



**UPCOMING FLORAL SHOWS**

- Summer Show Cancelled
- Sept 26 —Nov 8 [Check website to confirm dates] The Haunting of Sleepy Hollow Fall Show
- Nov 21 — Jan 3, 2021 Poinsettia Promenade Holiday Show

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

- 2020's Virtual Volunteer Appreciation Event 2
- Welcome Pete Stobie 3
- Houseplants on Vacation! 10
- Green Sheet: Invasive Plant Species, Part 2 7

# Inside the Domes

MITCHELL PARK HORTICULTURAL CONSERVATORY

## Friends Helping Friends



If you are reading this, you are likely a member of the Friends of the Domes. Please know that we sincerely consider each of our members to be a dear and valued friend. During this time of uncertainty, we are thinking about you. We are thinking about ways we can help bring you some joy, some normal, maybe even help you to bring some green and some Domes to your home until we can all be together again “under glass.”

**This issue is dedicated to ways that we can be there for each other.**

## The Domes@Home

As soon as the FOD team got the news in March that the Domes would be closed to everyone except for a few essential horticulturists, we put our heads together (virtually, of course) and brainstormed ways that we could continue to bring the Domes to the public. We knew that we wanted to...

- Maintain contact with our members through times of separation
- Provide unique, easy-to-follow activities for children, families, and adults
- Provide everyone opportunities to acquire nature-based knowledge, experiences, hobbies, and values

To deliver all of this, we created the Domes@Home web page. This easy to find, easy to use page is packed with useful and fun information. You will find amazing virtual tour videos that will make you feel like you are right back at the Domes; educational videos for kids and adults; coloring pages and other crafts and activities; and even some horticulture humor. We plan to keep this page as a permanent addition to our website, so please **send us your ideas for what we can add to the page!** We will add new content to the site weekly, so visit the Domes@Home often!



## Letter from the Director of the Mitchell Park Domes

Dear Friends of the Domes,

Happy Spring in a time of crisis! It is my hope that this letter finds you well and that you are all dealing with this deeply challenging moment as best you can. I never imagined writing a letter in the middle of a global pandemic, so it's hard to keep my thoughts aligned with so much turmoil and uncertainty. Here's a brief update on life at the Domes during the COVID-19 closure.

Like many businesses and organizations across Wisconsin, the Mitchell Park Domes closed on Saturday, March 14, 2020, and they will remain closed until further notice. When the closure began, we were 16 days away from ending our very popular train show and one day away from celebrating Spring Equinox. All the props and plants were ready for a beautiful Spring Show. I was looking forward to experiencing one of the best and most acclaimed FOD events, Art in the Green.

Unfortunately, a lot has been cancelled and lost due to the coronavirus pandemic. Fortunately, most of the floral crop grown in our greenhouses was relocated to different areas of the parks department. If you visit the lake-front marina, some of the Parks' golf courses, or the Boerner Botanical Gardens, think of the Domes as you enjoy the flowers. We love to know that people can enjoy the flowers even though they are not at the Domes. And don't miss Marian's article (page 7) in this newsletter for more on the Domes while we're closed!

The Domes staff and the FOD staff have responded to this unprecedented situation with great care, creativity, and compassion for one another. We are indeed "In This Together," so I am forever grateful once again for your friendship and support. The FOD staff have worked hard to keep FOD mem-

bers and the public engaged and connected. This is a testament to their commitment and

dedication to the conservatory's mission to connect people with the wonderful world of plants and nature.

Great job everyone! I look forward to celebrating and sharing your amazing work as always.

We are currently doing our research and preparing a plan to reopen the Domes safely. We are doing so under the guidance and support of Milwaukee County and Parks leadership, state and local government orders and recom-



*Letter from the Director, Doris Maki, Con't. on page 3*

## 2020 Virtual Volunteer Appreciation Celebration Held in April

The FOD staff celebrated Volunteer Appreciation Week in April in a unique way this year. During that week, the FOD would normally be inviting volunteers to a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Knowing they would not be able to gather to celebrate everything the volunteers have helped us accomplish, we planned a virtual thank you event. In addition, a small token of the FOD's appreciation was mailed to the 95 individuals who cumulatively volunteered for 1,210 hours from June 2019 to March 2020. You can find a link to our virtual thank you video on our webpage, [milwaukeehomes.org](http://milwaukeehomes.org), click **Get Involved** from the main menu, then select **Volunteer**. You will see a link to the 2020 Volunteer Appreciation video.

The fingerprints of FOD volunteers are all over the Domes. This past year, our volunteers helped us staff three special FOD events that were amazing! Both Dia de los Muertos and New Year's Eve Celebration sold out. Our Hearts Under Glass Valentine's Day event had the highest attendance ever at 958 guests. Amazing! Funds raised from these events were used to purchase a SmartBoard for the Education Center. Coming soon are additional Ed Center renovations, a water bottle refilling station as well as a new Information Booth for the Domes lobby. This is on top of new plants and educational opportunities for the horticulturalists. Volunteers even assist the Domes staff at their special events like Pokemon Go and Steampunk Garden & Gears.

Our volunteers are highly active in our Education Department as well. We assisted the Domes staff in kickstarting four new programs – Roving Naturalist, Storytime Reading, Walk the Mitchell Mile, and staffing the Education Center over the weekends. Volunteers also worked with almost 800 first-graders during 21 Sharp Literacy workshops just in October through mid-March!

On top of all of that, we had volunteers assisting with office mailings, recruiting new members at our Weekend Membership Table, visiting with Vets from the VA Hospital, working admissions at the Sanger House garden tour last summer, doing graphic design, and working in our Gift Shop. I truly mean it when I say the FOD couldn't do this without you!

On behalf of the Friends of the Domes staff, our Board of Directors, and Milwaukee County Parks, I would like to thank our volunteers for their unwavering support and generosity. We appreciate and respect each and every one of them. We miss both our volunteers and our guests, and cannot wait to see you back at The Domes again!



## Welcome Pete Stobie

### *New Lead Interpretive Educator for the Friends of the Domes*

Hello Milwaukee and beyond,

I am looking forward to meeting you! My family and I are new to Milwaukee. We arrived in May 2019, after living in the Philadelphia area for the last few years. I graduated with a degree in Outdoor Recreation from Northern Michigan University. I spent nineteen years with the Kalamazoo Nature Center in several roles as an Interpretive Naturalist. Over my tenure at KNC, I designed, developed, and embellished over 100 different programs. I aim to make learning fun using props, costumes, songs, characters, puppets, and many other creative techniques.

I look forward to using my experience, knowledge, creativity, and love of nature to add to the Friends of the Domes Education Program. Some of my job highlights over the years include:

- Creating fun, interactive summer library programs
- Teaching many elementary school students about nature's many habitats and the animals that live in them
- Presenting at professional workshops around the US and Canada.
- Receiving the 1999 Outstanding New Interpreter by the National Association for Interpretation and the 2015 Julian Smith Outdoor Educator of the Year by the Michigan Alliance of Environmental and Outdoor Education.

Since Safer at Home began, I have worked mostly out of my home. My job, connecting with all of you, has not changed, but how I do my job has changed. With the FOD, I have been developing new curriculum, planning videos and other content for the Domes@Home web page, and developing Activity Adventure Kits for you to enjoy in your backyard.

I hope to meet all of you and together experience the new normal at the Domes, whenever and whatever that may be. I know we will have fun learning and exploring together. Check out my video "A Nature Moment With Mr. Pete" and all of the other content on the Domes@Home web page. If you have any questions, ideas, or just want to say hello, my email address is [petestobie.fod@milwaueedomes.org](mailto:petestobie.fod@milwaueedomes.org). It's a BIG natural world, so stay tuned with the Friends of the Domes. Learn a little, play a little, and relax a little. Hope to see you soon!



*Letter from the Director, Doris Maki, Con't. from page 2*

mentation, and public health organizations guidelines. Please rest assured that the safety and health of our staff and visitors will remain our top priority and a communications plan will be implemented to help everyone understand our path forward for the Domes.

None of us have been left untouched by COVID-19, and there's still a lot to overcome together. Huge financial gaps, hiring freezes, indefinite furloughs, re-deployment, and the list goes on and on. But the Domes staff is not new to adversity and not afraid of the word "closure." They know that this, like many other difficult times, shall pass. Their resilience is my inspiration and strength every day. Cheers to Amy, Burt, Clay, Cathy, Heidi, Lisa, Maria, Marian, Mary, Paula, Rory, Scott, and Tonie for being the best team we could wish for to care for the Domes!

Sincerely,

Doris Maki

**CELEBRATE WITH US!**

**DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS**

**DAY OF THE DEAD CELEBRATION**

**MITCHELL PARK DOMES**

**OCTOBER 2020**

**JUST BECAUSE OUR CELEBRATION MAY BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT THIS YEAR, DOESN'T MEAN IT WILL BE ANY LESS SPECIAL! WITHOUT GIVING AWAY ALL OF OUR SURPRISES...SOME THINGS YOU WILL ENJOY:**

**FUN TAKE-HOME ACTIVITY KITS**

**VIRTUAL TOURS**

**DAY OF THE DEAD-THEMED CRAFTS & MORE!**

**FRIENDS OF THE DOMES**

**PROUDLY SUPPORTING MKECO PARKS**



**Thank you for renewing your membership!**

Your renewal will keep the FOD supported during this time when some of our annual fundraising events have had to be cancelled.



# Friends Helping Friends

## Pick-up an Activity Kit for Yourself or Someone Special!

Your favorite restaurants aren't the only ones offering curbside pick-up! The Conservatory Education team is offering a new line of activity kits that can be ordered and picked up at the Domes. **Kits can be ordered online or with the form on page 5.**

To order online, visit our website [www.milwaukeehomes.org](http://www.milwaukeehomes.org). Click **Store** in the main menu, then select **FOD Classes and Events**. Just one of the ways we are here to help our friends keep learning and growing this summer!

### Raised Garden Bed Kits

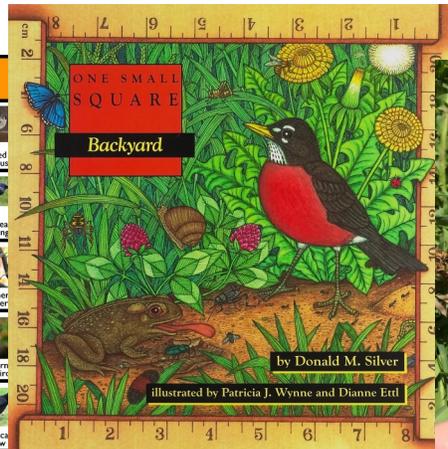
Our own Erica Putman has created two informative (and entertaining!) videos to help you create raised bed gardens. Make this project even easier by ordering a ready-to-assemble raised bed kit. Raised bed kits will only be available until June 21. The large size bed is about as big as, well, a single bed! (See Erica's photo on the right). Please see page 5 for details.



### Children and Family Activity Adventure Kits

Looking for fun activities for the family? Order a family activity kit, and we will pack up a variety of educational, entertaining projects for quick and easy curbside pick-up. Inspired by the Domes at Home video "A Nature Moment with Mr. Pete," each kit comes in a cool Friends of the Domes cinch bag and contains materials for 5-8 activities. Many of the activities can be completed independently by children.

A fun and welcome surprise for friends, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, your neighbors' kids, anyone who loves to learn! A great helper for grown-ups who want to get kids outside this summer!



### Children and Family Activity Adventure Kit Options:

#### Beginning Birding

Option 1

\$60

1. BYO Birdfeeder Project
2. Humming Bird Feeder Project
3. Birds View Window Clings
4. Binoculars
5. Take along Guide: Birds, Nests, and Eggs
6. Birding Bingo
7. Coloring Sheets
8. "I Love the Domes" Sticker
9. Cinch Bag with Logo

#### Beginning Birding

Option 2

\$30

1. Humming Bird Feeder Project
2. Birds View Window Clings
3. Birding Bingo
4. Coloring Sheets
5. "I Love the Domes" Sticker
6. Cinch Bag with Logo

#### Backyard Nature Detective

Option 1

\$40

1. Magnifier
2. Bug Box
3. Animal Track Identifier Project
4. Weather Window Cloud Id Project
5. One Small Square: Backyard Book
6. Backyard Bingo
7. Coloring Sheets
8. "I Love the Domes" Sticker
9. Cinch Bag with Logo

#### Backyard Nature Detective

Option 2

\$20

1. Magnifier
2. Bug Box
3. Animal Track Identifier Project
4. Backyard Bingo
5. Coloring Sheets
6. "I Love the Domes" Sticker
7. Cinch Bag with Logo

### Activity Kit Details:

- Kits can be ordered online or with the form below.
- Kits will be ready to **pick-up at the Domes** about 5 to 10 days after we receive your order. We will call or email you with pick-up details.
- Raised bed kits will be available for pick-up until June 21. They can be picked up from the Domes or on 9th and Oklahoma.
- Activity kits will be available through Summer 2020 or until we sell out.
- Your purchase helps support the Friends of the Domes in our mission to support the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory.



## Raised Bed Adult Activity Kit

**Our Bed PLUS soil option has sold out.**

<p><b>Medium Bed</b> 15-16 square feet, 8 inches deep <b>\$45 Members,</b> <b>\$55 Nonmembers</b></p>	<p>⋮</p>	<p><b>Large Bed</b> 21-24 Square foot, 10 inches deep <b>\$65 Members,</b> <b>\$75 Nonmembers</b></p>
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**Includes douglas fir lumber raised bed, screws, pre-drilled pilot holes, and landscape fabric. Curbside pickup from 9th & Oklahoma or from the Domes**

**Friends of the Domes**

### Order Your Activity Kits by Mail!

	Price	Quantity	Total
<b>Raised Garden Bed Kits</b> Available until June 21, 2020			
Medium Bed 15- 16 square feet; 8 inches deep	FOD Member \$45 Non-Member \$55		
Large Bed 21-24 square feet; 10 inches deep	FOD Member \$65 Non-Member \$75		
<b>Children and Family Activity Adventure Kits</b> Available through summer 2020 or until we sell out!			
Beginning Birding Option 1	\$60		
Beginning Birding Option 2	\$30		
Backyard Nature Detective Option 1	\$40		
Backyard Nature Detective Option 2	\$20		
			<b>Total Cost</b> <b>\$</b>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address **or** Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

If paying by credit card: Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_



Please send this completed form with a check payable to Friends of the Domes **or** provide your credit card information below.

Mail to:  
Friends of the Domes  
524 S. Layton Blvd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53215

**Thank you!!**

## Letter from the FOD Executive Director

By Sally Sullivan, FOD Executive Director

Hello Friends,

I begin this letter with my sincere hope that you are all healthy and navigating this unusual and challenging time successfully.

While the Domes has been closed, we, at the Friends, have still been very busy working from home. Our biggest project has been adding a Domes@Home web page to our website. While you can't visit the Domes right now, we have worked hard to bring the Domes to you. Visit this page for virtual tours; educational videos and activities for kids and adults; horticultural humor; and even Domes coloring pages!

Thank you to all of the members who renewed memberships during the closure. Our membership remains strong and dedicated. All expiration dates will be extended to reflect the time of closure so that you don't lose time on your membership. Please bear with us

as we implement this – it will be a big project!

The Friends of the Domes has taken over all education at the conservatory with two full-time educators. You have most likely met Erica and now have the opportunity to meet Pete in this newsletter issue (see page 3). They have been incredibly busy over the past few months creating the Domes@Home page, developing new programs, writing new curriculum for field trips, getting ready to welcome students this coming school year, adding content to our website, and attending a virtual conference that will have a tremendous impact on new programming. (More about the conference can be found on page 7.) This all generates lots of anticipation for good things coming for education at the Domes.

As I write this letter, we don't have a firm reopening date for the Domes but we will keep you posted on any new



information coming from Milwaukee County.

As things open up again, we anticipate a gradual comeback. Crowds will be limited, and most events have been cancelled or reconfigured. We sincerely appreciate your continued support of the Domes through your membership and donations.

Wishing you good health and looking forward to seeing you again in person!

Sally Sullivan



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## Inside the Lonely Domes

By Marian French, Horticulturist, Arid Collection

Since mid-March, the bridge and the deck in the Tropical Dome have been empty and silent with no one posing or taking pictures. The doves that live in the Desert Dome walk freely across the paths, with no one to shoo them out of the way. The center of the Show Dome has been completely emptied out, without a trace of train tracks or azaleas to be seen. Without visitors coming in, the lobby is still and the snack machines are full.

Although there have not been visitors since mid-March, a few staff members have been able to access the Domes and the greenhouses to care for the remarkable flora and fauna that call the Domes their home.

The team of essential horticulturists were first on the scene to ensure continuing care. In fact, not a day has gone by during the COVID-19 pandemic when there wasn't at least one horticulturist on site. And the list of daily tasks has been daunting: watering the Tropical Dome, watering the trees and shrubs in the Show Dome, watering in the Desert Dome, watering all six active greenhouses, transplanting seedlings for future shows and for Boerner Botanical Gardens, pruning all of our trees with the rented lift in the Tropical and Show Domes, cleaning and grooming outdoor garden beds, removing the entire Train Show and cleaning the center of the Show Dome, and, last but not least, feeding Steve (our bearded dragon). While the front doors are locked, inside each Dome everyone is working as hard as ever to keep each garden beautiful.

When it is safe to reopen to the public, the Domes and everything in them will look even better than you remember. And in the meantime, take some time to tend your own gardens and enjoy all the things that make your own home special. We'll see you soon.



Left: Marian in the Desert Dome caring for Steve and the Arid Collection; Center: Watering in the Tropical Dome; Right: Steve enjoying a leafy green snack



Our Bearded Dragon Steve thanks all those who have sponsored animals!

## The Education Staff Headed to Canada —Virtually!

By Erica Putman, FOD Education Director and Pete Stobie, Lead Interpretive Educator

This April, the Friends of the Domes education staff, Pete Stobie and Erica Putman, had the opportunity to attend the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) conference. NAI is a not-for-profit, professional association for those involved in the interpretation of natural and cultural, heritage resources in settings such as parks, zoos, museums, nature centers, aquaria, botanical gardens, and historical sites. The three-day conference was held virtually and attended by over 120 professionals from the US and Canada.

Pete and Erica attended several workshops and sessions. They attended learning programs that focused on the importance of storytelling, creating detailed illustrations, and other artforms in interpretation. They explored ways to apply these methods to education programming in and around the Domes. They participated in organizational workshops and took a deeper look at the Domes education program's mission, goals, and objectives and how to effectively provide engagement opportunities to all members of our community. They also participated in timely discussions about virtual programming, including tools to continue to teach when the Domes and other facilities had to close due to COVID-19. There were also discussions about how to manage social distancing with visitors and staff as facilities re-open.

The Friends of the Domes education staff will continue to reflect on the education program's vision as they move into the next stage of development. Along with the chance to meet with other professionals, discover new ideas, and recharge their mental batteries, they reported feeling validated that the work they do - though sometimes challenging - is beneficial and important. It was a great opportunity to be reminded that they are not alone in their efforts. Pete and Erica extend a huge thank you to the Friends of the Domes for supporting the education staff and for making it possible for them to attend this conference.

FRIENDS OF THE DOMES

# Domes Field Trips

For Schools, Scouts, Camps, Youth, Home School, and more

Experience a desert oasis, a tropical jungle, and floral gardens - all in one afternoon! The **Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory** - better know as **The Domes** - is one of the most unique destinations in Milwaukee.

**Educator-led Field Trip:  
\$7 per Child**

**Book Your Experience for 2020-2021 Now at  
[www.milwaukeehomes.org/Education](http://www.milwaukeehomes.org/Education)**

## Grades K-12 Experiences

**The Tropical Experience**

Tropical plants, plants that changed the world, animals, biodiversity, and human impact on the rain forest

**The Desert Experience**

Desert plants like cacti & succulents, animals (meet the bearded dragon!), adaptations, and survival

**The Show Dome Experience**

Explore the current Show Dome theme (which changes 5 times a year!), herbs, and Mediterranean plants

**The Wisconsin Experience**

Native plants and their importance, invasive species, Milwaukee water, local pollinators, save the bees!

**The Team-Building Experience**

Team-building challenges, using your senses, mindfulness, restorative circles, and group discussions

**The Arts Experience**

Explore the arts, inspired by our diverse and unique plant collection

## Grades 7-12 Experiences

**These programs will include higher level problem solving and an optional research project component - in addition to a guided Domes tour and presentation.**

Each experience includes a presentation, interactive activity, pre- and post-lesson discussion questions, and a guided tour.

Our Interpretive Educators are knowledgeable and engaging and are trained in social and emotional development. Our programming caters to all levels and learning styles.

**EXPERIENCE SOMETHING NEW**

## Friends Helping Friends

### Gift Shop to Offer Fun and Exciting Gift Packages!

Need a special gift, but not ready to browse in a crowded store? We're here to help!

Mary and the Gift Shop team are assembling fun and creative gift shop packages that will be available to order from our website. These gift packages will feature themes like children's gardening, fairy gardens, plants, and dish gardens. Watch your inbox for an email soon to announce the kick-off of this fun opportunity or visit our website.

In addition gift certificates are always available on our website! Gifts Under Glass carries many unique, local, and educational items for kids, families, and adults.



## In Memory of Terrell Ford

The Friends of the Domes send a sad goodbye to Terrell Ford, a Friends of the Domes member for over 30 years and a member of the FOD Board of Directors for almost as long.



Terrell passed away on April 30, 2020 and is survived by his wife, Susan, who continues to serve as a member and on the Board of Directors. We will miss Terrell, and we thank him for all of his contributions and his dedication to the Domes.

## Summer Vacation for your Home Jungle: Houseplants on Vacation

### Our Horticulturist's advice for safely getting your houseplants outside this summer

By Marian French, Horticulturist, Arid Collection

During the Stay at Home order this spring, did you adopt a new plant friend or two...or three...or a dozen? Did spending more time in your home make you realize that you needed more greenery and more oxygen? Are you looking forward to spending more time outside now that warmth has returned to our state?

Now that you are going to be spending more time outside in the summer sun, don't let your new houseplant friends miss out on the action! Believe it or not, most indoor plants enjoy a little summer vacation, too. Even under a shade tree they can get much more sunlight than they could get inside, and pest problems can get cleared up by natural predators found in your backyard. You'll be amazed at how much your green friends will grow over the summer with this extra elbow room!



Here are a few things to keep in mind as you get your plant friends ready for their summer outing...

First, consider the night-time temperatures. Most plants that we grow indoors are tropical and would not be happy with anything under 50 degrees. Frost will downright kill them. Usually, by early June south-eastern Wisconsin is safe from frost, but you will definitely want to check the weather forecast to be safe.

Second, as tempting as it is to put your plants directly out in the bright sunshine one warm day, you must resist. To look at it from the plant's point of view, they've been in a fairly dim habitat for the past 6 months or more. They have adapted to having their sunlight filtered through glass, curtains, and other window coverings. In addition, many of the most popular indoor plant species' originated in the shaded understory of tropical forests. They are not well suited for direct sunlight. No matter which species you have, they will need to be acclimated to being outside before you can place them in their summer vacation spot.

Acclimate them by slowly introducing bright sunlight. A colored bedsheet works pretty well (white can let too much light through), stretched out over the top of all the plants and secured so that it will not blow away. Keep them under cover for at least a week or two, checking on them every day to see if they are getting burned or need water.

When your plants have been out for a few weeks, feel free to place them around your yard wherever they can have the sun or shade they need. A good rule of thumb for vacation sites is sunny, sunny, sunny for succulents and cacti, and some type of shade (part or full) for anything leafy.

Once September rolls around, keep an eye on the weather again to prevent any frost nips or damage, and just like kids going back to school, eventually everybody has to come back inside.

Hopefully this season you can treat your plants to a little bit of TLC, and everyone in your household will be able to enjoy a little summer sun!





**Celebrate & support local artists, musicians, & food vendors from your homes!**

**Our biggest fundraiser-Art in the Green (a two-day, indoor art festival)**

**would have been April 25-26, 2020 in the Domes.**

**Please visit our Art in the Green webpage for links to artists, musicians, & food vendors.**

**<https://milwaukeehomes.org/art-in-the-green>**

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THE FRIENDS OF THE DOMES

# Green Sheet

Summer 2020

Canada Thistle [*Cirsium arvense*]

## The Real Monsters of the Plant World *Part 2*

By Julie Merck

FOD Newsletter Editor

Much has changed in the world since the Spring newsletter arrived in your home. One thing that has not changed is the damage and destruction invasive species cause to public and private outdoor spaces across the country. This is the second half of our article on invasive species in Southeastern Wisconsin.

One of the most easily recognizable invasive species is Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*). Canada thistle (native to Europe, not Canada) thrives in disturbed areas and in a wide variety of soils. Their sharply lobed leaves are tipped with a barb, making them a pain-inducing nuisance. A mature plant can grow 2 to 5 feet. If allowed to mature, the numerous fluffy purple flowers will turn to seed. Each plant can produce 40,000 seeds which are easily dispersed in the wind and can remain viable for 20 years.

In addition to their effective method for seed distribution, two qualities of their roots make them spread easily: they grow an extensive root system deep under the ground and a small piece of root can grow back into a full plant. Canada thistle can be controlled chemical-free by putting on your garden gloves, finding the base of the thistle plant, and snipping off the plant at the base with a sharp pair of scissors. Pulling can cause the root to split, which will result in TWO Canada thistle plants to grow back. Check back weekly, and snip off any new growth. The plant will be forced to use up its energy reserves trying to grow new leaves and will eventually be depleted.

Another invasive species found in almost every part of Wisconsin is Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*). Leafy spurge is a bushy plant with distinctive heart shaped leaves that spiral up the stem. The plants form clusters of small yellowish flowers and can grow about 3 feet tall.

Sometimes called

“wolf’s milk,” the entire plant contains a thick, white sap that can inflict burns and blisters on animals that try to graze on the plant. Like Canada thistle, it spreads

quickly with an extensive root system and prolific seed production. It can also regenerate from a small piece of root. Manual removal will require diligence, as the entire, extensive root system will need to be removed.

The final destructive invasive species we will explore is the Porcelain Berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*). If you have ever had to take a closer look at a tree because it looked like there were grape vines winding up its trunk, you may have spotted porcelain berry. It closely resembles native grape species (*Vitis spp.*) and is sometimes called wild grape, however it is very harmful to native species. Porcelain berry can grow quickly and wind up to 25 feet

high on trees. It will climb over all other vegetation; its leaves shade out the shrubs and trees



Leafy Spurge plant; leaves and flowers

it grows on, robbing the plant of sunlight and nutrients. As it grows up a tree or shrub, the weight that it adds makes the tree more susceptible to wind and ice damage. The leaves are heart shaped and coarsely toothed. They can vary in shape—ranging from dissected, to lobed, to entire.

In the spring, it is easy to differentiate grapes from porcelain-berries. Native grapes’ fruit and flowers droop downward. Porcelain berries hold their flowers upward. It flowers mid-summer in broad, upright clusters and produces hard berries in the fall. The berries are not poisonous. The bark of porcelain berry vines does not peel and has light dots called lenticels. The stem pith is white and continuous.

Porcelain berry can be controlled by pulling the sometimes massive vines from trees and mowing to prevent flowering. Eradication is very difficult without chemicals.

One thing that struck me when I was researching and writing this article was the beauty of many of these invasive species: the thistle’s flowers, the leafy spurge’s delicate leaves, the bright colors of the porcelain berries. Looking at pictures, it is easy to forget the damage they cause, the native plant species they choke out, and the fact that they are not the best species to support native animal and bird species.

*Note: The majority of the content for this article was sourced from the Wisconsin DNR and IPAW (Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin) websites. These are excellent resources for more information about a wide variety of invasive species.*



Porcelain berry vines smothering host trees





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### Friends Helping Friends

*This issue is filled with ways that we can help each other get through this thorny time together!*

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## Upcoming Events\*

Reschedule date TBD	Pirates & Princesses Day
TBD	Orchid Show
October 30	Dia de los Muertos
December 31	New Year's Eve Family Celebration

\*Events subject to change. Please check our website [www.milwaukeedomes.org](http://www.milwaukeedomes.org) and click Events for up to date information about events.