
Your boots

Saturday

May 16 - WORK DAY - at Mengerson Reserve
Meet: 9 AM at Mengerson Reserve, 5900 Stellhorn.
Bring: Lunch, shovels, loppers, rakes, gloves, post hole diggers

ALL EVENTS PROCEED - RAIN OR SHINE !

SPRING

- ACRES MEMBERSHIP TIME

RENEW

JOIN

ADD A FRIEND'S MEMBERSHIP

Your membership card is attached.
Select the membership category and remit to:

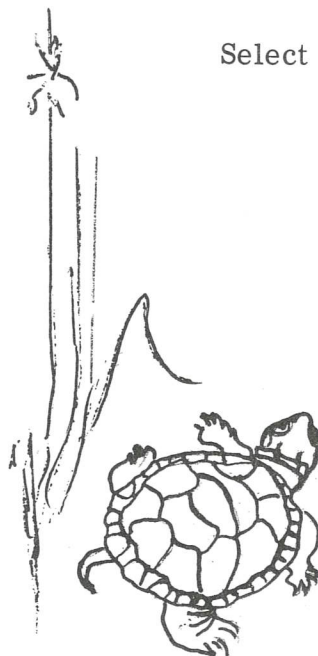
ACRES, INC.

1802 Chapman Road
Huntertown, Indiana 46748

You fill in the membership card and keep it. Return the address portion with your remittance in the return envelope provided.

Patron \$100; Sustaining \$50;
Share-the-Expense \$25; Family \$10; Regular \$5; Senior Citizen \$2; Student \$1.

Add your support to acquiring and preserving natural areas in northeastern Indiana. **JOIN NOW**



TED HEEMSTRA takes the helm as ACRES' President. He is looking ahead to increasing reliance on the generosity of citizens who love our natural heritage to contribute gifts of money, time, expertise, energy and land- toward the continuing ACRES' goal of preserving and protecting natural areas in northeastern Indiana. TODAY, ACRES needs 100% renewal and each member attracting another to join! Dues are nominal, so consider an addition to the LAND ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT FUND, or sign up for helping with any of the many projects which keep us going. Remember, we have no paid staff. We rely on the gifts of members and friends. CELEBRATE SPRING - JOIN ACRES!

QUARTERLY COVER ARTIST is Patricia Kern, Painter and Sculptor. Pat teaches art at South Side High School and Art History at Indiana University, Fort Wayne. Cover art is Morchella esculenta, the most prized of the morels.

TWO HERONS THAT DIDN'T MIGRATE

Once we had a great blue heron, named Alexander the Great Blue Heron, in our basement. Four feet of feathered trouble, nearly six feet of strong, broad wings. Of course there was nothing strong about Alexander when he arrived. It was January, snow covered the ground outside, ice covered the lakes and rivers. For some unexplained reason Alexander had not migrated out of the snowbelt. The ice cut off his food supply. He was starving, too weak to fly, too dejected to even try. I was called, birdman to the rescue, wrapped a jacket around the bird, took him home and released him in the basement.

The only trouble with Alexander, at first, was food and feeding. But when we started supplying minnows in a bucket of water that trouble was eliminated. Minnows gave Alexander renewed strength and changed our trouble. First he walked, striding about the basement, intimidating everyone with his long, sharp bill. Then he flew, back and forth, one end of the basement to the other, a feathered javeline.

Once he started flying we couldn't keep Alexander in our basement any longer. So I took him to the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo where he spent the winter. In spring, Alexander was released on the zoo grounds where he could be seen striding around the duck pond, up onto the sidewalk, startling many an innocent visitor.

Alexander's was an interesting story which I told to various groups. After one naration a lady came up and informed me she too had a heron story. Her story also began in winter but where mine ended with the zoo, hers started there.

A friend, a member of the zoo staff, had called her. "We have a great blue heron," he said. "It was injured last fall and couldn't fly. Now it's well, and we want to turn it loose. But we can't release it here. It should be released somewhere in the south."

Suspiciously the lady asked what that had to do with her.

"You're driving south for the Christmas holidays. Take the heron with you."

"In our car?! You're out of your head. Besides it's illegal."

"We'll put the bird in a cage that will fit in your car trunk. Nobody will see it. As soon as you get south of the snow, in Tennessee or Georgia, you can turn it loose. If anybody does see you just have them call the zoo."

"We can't do it. Suppose the bird injured itself, or died in our car trunk?"

"You should see the way its beating itself against the sides of its cage here at the zoo. It'll kill itself sure here. With you at least it has a chance."

Very reluctantly the lady agreed. As she said, what else could she do? And early next morning she and her husband and daughter started south, a heron in a cage in their trunk.

They intended to release the bird just as soon as they found open water. Kentucky was blanketed with snow. Tennessee was having a snow storm. Driving was hazardous. Certainly, it was no

place to release a bird of summer.

In Georgia the snow changed to sleet and ice. If it hadn't been for the heron they would have stopped at the nearest motel until the storm passed. But they couldn't keep the heron cooped up any longer than absolutely necessary. So they drove on, stopping only for gas.

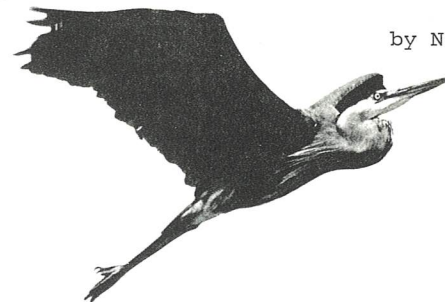
In Florida they finally got out of the ice. Pulling onto a back road they stopped by a stream. Another car pulled up behind them, stopped, and a conservation officer stepped out. Noting the Indiana license he asked if they were lost. They quickly decided to look for a different release point, got back in the car and drove on. The officer followed at a discrete distance until they turned back on the highway.

Farther south they again left the main road. They stopped by a field with a river at the far side. Husband and wife got the cage out of the trunk and carried it across the field. As they neared the river their daughter started to honk the car horn. Scuttling into some bushes, dragging the cage, they looked back and saw daughter talking to a state trooper. The lady said she didn't know what their daughter told the trooper, but the story must have been a good one. The trooper left.

And the heron? For hours it had been cramped in an un-natural horizontal position in a cage seemingly too small. Could they get it out of the cage? Would it be able to stand, let alone fly?

"When we opened the end of the cage," the lady said, "the heron erupted like a spring, shot out, took two long strides, spread its wings and took off straight down the river, dropping a large, white salute as it departed. I don't know who was most relieved, the bird or us!"

by Neil A. Case



Come gently into this harsh land,
though tough, it is frail;
though severe, it is weak
to our whims;
it does well without us,
but with us — you will tell.

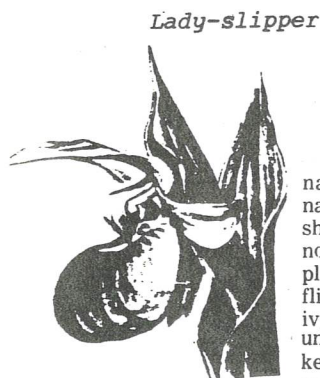
Ivy isn't only wild plant with an itch

If you're planning a walk through the woods to enjoy nature, the familiar three-leaved poison ivy vine isn't the only irritating plant to avoid..... other plants that cause rashes and skin irritations.....



Poison Oak

--Poison Oak: Similar in appearance and effect to poison ivy, this erect shrub has three leaflets which are distinctively lobed.



Lady-slipper

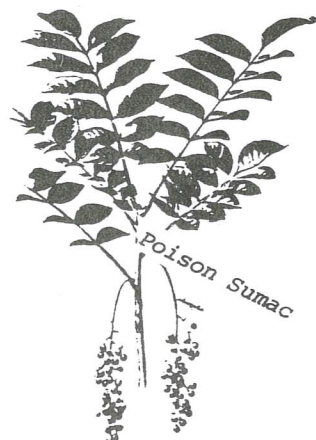
--Lady-slipper: One of the nation's most handsome native orchids, the regal showy lady-slipper inhabits northern bogs. Handling the plant can result in an affliction resembling poison ivy rash. Unfortunately, this unpleasant property has not kept it from being picked to near extinction in some areas.

--Nettle: This plant makes bare-legged hiking an ordeal, for its entire stem and leaves bristle with spiny-tipped hollow hairs which contain a variety of histamines and other proteins. Brushing against a nettle causes these hairs to penetrate the skin where they break off and release the fluid. Immediately, the affected area stings and itches fiercely. The sensation lasts only a few minutes, and an application of juice from the jewelweed usually relieves the itching.



Celandine

--Celandine: This plant's deep yellow flowers invite picking, but the bright orange juice that drips from the broken stems can cause an irritating skin inflammation.



Poison Sumac

--Poison Sumac: This large shrub or small tree bears drooping clusters of small ivory-colored fruits and shouldn't be confused with harmless red-fruited sumacs. The poison variety prefers a swampy environment.

Mushroom mania a sign of spring

By HAROLD ALLISON

AS THE LAST signs of winter begin to vanish, a strange transformation begins to take place in a large segment of the Hoosier population. They become restless and are often caught casting longing glances at nearby woods and thickets. It seems they have contracted a nearly incurable malady known as "mushroom fever"

To most of us the word mushroom is used to designate a certain kind of fungus that we know is edible and can be eaten without fear of being poisoned. Literally hundreds of fungi are edible, but to the average mushroom hunter only three or four kinds will be collected in his jaunts into the great outdoors. For the great majority only one variety will be collected for consumption.

To most, only one mushroom is worthy of hunting and this is the "king of the fungus," the morel. If you have never tasted the delicious flavor of a morel, coated with flour and then fried to a crisp brown in butter, you have missed one of the real joys of life.

There seems to be something about a morel that drives an otherwise sensible person into a near frenzy and sends him into the woods in all kinds of weather to search for this delectable morsel. Often he or she becomes a complete fool and will go to great lengths to keep a favorite mushroom hunting place a secret. To a non-mushroom hunter these actions must, indeed, seem that of a lunatic.

If you don't know what can or cannot be eaten, you should consult a good mushroom field guide, of which there are several excellent ones now available.

A strange thing about morels is that, while most people can eat all of them they want without any adverse effects, a few individuals have severe reactions from eating just a few morels. The black morel and the early or two-spored morel are varieties that seem to effect the most people.

Why some people can eat these kinds and suffer no ill effects, while another person can eat the same mushroom and become ill is still not completely understood. It's probably the same reason certain people are allergic to strawberries or various other foods... a matter of body chemistry.

ONE QUESTION I am constantly asked is "Where is the best place to look for morels." The answer I usually give is, "I have found them in almost every imaginable habitat." Some of the most unlikely looking terrain will yield morels, while other spots that look as if they should contain bushels of this succulent fungus will not have a single morel. Good places to look, however, include old orchards, around old dead elm trees, grassy swamp areas, burned over thickets and around May apples and grapevines.

One other question I am also constantly asked is "Where is your favorite mushroom patch?" Now you are getting too personal, and I won't answer that question for anyone.

After all, there is something about Indiana morels that makes some people act quite strange and I'm afraid I'm afflicted with this mania.



MORCHELLA

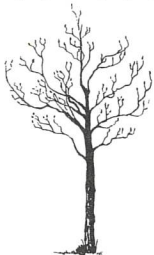
Morchella esculenta
(Edible)



GYROMITRA

Gyromitra
(Poisonous)

Ascomycetes.



In 1977, the Phil M. McNagny family preserved, by gift to ACRES, the tall trees and deep ravines that connect the Indiana-Purdue University Biological Station at Crooked Lake with nature preserve lands, making continuous protection for Crooked Lake's northern shore - line. This land and the dedication of shorelands and uplands into the Crooked Lake Nature Preserve are a living memorial to Phil M. McNagny who died March 28.

Phil McNagny's defense of wild and natural systems extended beyond his love for Crooked Lake. As practising Columbia City Attorney, Phil McNagny argued to save the Elkhart River, "The way I interpret the law, the county surveyor is required to dredge the river once it is declared a legal drain. . . . The south branch of the Elkhart River is one of the most unspoiled places I have seen in my life. If you are really interested in saving your river, take a trip down it in a canoe. You can go for miles without seeing a single home. There are fine wetland areas there, which are what we need to preserve wildlife. It has taken some 20,000 years to put this river system together. Man won't be able to put it back together if anyone fools with it. Turning the river into a legal drain and placing it in the hands of a few men is like turning a masterpiece over to a boy with crayons - even if he says he won't do anything with the crayons, it makes you nervous".

In Phil McNagny's memory, ACRES continues the defense and careful stewardship of these woods, waters and wildlife.

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