

Feel free to call the Preserve with any questions or interesting sightings that you may have at 425-3229. We are pleased to hear that a pair of eastern bluebirds is nesting in the town of Gardenton, thanks to a recently erected birdhouse. Bluebird numbers have decreased over the years for reasons that are not clear, so the presence of a local nesting pair is exciting news indeed!

Upcoming Events

- July 15 & 16 – Gardenton Ukrainian Festival
For more information call 425-3072.
- August 12 – Prairie Day. Find out what's happening on Canada's largest remnant of tall grass prairie.
For more information call 425-3229.

For more information about the cultural history of the Preserve area, visitors may wish to stop by the Gardenton Ukrainian Museum and St. Michael's Church.

Tall Grass Prairie Guided Walks

2:00 pm

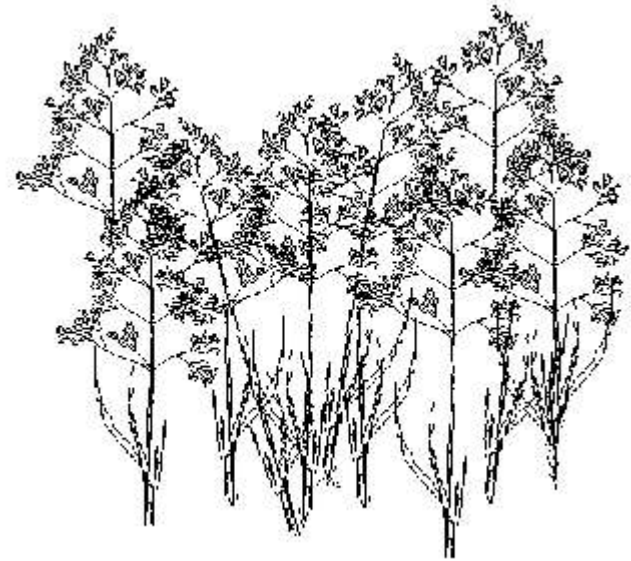
Every Sunday in July & August
Meet at the Prairie Shore Trail,
2 miles east of Tolstoi on PR 209

For more information call: 204-425-3229

The Preserve was established to protect and conserve the native species found there.

Please do not pick, dig or collect any of the plants or animals.

Manitoba Tall Grass Prairie Preserve



Prairie Ponders Summer 2000

Critical
Wildlife Habitat Program

The seasonal change from spring to summer is a time of mixed emotions on the Manitoba Tall Grass Prairie Preserve. There is sadness as we say good-bye to the cheerful sound of the bobolinks, which have quietly taken to the back woods; relief as the proliferation of wood ticks draws to an end; increasing tension that is directly attributed to skyrocketing mosquito populations; and utter delight as the fragrant red prairie lilies come into bloom.

Excitement is also in the air with the flowering of the endangered **western prairie fringed orchid**. This remarkable orchid has drawn people to the Preserve from all over North America and as far away as Australia. The best time to enjoy this protected flower is in the evening when its scent intensifies to attract nighttime pollinators.

The attractions of this 5000-acre playground are never-ending. The **purple prairie clover**'s beautiful pink and yellow cone-shaped flowers are dazzling enough, but smell the fine leaves of this plant and you will find that you just can't get enough. Also check out the rare **Cooper's vetch** located just off of the Prairie Shore Trail near stop number 10. This recently discovered flower, which began flowering in early July, produces large red and yellow seed pods that are quite showy and unique among the local legumes.

The Manitoba Tall Grass Prairie Preserve is home to four species of snakes including the **red-sided and plains garter snakes, northern redbelly snake and smooth green snake** – none of which are poisonous. **Garter snakes** are by far the most abundant and commonly seen. Though their diet consists mainly of frogs, garter snakes also eat small mammals such as

mice and voles, earthworms, fish, slugs and leeches. The examination of a snake on the Preserve earlier this year revealed that it had just raided a mouse nest and consumed five newborn mice. So put your hoe away and bring out the welcome mat! Snakes aren't so bad after all!

Mosquito and deerfly season is now upon us and Mother Nature has unleashed a barrage of artillery against the enemy - called **dragonflies**. These incredible insects are equipped with state-of-the-art enemy detection devices – eyes with up to 25,000 lenses that give them nearly 360-degree vision. These allow them to spot an enemy on the fly and plan an intercept course from a distance of 20 meters. With maximum speeds in excess of 50kph and the astounding ability to make full-speed 90-degree turns without banking, dragonflies are no strangers to surprise attacks.

Because dragonflies spend the larval stage of their life in water, they have been used as indicator species to assess habitat and water quality in many areas around the world. This year, the Manitoba Conservation Data Centre is conducting a province-wide dragonfly survey. Up to now, most information regarding the estimated 90 species of dragonflies in Manitoba has been gathered in urban areas. If you are interested in helping out with this survey by collecting dragonflies in your area, please call the Preserve Headquarters at 425-3229 for further details.