



April is a time to enjoy emergence of spring ephemerals, the leaving of our winter birds and the arrival of our warm weather feathered friends. Our Spring weather can be very volatile with temperatures in the 30's one day, and in the 60's the next, but this evens out as April moves into May. All this is Mother Nature's way of making us more flexible... if you don't sway with the winds, you will break.

Annual Meeting: On Saturday, April 16, the Annual Meeting will be held at Highbanks Metro Park Nature Center at 11:00AM. The brief business meeting that includes the election of officers will be followed by a hike out to the observation point to see the eagles... well, we hope that the eagles will be in residence, and will offer us an aerial display. If you are planning to attend, please RSVP to Debra Knapke: dknapke@columbus.rr.com or 614-459-7167.

Bison Bowl: Saturday, June 11, at Scioto Audubon Metro Park. Watch this space later this month as we will be revealing more pertinent information. The registration form should be up on our website by the next *Sassafras Leaf* send.

Bison Re-introduction Project: Battelle Darby has been a very busy park! The attendance numbers have exploded with 20,000 more visitors for February 2011 than February 2010. This is approximately a 30% increase over last year. Nothing like a bevy of beautiful bison to bring out families and wildlife watchers!

Wellness in the Woods: In February, the *Sassafras Leaf* mentioned the Wellness in the Woods fitness series sponsored by Craig Thompson of Greenswell and Metro Parks. Craig has launched the Greenswell website and you can now register for the various runs and walks on the website: <http://www.greenswell.com/> The first hike is on Sunday, April 17, at Blendon Woods.

Garden Tip:

With the wild swings in temperatures, you may be tempted to buy plants and put them in your gardens. The plants that can go in now if the ground is workable: vegetable seeds - peas, Swiss chard, beets, some of the Asian greens (read the seed package for specifics), shrubs and trees that have been acclimated to the weather at the nursery or garden center, perennials - it is better to wait until April, but you can move plants around in the garden now. But, if the temperature takes a deep drop, be prepared to go out and cover the newly moved plants with sheets.

Now is the time to start thinking about starting the seeds of the tender vegetables: tomatoes, chilies, bell peppers, eggplant, cabbage, kohlrabi, etc. The first week of April is a good target "date."

Environmental Tip:

Spring cleaning is a wonderful tradition that grows logically out of the old need for scrubbing walls, windows, floors and doors after the smoke-filled winter days and nights. Now, few of us scrub the walls,

but the windows and floors are certainly a target for cleaning after a season of being closed up. Here are a few tips for greener cleaning:

1. Clean does not smell like anything but clean. Cleaners and diffusers with scents are usually adding chemicals into the air and for those with allergies, they often add to the 'load' to which one is exposed. The only spring rain scent should be coming from outside.

2. More is not better. Cleansers are meant to be used sparingly. Indeed, most cleaners are not meant to be used and wiped off (for example countertop cleaners), but rather used, wiped off, and then wiped again with a clean, wet rag. Removal of residual is important as many cleansers have insecticides, fungicides, and the like in them which can stay behind if not rinsed.

3. Use rags, not paper towels. Cloth rags can work harder for you than can paper towels, and they're easy to toss into the laundry along with towels. But it does matter what type of cloth you use.

4. There are lots of "recipes" for alternative cleaning products. Here are a couple guiding principles:

a. Sometimes, you need "grit." Baking powder, corn starch, toothpaste and salt offer different degrees of grit. Mix with water and use as a paste.

b. If something is really greasy, use dishwashing detergent or baby shampoo.

c. Not everything needs to be sanitized -- some bacteria are good for the human body and are destroyed indiscriminately with anti-bacterials.

5. Open windows while you clean. Any fumes will dissipate much faster!