

SUNDAY, MAY 22ND

COME TO OPACUM'S PLANT SALE!

Spring is on its way, the grass is turning greener and our thoughts turn to the garden. Opacum is preparing for our Perennial Plant Sale to be held on Sunday, May 22nd at the Southbridge Common from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. This article does not contain ALL of the wonderful plant offerings we will have, but highlights some things you can expect to see.

Each year we have tried to provide a variety of plants for your garden. Opacum likes to encourage gardeners to plant native. Native plants provide food, shelter and nest habitat for our wildlife. As birds migrate north, insects emerge, and mammals become more active, they look for their favorite native plants, just as we await the appearance of snow drops and crocus. Planting native trees and shrubs is a great way to provide habitat for many species. This year we will be offering white cedar, red cedar and tamarack trees for planting. Both red and white cedars provide winter cover for many of our birds. They are nice, conical trees that can be planted around the edges of your property or in a "meadow" garden. Tamarack is a deciduous conifer. Its short needles turn a beautiful golden color as fall approaches and they lose their needles for the winter, it is a striking plant during all seasons.



Shrubs provide important nesting habitat and cover for both insects and birds. Native shrubs are often preferred by our native wildlife. We will have Mock Orange at our plant sale this year. Native a bit south of New England its fragrant blossoms make it worth our efforts to plant. Mock Orange has beautiful white

flowers, but you will want to plant it near the patio, porch or window to get the fragrance that it provides. Expect a few other native shrubs as well.

Perennials such as Bloodroot bloom early for bees and pollinating syrphid flies early in spring. Wild Ginger is a great ground cover that spreads slowly in the shaded garden and provides nectar for ants. Wild Columbine provides nectar for hummingbirds as they return north. Wild Blue Phlox is often visited by hummingbird moths on the carpet of lovely pale blue flowers in our garden. Black Eyed Susan and Purple Coneflower are summer bloomers that provide nectar for butterflies in bloom and seed for birds in fall. Dotted Horsemint attracts the most INCREDIBLE pollinating wasps each fall and are great for those sunny, dry areas of your yard. Butterflies overwinter under bark, or lay their eggs in fields of goldenrods and asters. Goldenrod and Aster is not always a popular garden plant, but finding locations for these fall beauties near shrubs provide color in an unusual place and time as well as nectar and seed.



At Opacum, we are also gardeners. We love our showy flowers, herbs and vegetables. We have selections for you too! Although spring witch hazel and lilac are not native, they are not invasive and they still provide needed shelter for wildlife while providing beautiful scented blossoms for us. Each year we have offered Epimediums – unusual spring wildflowers that come in a great array of color and leaf arrangements. Garden Columbines, unusual hostas, numerous choices of perennials will be offered. Glenn and Jennifer's famous heirloom tomatoes will be represented and this year we will be offering herbs and herb baskets as well: Basil, dill, lavender, parsley, and rosemary will be available.

Remember to arrive early for the best selection!

Leslie

FROM JENNIFER'S DESK...

ANOTHER REASON TO COME TO OPACUM'S PLANT SALE

Earlier this year, I received a notecard with a photo of a rather large pair of spectacles on the front. These enormous eyeglasses were placed on the Southbridge Town Common across the street from the old AO, the American Optical building. The card was from Nancy and Janina Swiacki, who have been longtime supporters of Opacum, are fellow Framingham State grads, and dear friends.

Opening the card I read their note which began, "YES! What you see on the front of this notecard is just a depiction. If you have not been in Southbridge lately, you are in for a surprise. When Opacum sets up at the Common for the annual plant sale, you will be sharing the Common with a 20' metal piece of public art."

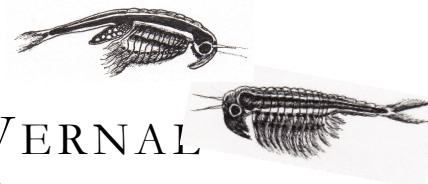
The sculpture was created by Woodstock sculptor and metalsmith Michael Saari. Southbridge has long been known as the "Eye of the Commonwealth" and this imaginative artwork brings to present the significance of the AO to South-

bridge and to all of the many families who worked there (many in my family were employed here, including my Gram who used to paint the veins on the glass eyeballs).

Opacum has been asked to help with the landscape, and our own expert Leslie Duthie will help select native species appropriate for the site. Leslie is also the driving force behind the Opacum plant sale; coupled with her sister Carol, mother Evelyn and other Opacums, we will help you pick out the right plants for your garden.



I hope you will come to the plant sale this May 22 to see this sculpture, even if you aren't shopping for plants. Congrats to Janina, Nancy, and all who helped make a spectacle on the common!



VERNAL POOLS

On Saturday, April 16 Opacum hosted a program led by Matt Burne on Vernal Pools. Matt is the author of "A Field Guide to Vernal Pools" (a phenomenal, must-have guide available from vernalpool.org) and also something of a legend in the salamander world. While it was a chilly, damp day, about twenty folks braved the elements to learn more about vernal pools and why they are important.

Opacum Land Trust is named after a critter that ONLY uses vernal pools for breeding. The marbled salamander, *Ambystoma opacum*, is listed as threatened in Massachusetts. While no Opacum salamanders were found on our adventure, other creatures, such as the yellow-spotted salamander, fairy shrimp, and wood frog made their presence known. They all use vernal pools exclusively because they dry up and are fish-free.

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ARTIST ANNA OZOLINS' PORTRAIT OF EAST BRIMFIELD

Well-known Brimfield artist **Anna Ozolins** has used her talent to preserve the memory of East Brimfield and at the same time help Opacum Land Trust.

Anna was deeply moved by the dvd of "The Lost Village of East Brimfield."

"When I first viewed the history of East Brimfield, there was a sadness about the loss of this quaint village. Children playing, women doing their many tasks and men working long hours in the factory. The sight of stunning rolling hills that sat in the background. How could all of this been taken away from these residents? Were they given a better future?"

Determined to preserve the memory of the people who had to leave their homes to form the present East Brimfield Reservoir, she worked with historian

Larry Lowenthal, who showed her a dramatic 1907 photo of the village. Based on this photo, Anna created a beautiful watercolor rendering, which brings the lost village to colorful life.

A limited number (100) of giclée prints of Anna's work are on sale now for \$15.00. The print is accompanied by a brief history of East Brimfield by local historian and writer Larry Lowenthal.

Proceeds will support the work of Opacum Land Trust. See Anna's painting at Opacum's web page, www.opacumlt.org.

To order, call 508-347-9144 or e-mail info@opacumlt.org.

The word "Giclée" (pronounced "zhee-clay"), is associated with a fine art reproduction process based on digital technology. "Giclée" is a French word meaning "to squirt or spurt." The Giclée printer squirts over 4 million microscopic droplets of ink per second onto canvas or paper. A Giclée print has come to mean a high quality ink-jet print and is often used by artist, galleries, and print shops.

JENNIFER'S DESK

(Continued from page 2)

Vernal Pools are not protected under the MA Wetlands Protection Act. Unless your town has a bylaw to the contrary, vernal pools that are not certified do NOT fall under the jurisdiction of the Act. Vernal Pools are not a *type* of wetland; they are considered to be a habitat feature (like a beaver lodge). Some vernal pools occur within wetlands; at that point the Act kicks in and the function that wetland serves is identified. That function as related to the vernal pool *feature* would be wildlife habitat. A vernal pool like the one we visited with Matt is isolated high atop a ridge. What would happen if the land was not already protected? Short answer: If the pool is not certified, it could be destroyed. Even if a pool is certified these isolated pools are only jurisdictional to their high water mark. The Act does nothing to protect the surrounding uplands where these vernal pool creatures, like the spotted, marbled and wood frogs spend the majority of their lives.

Jennifer



LUNCH WITH A VIEW

We need your help with our property management. Our trails are in need of maintenance. Can you help? As little as one hour but no more than four on a work party day. Fringe benefits include a lunch room ...with a view.

Contact hwifejr@aim.com for your reservation.

Howie





OPACUM

LAND TRUST

PO Box 233
Sturbridge MA 01566
www.opacumlt.org
info@opacumlt.org
508-347-9144

Opacum Land Trust is a non-profit conservation organization. Founded in 2000, our mission is to conserve, protect and preserve, in their natural condition, the lands and waters of South Central Massachusetts for the benefit of present and future generations. All donations are fully tax deductible, annual memberships start at \$25.

For more information, please visit our website: www.opacumlt.org



Mark Your Calendars!

Saturday, May 21st

Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary
Garden Open House
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
30 Peck Road, Wales

May is the peak time for spring wild-flower blooms and we hope that the Yellow Lady Slippers will be in full bloom! Leslie Duthie, plant propagator and horticulturist at Norcross, will be in the garden for guided tours and discussion of the wildflowers and more.

Sunday, May 22nd

Opacum's Perennial Plant Sale
8:00 am - Noon
on the Southbridge Town
Common, rain or shine!

Laws of Gardening!

- ◆ Nothing ever looks like it does on the seed packet.
- ◆ Your lawn is always slightly bigger than your desire to mow it.
- ◆ Whichever garden tool you want is always at the back of the shed.
- ◆ The only way to ensure rain is to give the garden a good soaking.
- ◆ Weeds grow at precisely the rate you pull them out.
- ◆ Autumn follows summer, winter follows autumn, drought follows planting.
- ◆ Evergreens go a funny shade of brown in the winter.
- ◆ The only way to guarantee some color all year round is to buy a garden gnome.
- ◆ However bare the lawn, grass will appear in the cracks between the patio paving stones.
- ◆ "Annuals" mean disappointment only once a year.

A Special Thank You to folks for our successful Annual Meeting

Fins & Tales
(Monika is a great bartender!)

Gary Blanchard,
James & Mary Gage,
Larry Lowenthal,
Anna Ozolins,
Richard Hunt,
and ALL the folks
who attended the
annual meeting.

Thank you!!!