

Conservation Corner

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Last week found us on the road again as we traveled to Minneapolis to pick up our son Neil and family. Migrating waterfowl and songbirds were also following the North American Central Flyways north to their breeding grounds. We should have brought our bird book along! I'll mention two species that we encountered along the way.

We were just a couple miles from home when we spotted a snowy owl perched on a fencepost along C-56. We had to stop, back up, and take a closer look as Ron had never seen this infrequent visitor from the Far North. As we crossed into Minnesota on I-35, a flock of nine majestic trumpeter swans soared overhead. Like us, every bird was making their way north as, like Neil and his family, they were winging their way home.

We soon arrived at the airport, hugged the weary travelers, gathered their luggage, and headed back South. Our grandsons, age 3 and 7, had never seen snow before, and so were especially thrilled to wake up to a spring snowstorm Saturday morning – perhaps the only two who thought so in Pocahontas County! They celebrated their first snow by building four giant snowmen – hopefully they won't last long.

After all, it is April, time to leave winter behind and look forward to spring field work, tree planting, and gardening. To help you get in the mood and prepare for this year's growing season, make plans to attend the 12th Annual Garden Extravaganza April 13 & 14 at the Pocahontas Expo Center. Join us for Wine Tasting on Friday evening from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. and then plan to return on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for classes, vendors, door prizes, as well as good food & fellowship. Be sure to stop by Conservation's Make & Take Workshop featuring wine bottle wind chimes.

Here in Iowa we're anxiously waiting for the snow to melt and the sun to warm things up, but have you ever wondered what conditions gardeners are facing in the rest of the world? For example, how would gardening work in a climate where temperatures never dip below 60° and the rain either comes down in sheets or not at all?

To learn the answers to these questions and more, just drop in on the 10:30 a.m. class titled "In November We Plant Vegetables." Neil will share some of the benefits and challenges of gardening on the other side of the world. He'll present an overview of raising vegetables and crops in southeast Asia, recap some of their successes and failures, and highlight a few of the differences and similarities to gardening and farming here in Pocahontas County.



After all, like most things in life, gardening is a learning process. Neil has learned that what works in Iowa doesn't necessarily work elsewhere. Likewise, what doesn't work in Iowa might be just the ticket in Laos. What gardening practices do you need to relearn?