

No Nature Deficit Here!

In his recent book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, author Richard Louv coins the term *nature-deficit disorder* to describe young people's alienation from nature—and the possible connection this has to the troubling increase in the number of children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Citing numerous studies that have found a significant reduction in ADHD symptoms when children are engaged with nature, Louv writes in the July 2005 issue of *Orion Magazine*, "It's not clear why exposure to nature would have such an apparently powerful influence on brain functions related to attention. One theory is that the experience simply engages a child mentally and physically in a 'natural' way, consistent with how humans have evolved."

Nathan Larson, Troy Gardens' Education Program Director, understands the remedy.

"We are working to eradicate *nature-deficit disorder* by providing young people with an accessible outdoor classroom in their neighborhood," Nathan says, "where they can develop a continuous and meaningful relationship with the natural world."

"In the Kids' Garden, children develop ties to the natural world as they plant and care for seedlings, gently hold wriggling worms, and hunt for sweet summer

strawberries. In the Farm & Field Environmental Leadership Program, teenagers learn first-hand what is involved in protecting and stewarding land for present and future generations."

Nathan's relationship with Troy Gardens began in 2000. A naturalist and garden educator, he took up an interest in building educational programs here that would generate connections between neighborhood youth and the land. As a volunteer, Nathan worked with the Friends of Troy Gardens' Board of Directors to design youth programs and fundraise for them.

As Troy Gardens' Education Program Director, Nathan develops, coordinates and implements a wide variety of educational programs for people of all ages.

That's an ambitious plate of work for one person, and Nathan relies on a wide assortment of interns and volunteers to help him. He's even invented a word to describe these people—Troy Guardians. (More Troy Guardians are always welcome.)

Nathan will enjoy a very short commute to work—he

and his wife are purchasing a townhouse at Troy Gardens, which will be completed this fall. Here Nathan will be living his dream, becoming part of "an intergenerational, diverse community that works, learns from, and celebrates the land together."



Troy Gardens Savor the Summer *Festival*

Saturday, August 12 • 10am-4pm • Rain Or Shine!

FREE Festivities for All-Ages!

- Live Music on the Main Stage

THE KISSERS



The Kissers

Oak Street Ramblers

West African Drum and Dance

- Ethnic Cooking Demos & Workshops

Enjoy free samples of Hmong cuisine and Huitlacoche recipes

- Urban Farm Activities for Kids!

Meet the chickens, visit the honeybees, race, roam and make art in the gardens

- Troy Gardens Tours

Prairie, Farm, Gardens, and Housing Construction



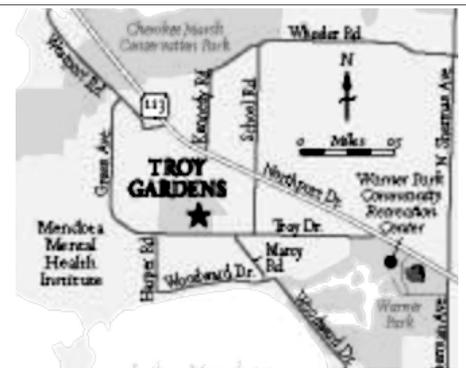
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Troy Gardens is located in the 500 block of Troy Drive on Madison's Northside.

Many Thanks to Our Savor The Summer Festival Sponsors!

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Pierce's Northside Market donated this wonderful truck to Troy Community Farm. Farm Manager Claire Strader reports, "Not only is it plenty big enough to transport all our 110 shares, it also provides a great deal of shade for your vegetables while they wait for you to come and fetch them." Thank you, Pierce's!

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Troy BioBlitz—Taking a Day . . .

Scientists, stewards, and community members scoured Troy Gardens for twenty-four hours on June 16-17, searching for non-human life. It was our first BioBlitz: a concentrated effort to discover and note every species of plants and animals living at Troy Gardens.

Experts in birds, insects, plants, reptiles and amphibians led groups of volunteers on excursions throughout the landscape, collecting and identifying species. "It's like taking a day to communicate and listen and let nature speak to us," observed one participant. Nature spoke up right away, as a lone deer leaped across the prairie with a backward glance at the unusual interruption of its quiet routine; and a raccoon family clambered out of the maple woodland to see what treats were awaiting them at the food tent.

As each species was discovered, markers representing various categories of living things was added to a "sea of biodiversity" display at base camp. Soon the markers began to accumulate.

By 1pm on Saturday, seven species of mammals, 38 species of birds, 291 species of plants, and 306 species of insects had been discovered for a total of 642 species.



Tom Kessenich of Snakes Alive led an expedition in search of reptiles and amphibians at Troy Gardens. The creatures remained hidden, but the searchers learned a lot from their enthusiastic guide.

Scientists and participants eagerly supported the idea of turning the BioBlitz into a yearly event. One scientist noted that repeating the event will allow Troy Gar-

dens "... to keep track of how the species may be changing over time. Nature is dynamic!"



Base camp was set up in the crossroads gathering area at Troy Gardens, above.

Food, beverages and camaraderie refreshed the professional and amateur ecologists between forays into the various habitats found on the land. Tables loaded with field guides supplemented the search.

Dan Young, an entomology professor at UW-Madison, lent us microscopes for the event. Eagle Optics donated binoculars to Troy Gardens to assist with the BioBlitz event, and to allow future groups to go bird-watching together here.



Join us in designing future BioBlitz events . . .

. . . To Let Nature Speak to Us

A few weeks after the BioBlitz, Farm and Field youth working in the prairie garden discovered a garter snake in the leaf pile, right. At least two community gardeners have recently been surprised (pleasantly or unpleasantly, depending on the gardener) by brown snakes slithering through the straw mulch, as the diversity of this marvelous land continues to reveal itself.



BioBlitz participants were fascinated to look at the intricate patterns and colors of insects under the microscopes.



BioBlitz concluded with the dedication of a new sign at the entrance to the prairie, below. The sign was donated by the parents of the late Christian Metz, who was a dedicated steward of the land.

This interactive sign will serve as a showcase for photographs of flowers that are blooming on the land and other species that are observed flying, crawling and living here.

Recording books will soon be added in mailboxes attached to the sign. Visitors will be encouraged to write about the species they see or thoughts they have while meandering through the interpretive trail system. These records will enable Troy to keep track of the species on the land throughout the year and to note new findings.



. . . Contact the Friends of Troy Gardens!

Voices of Troy Gardens

KAZOUA MOUA

Kazoua Moua is a Troy Community Gardener who serves on the Gardens Steering Committee and translates for the Hmong community at Troy. In addition for all she does for Troy Gardens, Kazoua works at the UW-Extension Nutrition Program. She wrote the following narrative for Recipes From Troy Gardens, 2006, the cookbook that will be distributed at this year's Savor the Summer Festival on Aug. 12.

In a typical day in Laos, when a Hmong family worked on the rice field all day, one member may encounter some wild oyster mushroom and harvested it for later to take home.

When the sun is set in the horizon and getting late, the mother or the older daughter would need to harvest some vegetables to take home. The vegetable would be green mustard, winter squash tips, cabbage, cucumber, some cilantro and lemon grass.

When the family get home, the mother or daughter would make this squash tip with oyster mushroom soup for the family's dinner. This soup can be eat any time of the day. Go for your mood of appetite.

With the winter squash plant, the more you harvest the tip, the more vine it will grow. Do not harvest it after it just rained. The hairy outer part tends to hold dirt very well and wash it will not come off. Try to pick those that



Kazoua Moua

are clean.

When I plant winter squash at Troy Garden, it reminds me of a childhood fishing experience with my dad in Laos. My dad taught me how to eat winter squash tip raw for survival.

My dad took me to fish one day. It was lunch time, we came to one of our relative's rice field where they grew winter squash close by the spring river. My dad gathered some squash tips nearby and peeled the hairy string off. He took some salt out, which he brought from home and showed me how to eat it raw.

He told me, we can eat these squash tips raw if the family ever fled to the jungle from the communism soldiers and could not make fire to cook it.

After this experience, I realized that eating squash tip raw was not poison at all, but I prefer to cook it and it taste better.

Taking Root

By Maury Smith, Troy Gardener and Neighbor

Stand and spread your gathered waters on the ground

The rising of the heat becomes the only sound

Summer breathing in the humid air

Sultry scent of blooming food is everywhere

No breeze disturbs the pregnant afternoon

The atmosphere's in lockdown since the end of June

No shade to shield you from the fiery truth

Simmer in your sweat-drenched skin and watch the fruit

Taking root

Birth's a burning furnace tearing time in two

Time to ease the friction . . . seasons pull us through

Simmer like a midwife . . . bring forth what you bring

Change me like a cold front borne on storm cloud's wings

Contact the Friends of Troy Gardens for our 2006 Cookbook!

Troy Garden Journal

By Marge Pitts

HOW TO MAKE MULBERRY LIQUEUR

Rise up and go to Troy Gardens on a fine June day. Bring a plastic grocery bag. That's all you need. Children and dogs are not required, but go ahead and bring them along, if you have any.

Take the trail to the back part of Troy Gardens, behind the farm and prairie restoration, where the land is fallow and looks like it did before anyone cared about this place in an organizational way. You'll see low, scraggly trees standing among waves of seemingly useless grass. Many of these are mulberry trees. In June, the berries ripen to dark purple, each one looking like a cluster of tiny grapes. Taste one. Should be good.

Try another tree. You'll discover that each mulberry tree has a unique flavor. Pick from the tastiest trees, dropping into your bag the berries you don't smash directly into your mouth (it's okay; everyone does it).

Here a small child might be helpful. If the tot can ride on your shoulders, she can pick mulberries from higher up and drop them into your hair (if you have any) and collar (if you're wearing a shirt). Following your dog's example, you can have a good shake (please put the tot down first) and retrieve the berries that come tumbling down. You can also place the bag over a fruitful branch and shake gently. The mulberries will tumble in.

Introduce your dog to this delicious new food. He'll soon discover the berries falling around you. He'll lie on the long, soft grass in the shade under the tree, purple tongue flapping and dripping, his bright gums and teeth exposed in a jolly grin. If the charm of bearing a child on your shoulders who's dropping mulberries on your head wears thin, set her down and watch as she discovers the fun of running through long, soft grass. She'll think she's vanishing in grass as tall as she is—but she won't get far! The grass folds under her feet, revealing her path and location every time you glance from your work. An excellent dog bed *and* babysitter—this plain long grass is not useless after all, when you're mulberry picking.

When you and your entourage have picked enough, and eaten enough, and your hands and faces are purple, and your dog has purple streaks on the white parts of his fur, then it's time to go home.

Now, here comes the recipe:

Gently pour the mulberries into a colander and im-

merse them in a bowl of cold water. Remove whatever twigs, spiders, and ladybugs float to the surface. Drain and give the berries one more rinse. Jiggle as much water as you can out of the colander of berries. Into clean quart jars, place about a cup of mulberries and a half a cup of sugar, more or less. I don't like to put too much detail into a recipe.

Fill the jars with vodka, cover tightly, and put in a dark place. After a respectable interlude, several weeks during which you'll have to drink something else, your mulberry liqueur will be ready. Give the jar a good shake, and strain the liqueur into another container. Press the mulberries against the strainer to squeeze out all the juice, and discard.

Mulberry liqueur makes a refreshing highball with lemonade or soda, a martini that'll put wheels on the dull-est cocktail party, or a healthy snort with best wishes all around.

To you, and your dog, and your children! To Troy Gardens! *Salud!*



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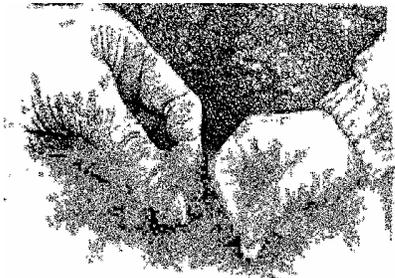


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Thank You!