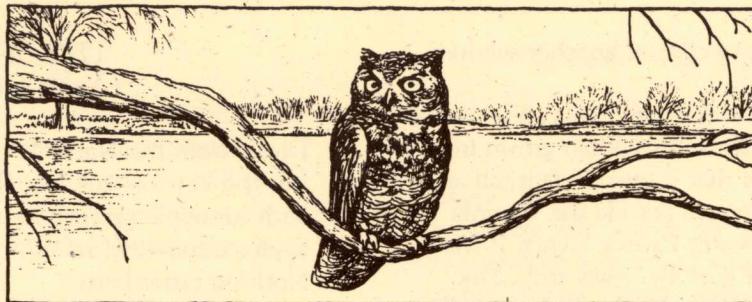


STILLMAN NEWSLETTER



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OSAGE ORANGE: History in its Roots

-- Mark Spreyer

They are called hedge apples, hedge balls, mock oranges, and, my favorite, green brain (see picture). The citrus-smelling fruit of the osage orange tree does bear a striking resemblance to hardened, green brains.

Hedge apple is also an appropriate name because this native of Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma was spread to Illinois and beyond by farmers who valued the tree as an important component of a living fence. So when you see one around here, it's a reminder of our bygone farming heritage.

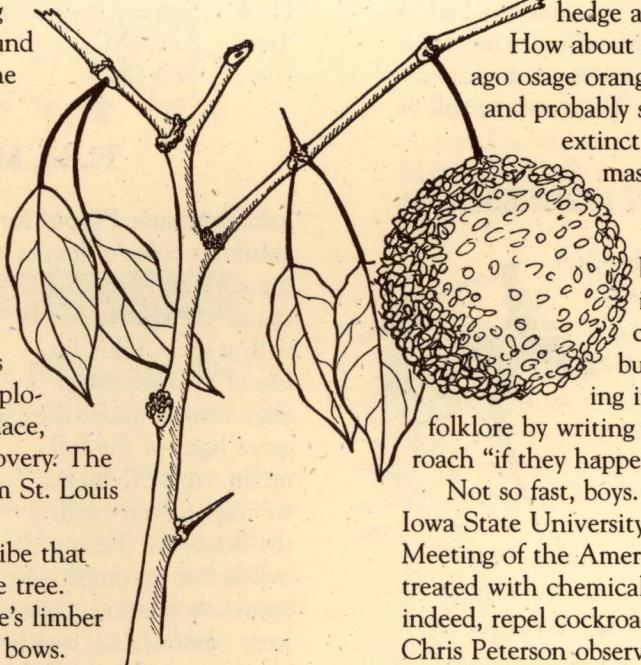
However, this small tree has played a much larger role in history. With that in mind, let's leave the irresistible fruit behind and take a look at the osage orange's roots, so to speak.

Lewis and Clark

Not quite two hundred years ago, one of the most amazing explorations in human history took place, Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery. The first tree they sent back east from St. Louis was the osage orange.

Osage refers to the Indian tribe that lived near the home range of the tree. Native Americans prized the tree's limber branches for the construction of bows. Because of this, the French termed it bois d'arc (wood of the bow). Southerners have transformed the French term to bodark. Can you guess which tree gave the Ozarks their name? That's right.

Speaking of French, take a look at the tree's scientific name, *Maclura pomifera*. The species name, *pomifera*, should remind you of the French word for apple, pomme. The genus name, *maclura*, honors William Maclure (1763-1840), the father of American geology and one of the



founding members of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.

As a scientist, I'm sure he would appreciate that the osage orange is a close relative of the mulberries. If you like, just think of hedge apples as hard, soft-ball sized mulberries.

Now what behemoth could swallow hedge apples like a raccoon eats mulberries? How about a mastodon? In fact, 100,000 years ago osage oranges grew as far north as Minnesota and probably served as food for super-sized (now extinct) North American mammals such as mastodons.

Ortho orange?

O.K., so we're back to the hedge balls. It has long been believed having this fruit in your basement or cupboards will discourage unwanted bugs, such as cockroaches, from moving in. One pair of authors dismissed this folklore by writing that osage oranges would only kill a roach "if they happen to fall directly on one."

Not so fast, boys. According to research conducted at Iowa State University and presented at a National Meeting of the American Chemical Society, surfaces treated with chemicals produced by osage orange did, indeed, repel cockroaches. Graduate research assistant Chris Peterson observed that "the roaches will venture onto the treated surface, stop, turn around and walk off onto the untreated surface." This research into natural roach repellents seems quite promising.

Back to the Future

So, what does the future hold for this historic tree? Perhaps, it will be grown as a source of insect repellent. I hope so because old osage oranges are getting harder to find. As land becomes more valuable, historic hedgerows, with their osage oranges, are getting bulldozed to make

STILLMAN NATURE CENTER

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room for a couple more rows of corn or another subdivision.

If you want to grow your own osage orange, one source is American Forests. These folks sell seedlings grown from the national champion, a tree that is over 50 feet tall and 90 feet wide. The champion stands outside the Virginia home of Revolutionary War orator Patrick Henry. It was grown from hedge apples sent back by Lewis and Clark.

Not all hedge apples can trace their roots back to the Corps of Discovery but all serve as reminders of our country's and continent's past. So the next time you drive by an osage orange, think of it as a living historical marker.

PROGRAMS

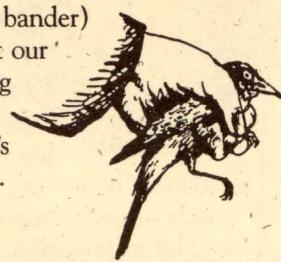
Program Basics: PLEASE CALL OR FAX US AT 428-OWLS(6957), OR EMAIL STILLMAN AT: stillnc@flash.net TO MAKE RESERVATIONS for programs. Remember to include your name, phone number, and the number of people that will be attending.

If less than 5 - 10 people (varying with the activity) have called two days prior to a program, the program could well be cancelled. So, don't forget to call the nature center in advance. If you discover that you are unable to attend, please call to cancel your reservations. This courtesy will be greatly appreciated.

BIRD BANDING OPEN HOUSES

Watch Mark Spreyer (a licensed bird bander) measure, weigh and record data about our resident and migratory birds. Catching birds is not always predictable, so come prepared to hike the trails. If it's raining, the activity will be cancelled.

Date: Sundays, Sept. 7 & Oct. 5
Time: 9:00AM to Noon
Fee: None



SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALK

Mark Spreyer will lead a morning bird walk. Binoculars and field guides are a must. If you don't have any, don't worry, Stillman does. If it's raining, the activity will be cancelled.

Date: Sunday, Sept. 14
Time: 8:00AM
Fee: None
Age: 10 years and up



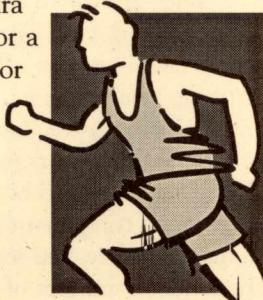
THE BIG SQUISH! (Apple Cider Pressing)

Direct from the Natural Areas Conference, where he was the keynote speaker, Rob Nurre will be on hand with his apple press. Join us as we smush Stillman's own apples into sweet, refreshing, homemade apple cider. Nothing tastes better!

Date: Sunday, Sept. 21
Time: 2:00 PM
Fee: None

STRIDES FOR STILLMAN

Our 5K Run will start at the Barbara Rose School. Or, you can join us for a nature walk at the nature center. For more information, read the enclosed brochure or call (847) 898-9908.



Date: Sunday, Sept. 28
Time: 8:00AM
Fee: \$20 - \$25

FULL MOON YOGA

Join Evamarie Pilipuf for a unique way to celebrate autumn's colorful leaves and crisp air, while gently working and stretching stress-weary muscles. We will venture out at the nature center with a short hike, followed by a relaxing yoga session under the quiet light of the full moon. If we're lucky, we might even catch the hoot of a distant owl as our accompanying "music"! All levels are welcome; no previous yoga experience is needed. Please wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing, and bring an old blanket (one that can lay on the ground). Hot tea and/or coffee will be provided.



Please call 428-OWLS to let us know if you plan to attend.

Date: Friday, Oct. 10
Time: 7:00 - 8:30PM
Member's Fee: \$7.00
Non-member's Fee: \$10.00
Age: 10 years and up

THE BIG SIT!

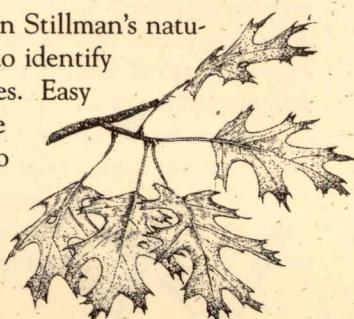
This "Lazy Birder's" field trip is brought to you by Prairie Woods Audubon, the local chapter of the National Audubon Society. No walking is required. We will sit by the lake and let the birds come to us. Good chance we'll go for food afterward! Please RSVP to Wendy Treptow at 847-221-2366.

Date: Saturday, Oct. 11
Time: 3:00PM until sunset
Age: 10 years and up
Fee: None

TREE I.D. OR THIS BUD'S FOR YOU!

As the leaves turn color, join Stillman's naturalist as he shows you how to identify some of our Midwestern trees. Easy to remember tips and simple hand-outs will inspire you to open your own "branch office." Come prepared to be out in the weather.

Date: Sunday, Oct. 12
Time: 2:00PM
Fee: None



THANK YOU

For years, we've hired Kurt Wilkinson (847-622-1818) to put on a new roof, repair the wall, paint the office, and so on.

Lucky for us, Kurt has also been on hand to volunteer his time and hard work. In particular, if a big tree falls across a trail on a Friday and I need it cut and moved by Sunday, Kurt brings his chainsaw and makes short work of it. He has also helped in other ways such as mounting the tribute tree plaques on the wall. Under the "better late than never" heading, thank you Kurt!

Of course, we can't forget to thank Daria Sapp, Jill Kohler, Nancy Hallquist, and Roger Laegeler who are working hard at keeping our natural areas healthy.

No shade tree? Blame not the sun but yourself.

- Chinese Proverb

SEASONAL SCIENCE - FALL

A Class for Educators
1 Hour Graduate Credit

Course Description

This course will provide participants with the opportunity to experience a variety of science activities which explore autumn. Topics include: prairie plant identification, tree identification, seed distribution, weather, and seasonal environmental changes. These activities will be appropriate to a variety of grade levels and will emphasize content background, concept development, and process skills.

Friday evening activities will be conducted in both the classroom and on the grounds at the District 54 Nature Center in Schaumburg. Much of Saturday will be spent in the field at the Stillman Nature Center and will take place rain or shine.

Days	Dates	Times
Friday	10/17	4:00 - 9:00 PM
Saturday	10/18	8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

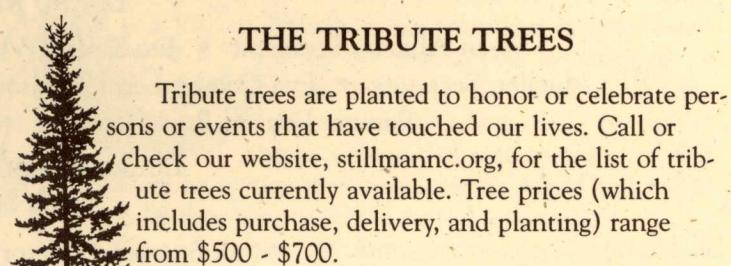
Instructors: Susan Allman, 4th grade teacher, Fox School; Mark Spreyer, Director, Stillman Nature Center

Fees: \$35.00 materials fee which includes meals (dinner, breakfast, lunch). \$75.00, 1 hr. graduate credit from Aurora University.

Materials: To be provided. Outdoor dress required.

Min/Max: 10 Minimum/20 Maximum

THE TRIBUTE TREES



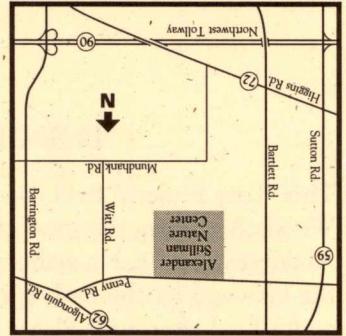
Tribute trees are planted to honor or celebrate persons or events that have touched our lives. Call or check our website, stillmannnc.org, for the list of tribute trees currently available. Tree prices (which includes purchase, delivery, and planting) range from \$500 - \$700.

In addition to the tree, most of which will be 2" in diameter at breast height, the honoree's name will appear on a small plaque which will be located on the white brick wall that parallels the entrance drive.

WINTER HOURS BEGIN IN NOVEMBER

In September and October, Stillman will be open Sundays from 9 AM to 4 PM. Starting in November, Stillman will be open Sundays from 11 AM to 4 PM.

Please note that the Stillman Nature Center is also available, by reservation, during the week to school classes. For more information just call or check our website: stillmannnc.org.



www.stillmann.org
 Email: stillnc@flash.net
 (847) 428-0WLS
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 33 West Penny Road

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If you aren't already a member, please consider joining us.

- Yes, I'd like to become a member of the Stillman Nature Center. I enclose my tax deductible contribution of \$_____.
- I'd like to help as a volunteer with programs or land management at the Stillman Nature Center, please call me.
- Please send a gift membership from _____ to the name and address listed below.

Name _____

Address _____

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Please mail with your check to:

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