

DO  
THE

# Prairie Prowl

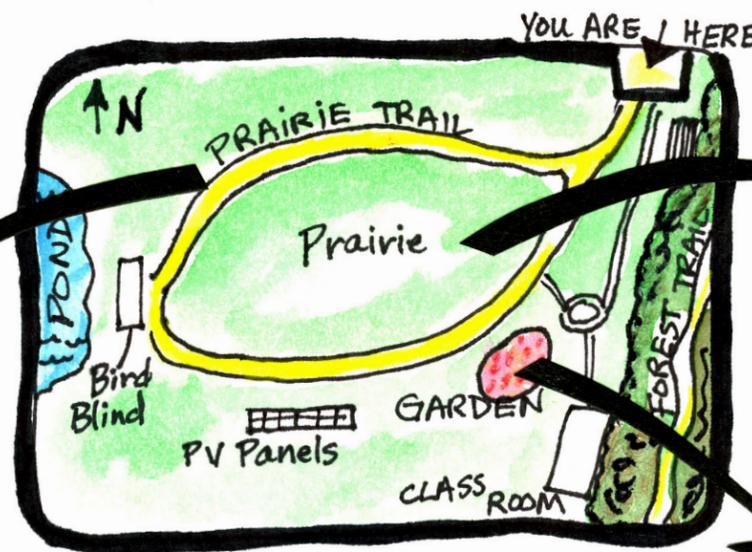
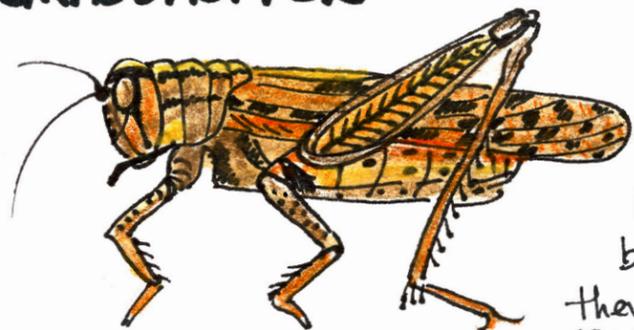


OPEN YOUR SENSES TO PRAIRIE RIDGE! STROLL THE FOREST OR PRAIRIE TRAILS, PERCH IN THE POND'S BIRD BLIND, OR MEANDER AMONG THE ARBORETUM'S NATIVE TREES. WHAT CREATURES WILL YOU SEE OR HEAR? TRACKS TO ID.? WHO WILL SOAR OVERHEAD? ARE THERE FLOWERS TO SMELL? IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT TIME IT IS IN NATURE...

In  
Fall...

As you walk the Prairie Trail your presence will seem to activate many critters bounding ahead of you, as if to herald your arrival. Are they birds? Insects? The name says it all. Meet the **AMERICAN BIRD GRASSHOPPER** (*Schistocerca americana*), common to eastern U.S.

- Brown/yellowish brown
- Males 1½-2", females 2-2¾"
- Shows white "wings" when it flies



You can't miss the feathery plumes of **SWITCHGRASS** (*Panicum virgatum*) that permeate the prairie. This versatile native grass provides:

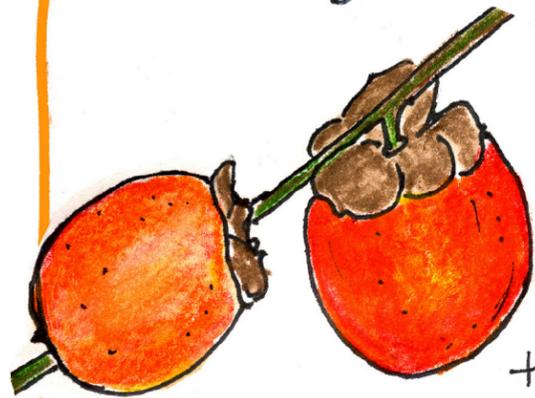
- plentiful seeds and tall cover
- forage and habitat for native birds
- erosion control - with deep roots
- has potential as a biofuel

If you head for the demonstration garden - slide open the gate, enter, and look for the bronze fennel plants on the right. Fennel (and carrot, parsley, dill) is the host plant for the **BLACK SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY LARVAE** (*Papilio polyxenes*). Early instars (stages) of this caterpillar look like bird poop, but later instars will dazzle you with green or white, yellow and black patterns. Are the caterpillars devouring the fennel? Good! Soon they will pupate, and Black Swallowtails will emerge from the chrysalids. (Remember to close the gate, por favor!)



 prawl ~ "to roam as if in search of whatever may be found" - Webster's Dictionary

Want to eat a tasty treat? So do the raccoons, possum, deer, and other natives that rely on this food source. The word "persimmon" is Algonquin for "dry fruit." Look for our **COMMON PERSIMMON** (*Diospyros virginiana*) trees in the Lowland Forest. The dark bark is deeply grooved and blocky. Female trees are the ones bearing



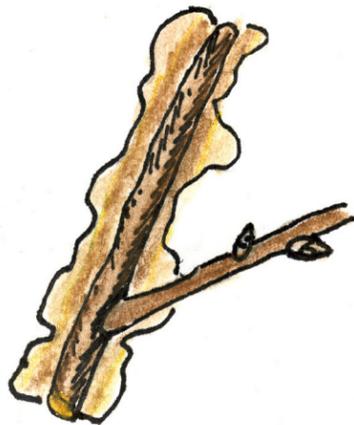
orange orbs of fruit. The soft, wrinkly ones are delicious! You might find the oval, shiny brown persimmon seeds



in animal scat along the Forest Trail. Can

you find another Lady Persimmon tree? Hint—there's one near the outdoor classroom, woods-side.

Also in the Lowland Forest try to find the **WINGED ELM TREE** (*Ulmus alata*). It's the one with the freaky Halloween bark, as if there was a fungus among the twigs, branches, and trunk. With yellow leaves in fall, the Winged Elm can grow 40'-50'. Don't miss this dramatic tree with its quirky, corky, bumpy bark.



For a visual treat be sure to admire the **BEAUTY BERRY** (*Callicarpa americana*) shrubs by the outdoor classroom.

With a berry color that can only be described as "screaming magenta," these native shrubs provide food for wildlife all winter. Its small



pinkish flowers in spring yield to showy clusters of purple berries in fall. American Beautyberry is

- deciduous,
- grows 4'-8' tall and wide,
- tolerates drought, and is
- available at local nurseries for your home wildlife garden

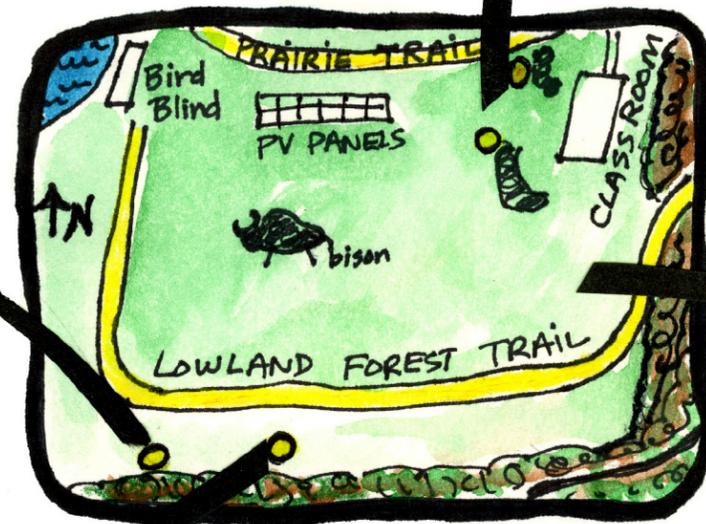
Look skyward and maybe you'll see the graceful soaring of a

### **RED-TAILED HAWK**

(*Buteo jamaicensis*) sometimes seen over the prairie. At the tree

line you might spot one perched at the forest edge searching for any movement in the grass below that would indicate mealtime. A common hawk, the adult red-tailed has certain field marks:

- Dark belly band
- Heavier body than other hawks
- Reddish tail above, light pink beneath
- Length 18", wingspan 48"



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