

# Welcome to NATIVE PLANTS 101

- ❖ What are NATIVE plants?
- ❖ Why are NATIVES so important?
- ❖ Pollinators need NATIVES (*bats, bees, birds & bugs*)
- ❖ NATIVES as Host Plants
- ❖ How can YOU get involved?
- ❖ NATIVES for all seasons (*spring, summer, autumn, winter*)
- ❖ Easy NATIVES for beginners
- ❖ Did you know....?



*Echinacea*

# What Are Native Plants?

Native plants are, in a word, local. They are plants that have been growing in a particular region, typically for thousands of years (or longer).

In **Wisconsin**, we consider all the plants that grew here prior to European colonization to be **Native**.

# Why are Native plants so important?

Native plants are the necessary heart of healthy ecosystems.



Plants power the **food web** for the rest of life on earth.

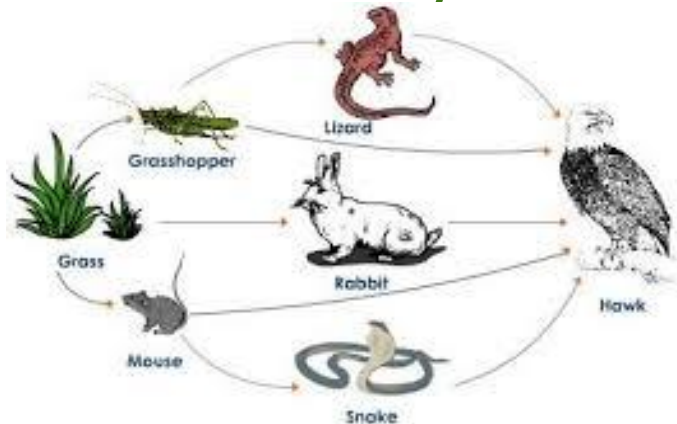


Co-evolutionary relationships allow millions of different species to all live closely together within a shared place.



In a local ecosystem, only the plants that have evolved over an extended period of time with the other flora and fauna present can successfully feed the entire food web & keep it stable.

Let's see what else they can do.....

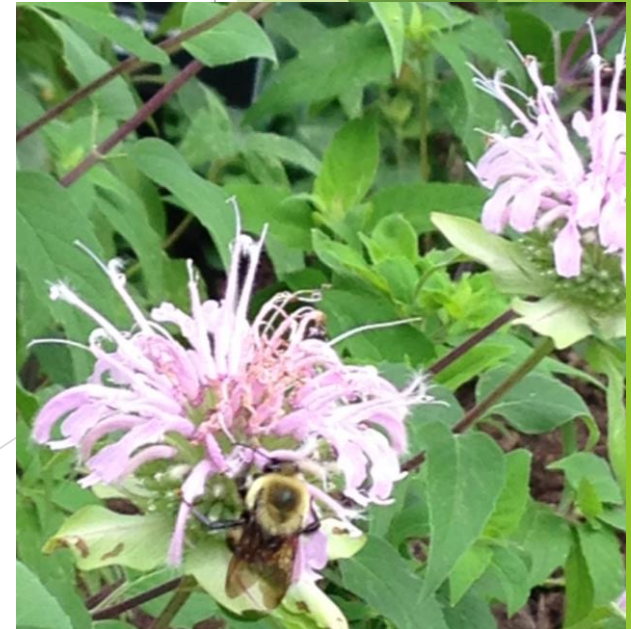


A Food Web in a Grassland Ecosystem With Five Possible Food Chains

# POLLINATORS— Made Possible by Natives

- ✿ A majority of plants are flowering plants, and most of those are pollinated by animals (primarily insects), but also a few birds, bats, and other animals.
- ✿ Some pollinators are **generalists** that can effectively pollinate a small number of plant species.
- ✿ Other pollinators are **specialists** that may be able to pollinate only a single plant species!
- ✿ The shape and structure of a every plant's flower is unique. The physiology & behavior of its pollination partner(s) create a **mutualistic relationship**.
- ✿ Pollinators depend upon our native plants, and vice versa.

A honey bee pollinating Wild Bergamot



# Native Plants Host the Insects We Need

Native plants host a greater number & variety of insect species than non-natives. For example, insects and other arthropods provide about 60% of the diet for birds, and they are virtually the **sole food source** for nesting terrestrial birds.



Without insects, our beautiful songbirds couldn't survive or raise their young. *(remember the food web?)*



Without ponds and other water sources teeming with insect life, there would be no spring peepers or amphibians!





***We need THEM and THEY need NATIVE plants.***




# Host-specific Lepidoptera

## (Butterflies and Moths)

 Many butterflies and moths are **host-specific** and can only reproduce if they lay their eggs on a single plant species that is edible to their larvae.

 The Monarch butterfly survives and reproduces only on milkweeds (*Asclepias spp.*). If we re-establish healthy native plant landscapes can we prevent the continued loss of species.

 Butterfly species around the world are in a serious decline unless we change how we manage **their** habitat.



# How can you get involved?



Observe what is going on around you!



Educate yourself and others about the benefits of native plants.



Plant Natives! - - *even if it's just ONE plant* (although 3 are better)



Join your local WILD ONES chapter!



Root River Chapter



# Native Spring Ephemerals

Jack-in-the Pulpit



Great White  
Trillium



Virginia Bluebells



# Native Summer Beauties

*Orange Coneflower*



*Cardinal Flower*

*Prickly Pear  
Cactus*





# Native Autumn Bloomers

Little Bluestem



New England Aster



# Native Winter Interest



Winterberry



# “Easy” Natives for Beginners...



Butterfly Weed

Whorled Milkweed



Common Milkweed

Swamp (Red) Milkweed





# “Easy” Natives for Beginners...

*Aquilegia canadensis* / American columbine



# “Easy” Natives for Beginners...

*Geranium maculatum* / Wild geranium





# “Easy” Natives for Beginners...

*Adiantum pedatum* / Maidenhair fern





# “Easy” Natives for Beginners...

*Solidago rigida* / Stiff goldenrod





# “Easy” Natives for Beginners...

*Sporobolus heterolepis* Prairie dropseed

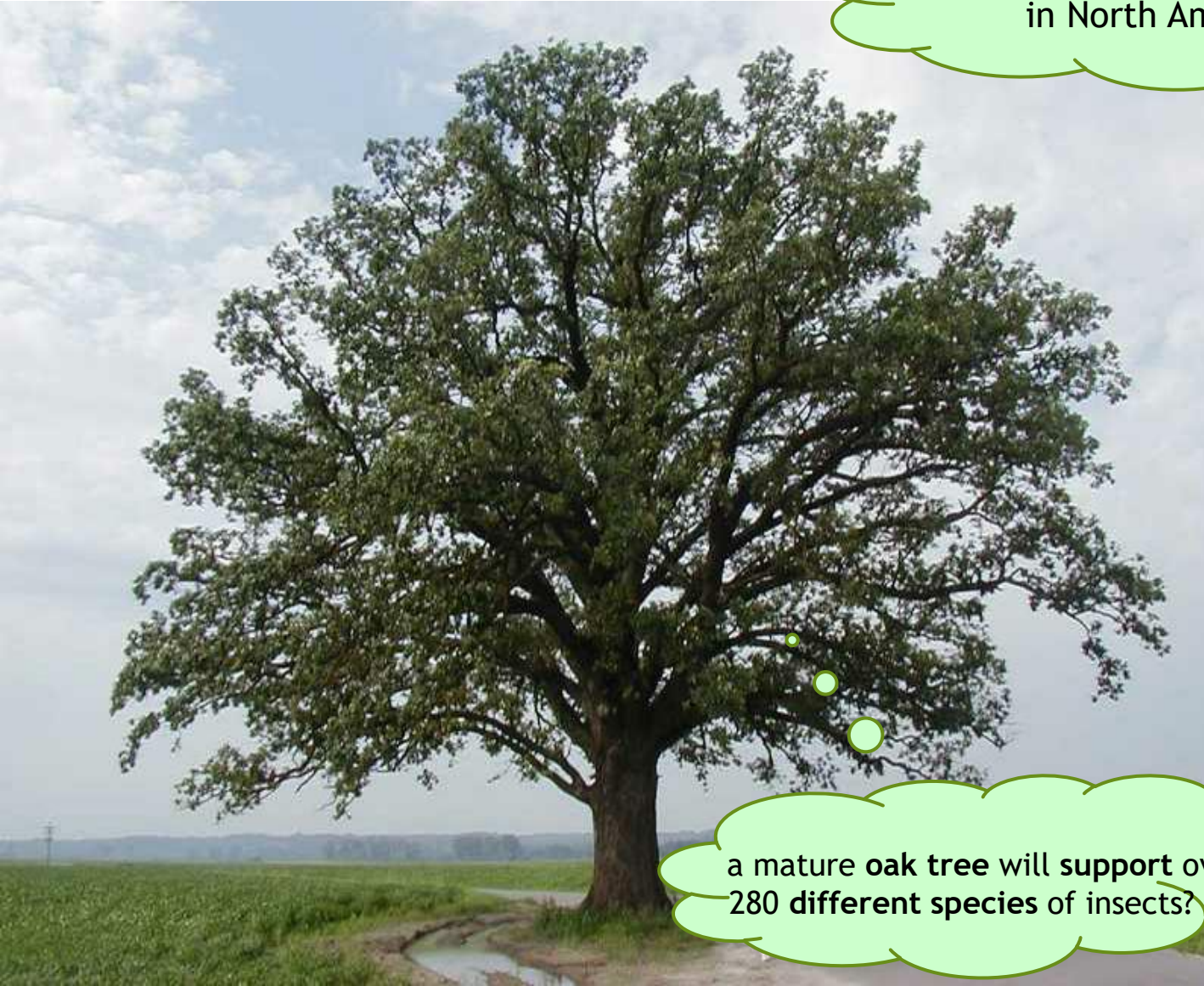




# Did you know....

*Quercus macrocarpa* / Bur oak

there are over 58 species of native oaks  
in North America?



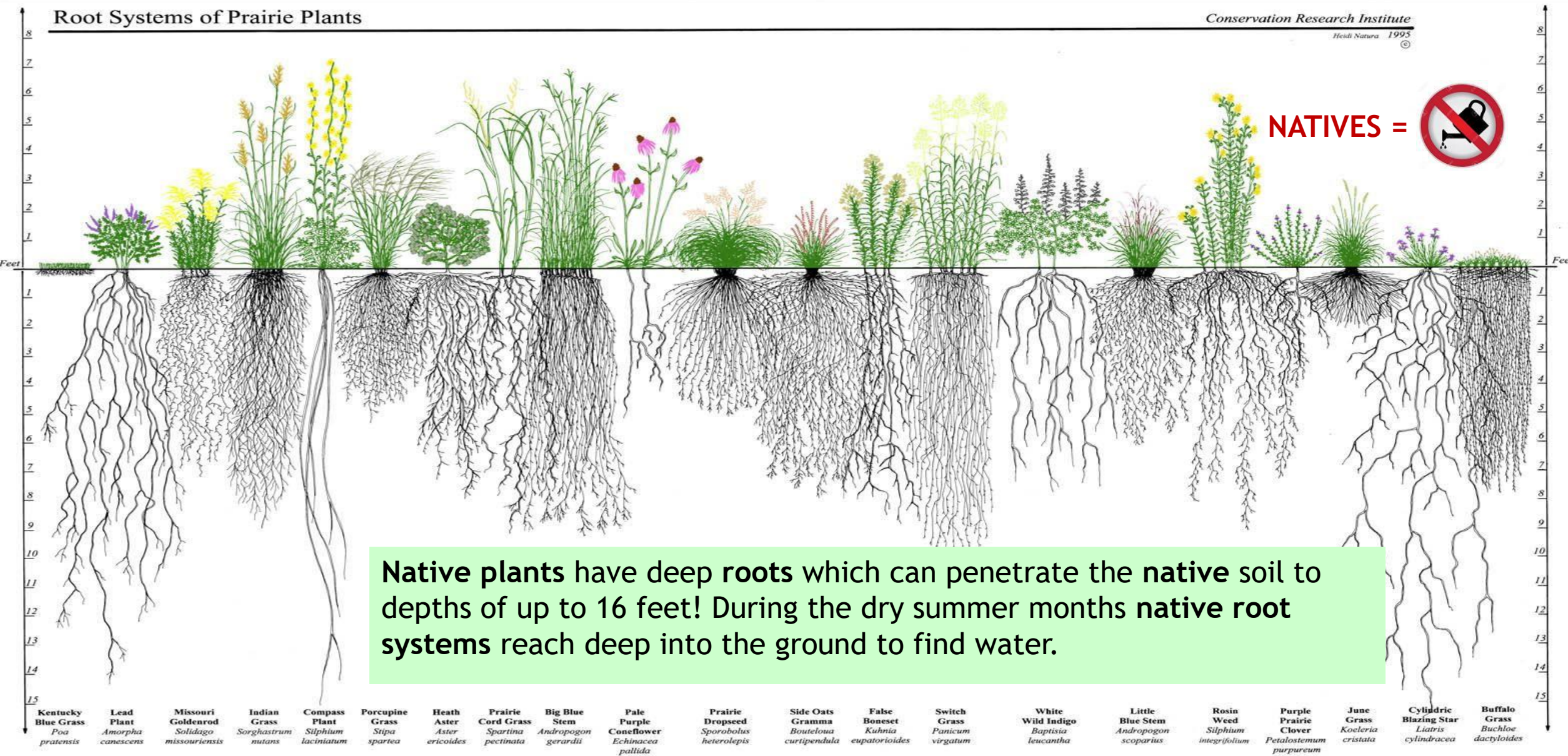
a mature oak tree will support over  
280 different species of insects?



when I grow up I will be  
over 80 feet tall? WOW!!!



# Did you know...



*Thank you for attending this short “101 session”.*

## Be Wild!



Pale Purple Coneflower

*Wild Ones Mission: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes . . . promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities.*