

1



IS THIS BOOK FOR ME?

If you've ever wanted to establish a native prairie or meadow, or just incorporate a few native plants into your yard or garden, this book is for you. Other folks who may be interested in this book include wildflower groups, government agencies, and groups devoted to preserving our natural surroundings, such as the U.S. Forest Service, soil conservation districts, the Wild Ones, and the Nature Conservancy. These groups engage in projects such as dune restoration and restoring other neglected or abused sites to their original native splendor. This will be a valuable handbook for acquiring detailed information on seed collection, propagation, site preparation, and maintenance of a wildflower planting.

Much of the trial and error of starting native plants by seed or vegetative propagation has been done for you and detailed in this book. Although it's not an exhaustive book in terms of including every single native plant you may encounter or wish to plant, I have tried to include a pretty wide range of native plants, especially those that are popular and useful in various situations and soil conditions, including upland, swamp, clay, and sandy sites. I think you will also find there is a common thread in the propagation of most species of native wildflowers; that is, experiment, experiment, experiment!

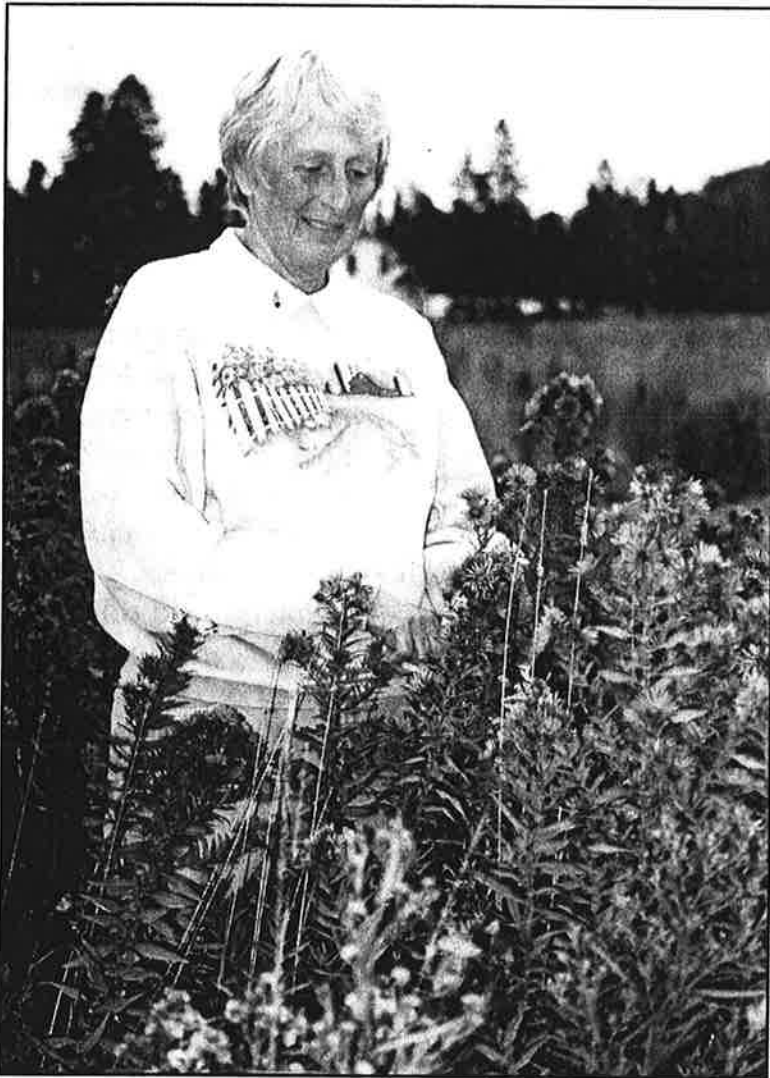
And finally, this book is for people who just plain enjoy seeking out native plants on their excursions throughout the Upper Great Lakes region. That's why

North Country Gardening with Wildflowers

I have included a list of some native plant hot spots in this region. I've listed some of the managed "natural areas" near the cities, but also what I feel is the real McCoy of wilderness areas for viewing wildflowers—places such as the Seney Wildlife Refuge, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Whitewater State Park in southeastern Minnesota, and Peninsula State Park, in Wisconsin's Door County.

It is my hope that this book will be a springboard for both your enjoyment and propagation of native plants. In a natural world that is constantly shrinking

due to over development, I think you will find, upon reading this book, that we can do our part to keep the natural world natural, if only in our own backyards.



Karen Bartunek enjoys some beautiful New England asters in her garden of wildflowers.

8



REATING A WILDLIFE OASIS

Imagine your backyard, not as a collection of various plants, but as an oasis for wildlife—birds, butterflies, hummingbirds, and perhaps a few surprise visitors, such as frogs, a rare bird, or even a bunny rabbit. Imagine pollinating insects and other beneficial bugs flitting from flower to flower, or preying on the insects that are desiccating your rose bush or potato plants.

This is what my wife and I and many others have created by letting our hair down a little and planting a nice variety of native plants. We added a couple of water features to further attract wildlife. This approach to landscaping may look a little unkempt around the edges, but it sure attracts wildlife, and provides us with hours of enjoyment.

Lord knows the critters need our help as they're pushed towards being endangered and even extinct by loss of habitat, which is the number one factor



Your yard can be certified as a wildlife habitat (see Appendix A).

“Small ‘islands’ of habitat can provide food resources for birds, particularly during migration.”

*Victoria D. Piaskowski,
International Coordinator, Birds
without Borders, Zoological
Society of Milwaukee*

better to offer a constant food source from native plants. In fact, some birds don't rely on feeders at all, insisting instead on foraging in the wild.

In recent years populations of nonnative honey bees have dwindled due to what some deem a “mysterious condition”—Colony Collapse Disorder. It's not really mysterious at all. It appears evident now that the bees are perishing due to the overuse of chemical pesticides and the fact that they are simply being worked to death. As native plant enthusiasts we can be a part of the solution to this problem by planting large and small plots of wildflowers as described in this book. This won't save the commercial honey bees, but rather encourage native bees and other insect pollinators.

Folks who plant wildflowers on their property won't need to visit a butterfly house to experience the beauty of butterflies. There are many species of wild-

“Native plants, which have co-evolved with native wild birds, are more likely to provide a mix of foods—just the right kind of nutrition—and just when the birds need them.”

*Stephen Kress, National
Audubon Society*

flowers that attract a multitude of butterflies. By planting wildflowers for the butterflies, we can offer them four things: a source of nectar, a place to lay their eggs, food for developing butterfly larvae, and a place for them to form a butterfly chrysalis. Here is a list of wildflowers and what you can expect to attract to your property by planting them on your property.