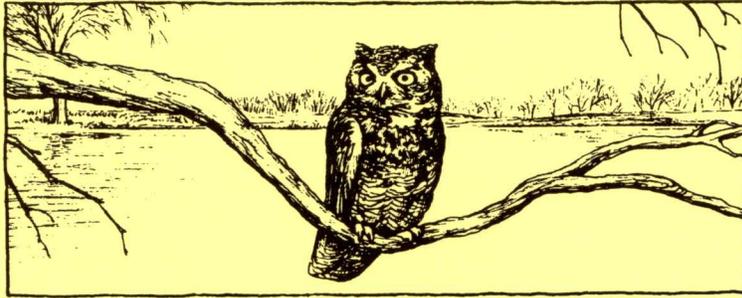


# STILLMAN NEWSLETTER



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## HANGING OUT OUR SHINGLE... OAK

-- Mark Spreyer

Recently, the National Arbor Day Foundation's web site polled its users as to what our national tree should be. Folks could choose between generic trees such as pine, oak or redwood. On Arbor Day, they announced the winner: the oak. That same day, thanks to a generous gift of trees from an anonymous donor, the Stillman Nature Center added a new oak species, the shingle oak, to our woods.

Shingle oaks are not commonly found in Barrington's natural areas. Red, white, and bur oak are the ones you are most likely to see.

These four species are an interesting cross-section of the 70, more or less, species of oaks that grow in North America.

If 70 sounds like a lot, keep in mind that there are about 450 species of oaks worldwide. While some tree species (i.e. ginkgo) produce separate males and females, oaks have male and female flowers on the same tree. Most oaks are evergreen, particularly the Asiatic species. Many of North America's oaks are evergreen wanna-bes. That is, they often hang on to their dry and withered leaves through the winter months.

Our oaks can be loosely divided into two groups:

white oaks and red oaks. White oak leaves have rounded lobes or teeth and can produce acorns in one year. Both white and bur oak belong to the white oak group.

Red oak leaves have pointed or bristle-tipped lobes or teeth and their acorns take two years to mature. Besides *the* red oak, mentioned above, red oaks include black, scarlet and pin oak. So, the phrase "red oaks" could refer to a stand of one

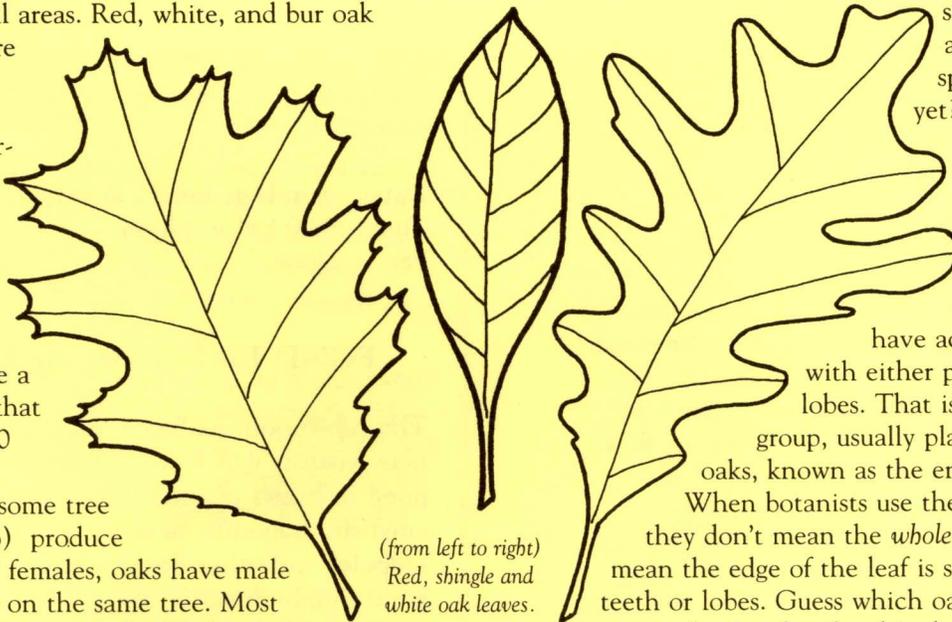
species of oak or to a group of oak species. Confused yet?

If not, just give me another paragraph. Right now, you're probably thinking oaks

have acorns and leaves with either pointed or rounded lobes. That is until we get to a group, usually placed with the red oaks, known as the entire-leaved oaks.

When botanists use the term "entire," they don't mean the *whole* leaf is there. They mean the edge of the leaf is smooth, it has no teeth or lobes. Guess which oak falls into that group-- that's right, the shingle oak.

Shingle oak (*Quercus imbricaria*) is a common tree of the central and eastern U.S. from New Jersey to Tennessee and west as far as Kansas and Nebraska. In Illinois, although it does grow here in Cook and



(from left to right)  
Red, shingle and  
white oak leaves.

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Lake Counties, it is more common in the central and southern reaches of the state.

Its lance-shaped leaves can grow up to six inches long and two inches across. They are dark green, glossy and smooth on the upper surface, paler with a coating of fine hairs underneath. The leaf is tipped with a short slender bristle. Shingle oak can be used to make an effective screen or windbreak as its brown leaves persist on the tree through the winter.

You might be thinking, plant an oak screen around the house? Aren't oaks hard to transplant? Some of them, like white or scarlet oak, are hard to move except when quite young. Where a larger oak is desired, shingle oak is one of the easier ones to successfully transplant. It adapts to various site conditions including urban and suburban landscapes. This is one of the reasons we were so happy to have these trees offered to Stillman. We've planted many small oaks but animals, competition from other plants, and weather conditions makes it tough on these little guys. All big oaks are welcome at the Stillman Nature Center!

For an oak, shingle oak is a moderately fast-growing tree that will eventually reach a height of 50 feet. Like other oaks in the area, shingle oak is susceptible to oak wilt which is caused by a fungus. The oak wilt fungus is a close relative of the fungus that causes Dutch elm disease. Both fungi are spread by beetles. If you live near a known oak wilt area, be careful not to prune your oaks from mid-April to early July.

Finally, we come to this tree's name. Early pioneers discovered that the wood from this oak could be split into relatively thin pieces that were resistant to decay. In Illinois, for instance, the wood was used for shingles by the French colonists who settled at Kaskaskia. Explorer-botanist Andre Michaux discovered shingle oak on one of his trips west to collect plants. He gave this species the scientific name *imbricaria* from the Latin word *imbrex*, which refers to a hollow tile used for roofing.

Besides here at Stillman (near the new parking lot), shingle oaks can be seen at a variety of locations such as the Morton Arboretum, Chicago Botanic Garden, and the Columbia Woods Forest Preserve near Willow Springs.

**P.S.** North Barrington is sponsoring a big oak contest. Residents should contact **Sue Allman**, the village forester and Stillman President, for contest details.

## PROGRAMS

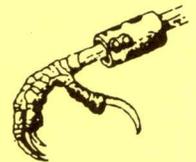
**Program Basics:** PLEASE CALL OR FAX US AT 428-OWLS(6957), OR EMAIL STILLMAN AT: stillnc@flash.net TO MAKE RESERVATIONS for programs (except for bird banding open houses). Remember to include your name, phone number, and the number of people that will be attending.

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.

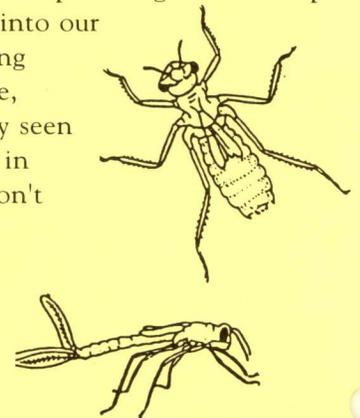
Date: Sundays, June 3 & July 1  
Time: 9:00AM to Noon  
Fee: None



### POND LIFE: From the Bottom Up

This afternoon, with the help of long-handled dip nets, visitors will scoop into our pond in hopes of catching crayfish, dragonfly larvae, tadpoles and other rarely seen pond inhabitants. Dress in clothes and shoes you don't mind getting muddy.

Date: Sunday, June 17  
Time: 2:00PM  
Fee: None



## SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS

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: Sundays: June 17 & July 15  
Time: 8:00AM  
Fee: None  
Age: 10 years and up

## FRIDAY (the 13th!) MORNING BIRD WALKS

Just like above but on a weekday. Mark Spreyer, former Director of Chicago's Peregrine falcon release project, will lead the walks. Binoculars and field guides are a must. If you don't have any, don't worry, Stillman does. On the 13th, we'll try not to walk under any ladder-backed woodpeckers or let a black catbird cross our path!

Date: Fridays: June 15 & July 13  
Time: 8:00AM  
Fee: None  
Age: 10 years and up

## SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS EVENT

Long-time readers of this newsletter have seen **Cyndi Duda of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** frequently mentioned under the Program section. Besides leading night hikes for the public, Cyndi has taught many a teacher workshop and helped with high school classes that come to Stillman for a field trip.

So, in honor of Cyndi, we are hosting our fourth annual outdoor meeting. We'll provide the main course and beverages. We'd like you to bring along a side dish. ALL of Stillman's members, volunteers and their families are invited. Feel free to come any time between 4:00 and 7:00PM.

**A Surprise Second Honoree.** Yes, someone else will be embarrassed, I mean, honored besides Cyndi. Who, you ask? You'll have to attend to find out!

If it's raining, we'll reschedule this picnic to an autumn date. *Please call 428-OWLS to let us know if you plan to attend and what kind of dish you'll be bringing.*

Date: Sunday, June 24  
Time: 4:00 - 7:00PM

## THANK YOU

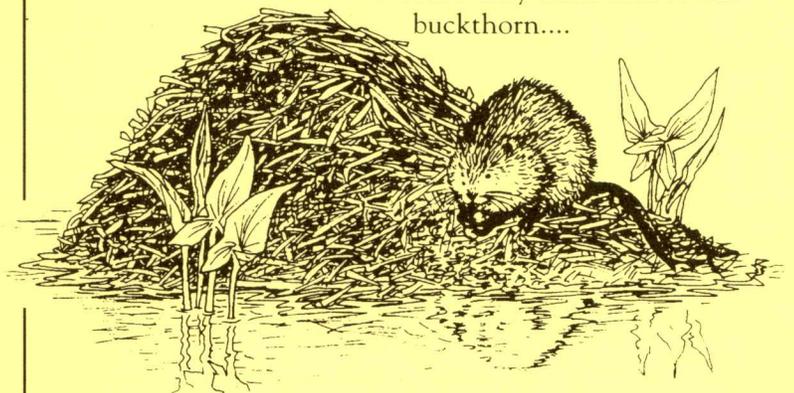
As has become a spring tradition, we were delighted to have the help of the Arboriculture class from **Harper College**. Under the supervision of **Steve Haigh**, the students targeted elms that had succumbed to Dutch elm disease. Of course, dead trees do provide homes and food for woodpeckers and the like, but these dead trees were soon to fall on the driveway or accessibility trail.

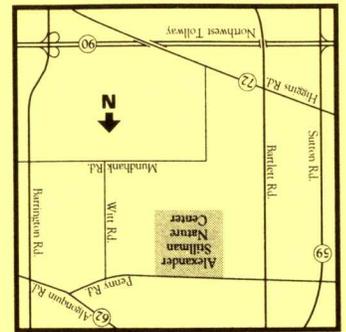
So, with the skilled help of the Harper students, these potential hazards were quickly removed. Without the college's assistance, this job would have cost Stillman some serious money. We are indebted to the Harper class and look forward to working with them next year.

Another spring tradition is the Saturday work crews composed of hard-working advanced biology students from **Hersey High School**. Under the direction of Stillman Board member and biology teacher, **Jim Kaltsas**, these young women spread chips, pulled garlic mustard, and planted pine seedlings. We couldn't help but notice that more work gets done when there aren't any boys around! Thanks for helping make Stillman a better nature center.

I can't end this section without a tip of the hard hat to our 'regulars:' **Daria Sapp, Jill Kohler, Nancy Hallquist, and Roger Laegeler**. Roger, better known as the "buckthorn beaver," had considerable help from fellow Board member **Roy Schodtler**. Roy worked so hard at cutting buckthorn that he is now known as the "buckthorn muskrat."

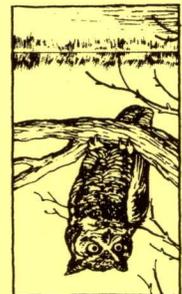
Speaking of beavers and cutting, a REAL beaver has taken up residence at the nature center. Now, if we could only train him to cut buckthorn....





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 South Barrington, IL 60010  
 33 West Penny Road

**STILLMAN**  
 nature center



Open Sundays 9-4

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

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