

As autumn officially rolled into our lives, the plants which bear color and welcome fall, peek-a-boo from everywhere. This year, the small successes in a stretch of prairie have made a few of us volunteers smile. Harvey One-Room School is on the way to having a prairie to share with future students and other visitors.

In the fall of 2009, Warren Uxley collected mature seed for prairie plants all over Ohio from preserves and prairies. Here in our county I was able to help in the gathering, which was both easy and fascinating. Seed was sown that October.

After two years of growing seasons, we can see progress.

This spring, hail drove holes into our "prairie in Progress" signs which were double laminated with contact paper. And, worse, Warren discovered that a promising patch of purple liatris had been pelted to the ground. Upon inspection, you could see where the large hail had broken the stems; they were shredded. Wonderfully, about 10 stems bloomed and the area will bear fruit next year.

As we looked over the grasses, there was plenty of triumph- Canada wild rye, switch grass, Indian grass, prairie cord grass, Big Bluestem, and Little Bluestem had shown up. Concerned a bit about the Little Bluestem, I had ordered another batch and it was sown in August.

A few Rattlesnake Master plants are in place. A Sawtooth sunflower stands. Butterfly milkweed bloomed near our Harvey School kiosk.

There are tall prairie dock plants, though we would like more. Bergamot, also known as bee balm has bloomed. Royal Catchfly and gray-headed coneflowers joined in the prairie party. Jerusalem artichoke, and tall coreopsis have shown seed heads.

The happiest success showed up near the parking lot. There is a display of Rigid Goldenrod which brought quiet rejoicing. For

those who have seen its form, it is handsome, with a different stem makeup and branching. Warren and I might have called in the

Herald Trumpeters, you know the guys that used to welcome the president of the United States. We beamed and stroked the plant.

Photographs prove out that butterflies have welcomed this species of goldenrod.

There are some open areas dominated by non-native species like ragweed, common goldenrod, and thistles. Warren has cut and broken off immature seed heads on these; we have plans to sow more prairie seed here in a couple weeks.

In the meantime the five-year plan is well underway. The diversity in this prairie's life is more complete. Life is good