

Planting Native Flowers — Wild Geranium

AKA – *Geranium maculatum*

Flowering in the spring, the pinkish-purple blooms will attract pollinators to your garden while adding lovely colour. Also known as Spotted/Wild Cranesbill, this plant is an easy-to-manage perennial that prefers medium to wet conditions and tolerates most light conditions from full sun to full shade. This plant is a clump-forming, herbaceous perennial wildflower native to eastern North America. Upright hairy stems carry a profusion of upward-facing, saucer-shaped flowers, often with a pale centre and delicate darker veining that acts as a nectar guide for pollinators.

Wild Geranium has unique dissected leaves that turn red and orange in the fall.

After flowering, distinctive bristly beaked seed capsules form, giving rise to the common name “cranesbill”. The long hairs on the seed pods and even on the seeds themselves aid animal dispersal of the seeds. When the seeds are totally ripe the beak splits up the middle and each seed is attached to a curved piece of the old beak.

Low maintenance, deer and rabbit resistant, and highly attractive to bees, butterflies and songbirds, Wild geranium is a superb native ground cover for native gardens.



© Jan Grincevicius
Photo by Jan Grincevicius from her garden



The beak of this seed pod suggests the common name, Cranesbill.



The seed capsule splits open with five seeds at the curled base.

Identifying Trees in Winter

Nicholas Armstrong and Emma Dryden from the Nature Conservancy of Canada lead several of us on a wintery hike in Backus Woods (access from Highway 24 west) to identify species of trees based on bark and buds and to discuss their ecology. We learned that studying leaf buds is an excellent method to identify trees in addition to the review of bark and tree shape.

Trees identified were: American Beech, Red Oak, Hickory (species unknown), Ironwood, Black Cherry, White Oak, Sugar Maple, Eastern Flowering Dogwood, Green Ash, Eastern Hemlock and Shagbark Hickory.



Red Oak



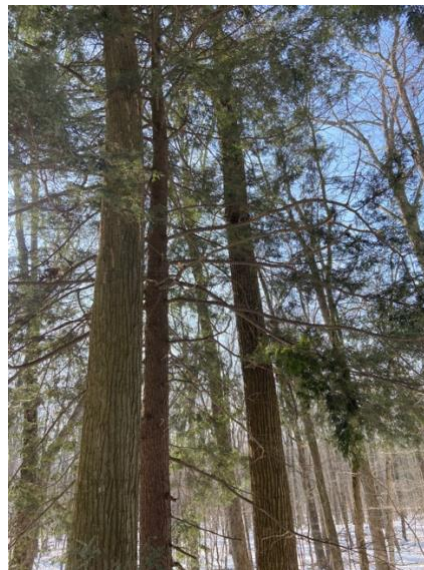
Ironwood



Black Cherry



White Oak



Green Ash



Shagbark Hickory

Haldimand Raptors in Winter Event

On February 22nd Norfolk Nature member, Audrey Heagy, lead a driving tour for eight keen birders to look for raptors and other winter birds on the backroads of Haldimand County. We were hoping for Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Short-eared Owl, and other birds and maybe even a Snowy Owl.

Unfortunately, the conditions didn't cooperate, so what we saw was limited. Here's the list:
Raptors — Red-tailed Hawks
Water birds — Canada Geese, Buffleheads, Mallards and a Long-tailed Duck.
Others — Wild Turkeys



Redtail Hawk - Photo by Member, Richard Szycha



Wild Turkey - Photo by Member, Jan Grincevicius

Spotlight on the Northern Cardinal

Cardinals are a perfect combination of familiarity and style: males are a shade of red you can't take your eyes off, females sport warm tones accented by a bright orange bill, and both sexes have that ready-for-action crest. Find out other interesting tidbits with this [new spotlight video](#).



Northern Cardinal at Old Cut (Long Point) –
Photo by Member, Len Grincevicius

The Last of Its Kind by Sibylle Grimberty translated by Aleshia Jensen

Sibylle Grimberty's *The Last of Its Kind*, a work of historical fiction, depicts a relationship between a young zoologist and a wounded great auk. The novel begins 1835, when a young zoologist named Auguste (Gus for short) encounters the auk, which is an injured survivor of an attack by fishermen on a colony of great auks.

Gus, who had been sent to Iceland by the Natural History Museum of Lille to study North Atlantic fauna, names the bird Prosp. Though he initially plans to send Prosp to the Museum of Lille as a specimen, Gus, as he spends more time with the bird, develops a great affection for it.

Gus continues his surveys of flora and fauna while becoming fascinated with Prosp and his behaviours. Meanwhile, there are increasing reports about the increasing scarcity of great auks, and their absence from customary nesting sites.

At first, Gus and his contemporaries believe that creatures like the great auk have simply relocated. Gradually, Gus comes to acknowledge the truth: Prosp may well be the last living representative of his species. Through Gus's thoughts and conversations, *The Last of Its Kind* show the struggle to come to grips with the reality of extinction.

The Last of Its Kind was originally released in 2022 in French, with the title *Le dernier des siens*. Grimberty's book offers a timely and poignant reminder that extinction events that seem to be unthinkable may in fact be all too possible, while at the same time encouraging compassion for the creatures affected by humans' actions.

Content notes: there are some disturbing scenes at the outset of the book when the colony of great auks is attacked.

A more detailed review of this book can be found at <https://www.theseboardreview.ca/p/the-last-of-its-kind-by-sibylle-grimberty>



Bird losses are Accelerating Across North America

Bird losses are accelerating across North America, particularly in farming regions where agriculture is most intensive.

A study in *science* highlights that human activities, such as pollution and habitat changes, are driving these losses.

Agricultural practices like pesticide use are playing a significant role.

Since the 1970s, the US has lost billions of birds. We now know that those losses aren't just growing — they are accelerating in places with intensive human activity, particularly where agriculture and

expanding communities are changing the landscape.

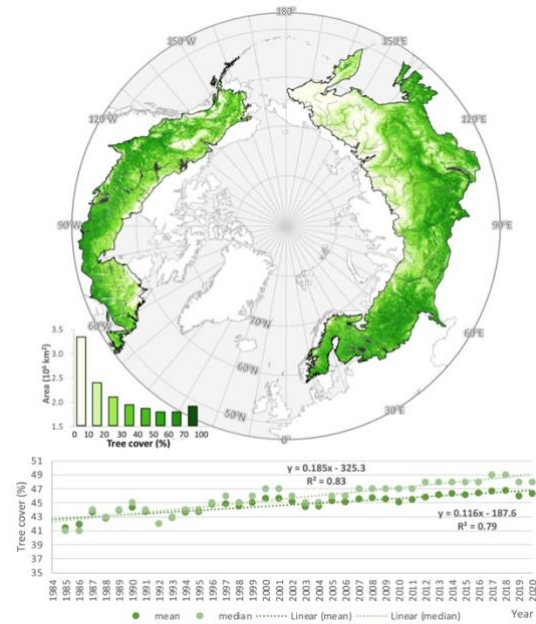
Learn more [here](#).



Dark-eyed Junco – Photo by Member, Jeff Hiebert

Satellite Record Shows Boreal Forests Expanded 12% And Shifted North Since

The boreal forest—the world's largest terrestrial biome—is warming faster than any other forest type. A study confirms an increase in size and northward shift in boreal forest cover over the past four decades. Learn more [here](#).



Green

By Member, Lisa Timpf
(Website: <https://lisatimpf.blogspot.com>)

if green had a shape, it would take
the form of a woman, neither young nor old,
walking fields and forests, and coaxing
trilliums to bloom, sap to rise

and if green had a smell,
it would be the delicate perfume
of hyacinths and sun-warmed pine needles,
the pong of moist earth after a rain

and if green had a flavor, it would be
asparagus and rhubarb, early
strawberries, the slow-grown savor
of the season's first spinach

and if green had a touch, it would be
the warm spring breeze caressing
your bare arm, the stickiness of sap,
a pussy willow's velvet smoothness



Trillium
Photo by Jan Grincevicius

Pussy Willow
Photo by
Bianca Begert



SPRING THINGS PHOTO QUIZ



Photos by: 1. Jeff Hiebert, 2. Jim Z., 3. Inga Hinnerichsen, 4. Jan Grincevicius, 5. Pavel Kirillov, 6. Nature Canada, 7. Leanne Lemaiche, 8. Louis Brodeur

ANSWERS ON PAGE 8

Removal of provincial park protections from Wasaga Beach is putting Piping Plovers at risk. Read more [here](#).

ON Nature – Spring 2026 edition [here](#).

To receive selected information by email, you can sign up:
ontarionature.org

Thank You!

From Norfolk Nature to
Will & Morgan Partridge
Guardian Computing
For hosting our website

How To Identify Woodpeckers by Their Drumming

Drumming is to woodpeckers as song is to songbirds—and a rapid *rat-a-tat-tat-tat-tat!* ringing out through the woods is a sure sign of spring. Woodpecker drumming may not be as immediately distinctive as birdsong—but by carefully listening to speed, duration, and rhythm you can still tell many species apart. Just like learning to identify wrens and warblers by their melodies, with a little practice you can [identify some woodpeckers by the speed, cadence, and rhythm of their drumming](#).

Red Bellied
Woodpecker
Photo by
Len Grincevicius



Hello Norfolk Nature members!

As has become increasingly the norm, spring is taking its sweet time to arrive – at least temperature wise. Nature-wise we are seeing all the signs – tundra swans returning and feeding in the cornfields, turkey vultures overhead, robins and cardinals singing, skunk cabbage up, tree buds swelling. I'm really looking forward to spending more time in the woods and to our upcoming Norfolk Nature outings. Check our website for a listing of all outings at <https://norfolknature.org/>

We had a pleasant surprise last month when we learned we are receiving a final \$81,000 disbursement from the Frishette estate. The Board of Directors met on March 24th to discuss plans for the funds, and we decided that, on receipt, we will place \$40,000 in a 1-year GIC and the remainder will be kept in our account as we are anticipating expense for our 65th anniversary celebrations next year.

Based on members' feedback we revisited offering the meetings we hold with Zoom speakers to members that are unable to make it to our meetings, especially in the winter. We decided to begin recording those presentations (with the speaker's permission) and then offering them starting the day after the presentation for folks to watch at home.

Plans for the Norfolk Nature Fest are progressing nicely. We have a planning committee in place, which met for the first time on March 18th. We have already had great feedback from the community with folks offering to volunteer in various capacities. Currently we are in the process of hiring a Festival Coordinator. We are still looking for a headquarters to run the celebrations from and are starting to apply for some grants to support our plans. Stay tuned!

And finally, our Treasurer, Peter Black, has discussed with the Simcoe B.I.A. about installing local artisan banners, featuring Norfolk's nature, along Simcoe's main drag, in 2027 and they have agreed!

Warm Regards, Bernie

Upcoming NN Events

- April 10 – Timberdoodles
- April 25 – Night Sky
- May 9 – Spring Birding
- May 10 – Spring Flowers
- June 6 – Forest Bathing
- June 20 – Spring Arbour Farm

Canadian Chestnut Council
See Winter 2026 Newsletter [here](#)



Answers to Spring Things Quiz:

- 1) Wood frog
- 2) Compton tortoiseshell
- 3) Skunk cabbage
- 4) Song sparrow
- 5) Mourning cloak
- 6) Northern Ribbon snake
- 7) Blue Spotted/Jefferson Complex salamander
- 8) American Woodcock



[Long Point Bird Observatory Newsletter](#)

Tell a friend about us.

The benefits of membership, membership forms and payment options are available at www.norfolknature.org

We welcome new members.
Don't keep us a secret.

Norfolk Nature Meetings

Norfolk Nature meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month from September to April.

Meetings take place at the **Simcoe Recreation Centre, 182 South Drive, Simcoe**. The meetings are free and visitors are always welcome. Doors open at 6:30 pm, programs begin at 7:00 pm.

NN Mailing Address

Norfolk Nature
PO Box 995, Simcoe, ON
N3Y 5B3

Next Lotus Issue:

Summer 2026
Input dead line:
Friday, June 19, 2026

About Norfolk Nature

Norfolk Nature members participate in meetings and field outings, many of which are family-friendly. **Membership fees are \$30 Individual and \$50 Family.**

Donations are eligible for income tax credits. Charitable registration # 11905869RR00001

Guest speakers present programs on interesting and relevant natural history and conservation topics. Club members receive the Lotus newsletter with articles on local natural history and club activities. Copies of the Lotus are available at meetings, by mail or by email and posted on the Norfolk Nature web site. Articles published in the Lotus reflect the views and opinions of the authors, but not necessarily those of NN.

www.norfolknature.org

2025-26 Directors and Coordinators with Project Information

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