

# Illinois Native Plant Society Northeast Chapter

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DECEMBER 2016

## *A few words from the president*

Season's greetings, Northeast!

I hope this holiday season finds you in good health and spirits. Though winter might not be the best season to experience all the native plants we love, it's a great time of year to reconnect with the people we love. I hope you get the opportunity to do just that this month.

We don't have anything planned for December as a chapter, but check out the rest of the newsletter for some opportunities to experience our region's natural resources. Stay tuned for upcoming information about a membership gathering to be held in early 2017, as well as details for our next winter tree identification workshop. We'll get you those dates once they're finalized and we hope you can join us!

Happy holidays!

-Andy

## *An exceedingly short history of the Christmas Tree*

Thanks to the glory of Wikipedia, you will get this nickel tour of Christmas tree history and industry! I've got cookies to bake, so I won't even rephrase, just cut and paste. Happy Holidays!

- Linda

According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "The use of [evergreen trees](#), wreaths, and garlands to symbolize eternal life was a custom of ancient Egyptians, Chinese, and Hebrews. Tree worship was common among the pagan Europeans and survived their conversion to Christianity in the Scandinavian customs of decorating the house and barn with evergreens at the New Year to scare away the devil and of setting up a tree for the birds during Christmastime." The modern Christmas tree is

frequently traced to the symbolism of trees in pre-Christian winter rites.

The tradition was introduced to Canada in the winter of 1781 by Brunswick soldiers stationed in the Province of Quebec to garrison the colony against American attack. General Friedrich Adolf Riedesel and his wife, the Baroness von Riedesel, held a Christmas party at Sorel, delighting their guests with a fir tree decorated with candles and fruits.

Each year, 33 to 36 million Christmas trees are produced in America. In 1998, there were about 15,000 growers in America (a third of them "choose and cut" farms). In that same year, it was estimated that Americans spent \$1.5 billion on Christmas trees. Almost all Christmas trees in the United States are grown on Christmas tree farms where they are cut after about ten years of growth and new trees planted. [LM note: The most common species sold in the USA are *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas fir), *Abies balsamea* (Balsam fir), and *Abies fraseri* (Fraser Fir), although my favorite is *Abies concolor* (White fir)]. Real or cut trees are used only for a short time, but can be recycled and used as mulch, wildlife habitat, or used to prevent erosion.



*Abies concolor* (image: [www.extension.iastate.edu/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/))

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## Native Plant Excursions

Visit our FaceBook page for more info!

### UPCOMING

#### Cook County

Enjoy a [Winter Walk](#) on the last day of the year (12/31) at Crabtree Nature Center, and start the new year off right with a [New Year's Resolution Walk](#) at Trailside on 1/3/2017. Top it off with another [Winter Nature Hike](#) at the Little Red Schoolhouse on 1/7/2017 and a [Snowshoe Hike](#) at Thatcher Woods on 1/8/2017. Check out the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's [web page](#) for complete FP listings.

Chicago Botanic Garden offers [Winter Woods Walks](#) on 12/18 and 1/15/2017.

If it is too cold outside, take a guided [Mini Tour](#) around the Garfield Park Conservatory (12/10, 12/18, 1/14/2017, 1/22/2017).

#### DuPage County

Greene Valley is offering a [Forest Fitness Walk](#) on 12/12, and another at [Fullersburg Woods](#) on 12/19 and 1/9/2017. You can participate in a [Snowshoe Hike](#) at Blackwell on 12/17 and at West DuPage Woods on 12/31. [Ranger Adventure Days](#) are happening at Herrick Lake on 12/21, 12/28, and 1/16/2017, and are open to kids ages 9-12. Waterfall Glen is hosting a [New Year's Day Hike](#) (1/1/2017). Visit the [DuPage County Forest Preserve](#) web site for locations and schedule details.

#### Kane County

Head out to Creek Bend Nature Center for a New Year's Morning Hike (1/1/2017). Trek with a Naturalist kicks of the new year with a hike at Burnidge FP on 1/7/2017. See the most recent issue of [The Treeline](#) for more information.

#### Lake County

Visit the [Lake County Forest Preserve](#) web site for locations and schedule details.

#### McHenry County

You can visit [Cotton Creek Marsh](#), one of McHenry County's Sites Seldom Seen, on 12/11.

## Other Regional Plant Events

#### Cook County

Learn about the biology behind why some trees are [evergreen and other deciduous](#) at the Sand Ridge Nature Center on 12/10. [Tree Essences](#) are on the agenda at Crabtree Nature Center on 12/11.

West Cook Wild Ones Chapter is hosting Linda Walker for a [Winter seed sowing](#) presentation on 1/29/2017 and a few weeks later they hold their [Beautifully Natural Garden Conference](#) (2/11/2017).

Get an early start on your garden at the [Super Seed Weekend](#) (1/21-22/2017) at Chicago Botanic Garden. You can also indulge your chocolate desires and learn about this delicious bean at [Loco for Cocoa](#) (1/21 and 1/29/2017).

Take advantage of [Free Admission Days](#) at The Field Museum! The next free day is 12/18.

Wild Things Conference 2017 happens on 2/18/2017. You can get more info or register [here](#).

#### DuPage County

The [Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan](#) will be featured in a presentation by Jack Shouba for the DuPage Wild Ones on 1/19/2017. The [Plant Hunters](#) exhibit is still open in the library at The Morton Arboretum. Can't get enough of The Morton Arboretum? You can visit [FREE](#) on 12/25 (buildings will be closed; restrooms will be available)!

#### Kane County

Two great programs are offered at Creek Bend Nature Center during January. The first, A Rose by Any Other Name, had Jack Shouba explaining how plants get their scientific names (1/26/2017). The second is a Winter Tree Identification class by Valerie Blaine (1/28/2017). See the most recent issue of [The Treeline](#) for listings.

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### Lake County

Lake to Prairie Wild Ones is hosting a showing of the documentary [Hometown Habitat](#) on 2/7/2017.

### Further Afield / Electronic

2017 National Native Seed Conference happens on 2/13-16 in Washington, DC. Information on the conference and registration is available [here](#).

Save the Date! The Southern chapter of INPS will hold their 5<sup>th</sup> annual Indigenous Plant Symposium on 3/31-4/2/2017.

Also check out [The Outside Calendar](#) for more events.

## *Volunteer Opportunities*

### Cook County

The next [R.I.P Workday](#) at Little Red Schoolhouse happens on Sat 12/10 or 1/14/2017. Alternatively, you can join for a [Restoration Workday](#) at River Trail Nature Center (also 12/10 and 1/14/2017). Forest Preserve District of Cook County [web page](#) may have additional listings.

The next [Restoring Eggers Grove](#) meetings are 12/10 and 1/14/2017, and [Restoring Beaubien Woods](#) is 1/7/2017.

### DuPage County

Volunteer Restoration Workdays are happening at various preserves. [Springbrook Prairie](#) is your host on 12/10 and 1/4/2017. [Churchill Woods](#) is also looking for volunteers for 1/7/2017. The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County [web page](#).

### Kane County

Find out more about volunteer opportunities at the next Volunteer Open House on 12/14. Details are available on the Kane County Forest Preserve [web page](#).

### Lake County

There are opportunities almost every day of the week and on the weekend to assist in **Restoration Workdays**

at the Native Seed Nursery or in a variety of communities. Contact the Restoration workday coordinator [Tom Smith](#) to participate. Desk: 847-968-3329, Cell: 847-276-5379. Visit the Lake County Forest Preserve [web page](#) for more information.

### McHenry County

Habitat Restoration Days happen throughout the year. [Weekend of Restoration XI](#) takes place on 1/14-15/2017. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator of McHenry County Conservation District at 815-338-6223 x1229 or email [Volunteers@MCCDistrict.org](mailto:Volunteers@MCCDistrict.org) for more information.

[The Habitat Project](#) and [Habitat 2030](#) [ongoing]

## *Funding Opportunities*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking new proposals for cutting-edge projects that will provide new conservation opportunities through its competitive [Conservation Innovation Grants](#) (CIG) program. Proposals are due 1/9/2017.

The Morton Arboretum is seeking applicants for their [Tree Science Undergraduate Research Fellowship](#). This is a ten-week program to help prepare students for graduate studies and professional careers in science-related fields. Application review 1/1-2/24/2107.

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## Events At A Glance:

Various	Winter Walks
1/19/2017	Sand Dunes – Lake Michigan
1/22-23/2017	Super Seed Weekend
1/26/2017	Plant Names
1/28/2017	Winter Tree ID
1/29/2017	Winter Seed Sowing
2/11/2017	Beautifully Natural Garden
2/13-16/2017	Natl Native Seed Conference
3/31-4/2/2017	Indigenous Plant Symposium

Check on our NE-INPS or Facebook pages for late additions to the calendar of events. Got some great ideas for places to go or plants to see? Want to hear talks on specific topics? Send us an email message:

[northeast.inps@gmail.com](mailto:northeast.inps@gmail.com) or write me directly at [lindamprince@gmail.com](mailto:lindamprince@gmail.com)

*If you received this as a complimentary copy, you may wish to join the Illinois Native Plant Society. Send your name, address, and phone number with a check made out to INPS for*

- \$15 Student
- \$25 Individual
- \$20 Institutional (nonvoting)
- \$35 Family
- \$50 Supporting
- \$100 Patron
- \$125 Business
- \$500 Life\*

*\*Additional Life membership categories provide even greater support for our organization.*

To join, visit [www.ill-inps.org](http://www.ill-inps.org). Please indicate that your chapter is Northeast  
OR

Mail to: Illinois Native Plant Society,  
Membership, P.O. Box 271, Carbondale, IL  
62903-0271

Like us on FaceBook in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)!

INPS NE Chapter 2016 Officers:

President: Andy Olnas

Treasurer: Jason Zylka

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