

OUTDOORS CALENDAR

CLASSES/SHOWS

■ WINTER EDUCATION CLASS
The Wayne County Sportsman's Club in Romulus will offer hunter education (safety) classes on the following dates: Oct. 8-9, Oct. 22-23 and Nov. 5-6. Cost is \$6 and the courses are open to anyone 12 years of age or older, (313) 832-0285.

SHOOTING RANGES

■ WWCCA
The Western Wayne County Conservation Association's shooting range in Plymouth Township will be open Oct. 17-Nov. 14, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. seven days a week.

■ PONTIAC LAKE
The shooting range at the Pontiac Lake Recreation Area, 10 miles

west of Pontiac off M-59, is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., (810) 666-1020.

■ BALD MOUNTAIN
The range at the Bald Mountain Recreation Area, three miles north of The Palms, in Lake Orion, is open Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Monday and Tuesday, 3 p.m. to sunset and Wednesday, 10 a.m. to sunset. Starting in mid-October the range will be open noon-sunset on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday hours will stay the same, (810) 814-9193 or (810) 693-6767.

FISHING CLUBS

■ FOUR SEASONS
The Four Seasons Fishing Club meets 7:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Maple-

wood Center in Garden City, 477-3816.
■ MICHIGAN FLY FISHERS
The Michigan Fly Fishing Club meets at 7 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Livonia Clarenceville Junior High School, 420-2233.

■ METRO-WEST STEELHEADERS
Metro-West Steelheaders meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at Garden City High School, 420-2365.

DEADLINES/DATES

■ ARCHERY DEER
Statewide through Nov. 14 and Dec. 1-Jan. 1.

■ DUCK
North Zone through Nov. 7. Middle Zone through Nov. 6. Southern Zone through Nov. 13.
■ GOOSE
North Zone through Oct. 16.

Middle Zone through Oct. 23. Southern Zone through Nov. 6.
■ PHEASANT
Zone I — Oct. 10-20. Zone II & III — Oct. 20-Nov. 14.
■ RABBIT
Statewide through March 31.

■ WOODCOCK/BOBWHITE
Statewide through Nov. 14.

METROPARKS

■ PICK YOUR PUMPKINS

Take a horse-drawn hayride to and from the pumpkin patch where you can select the perfect Halloween pumpkin weekends through October (while supply lasts) at the Kensington Farm Center.

People not only ones who plant, harvest

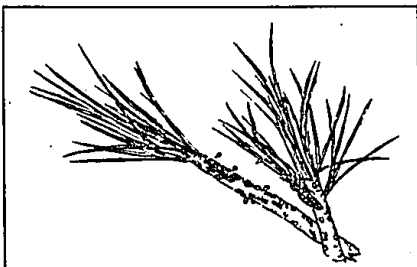
NATURE TRAILS
When we think of farming, our thoughts immediately conjure up rural areas, barns, silos, tractors, cows, chickens and such. Farmers work the land or tend their livestock for the products they yield. Surplus is what is sold to city folks who don't even take the time to plant tomatoes.

Farming also occurs, to a certain extent, in the animal world. Each spring I watch the ants and aphids on the gray dogwood leaves. As soon as the leaves emerge, black spots on the undersides become visible.

Those black spots are actually small insects known as aphids. They are inconspicuous because of their size and their location. But as soon as the aphids emerge, ants from the surrounding mounds take up residence on the leaves with the aphids.

Ants do not eat the aphids; rather, they eat what the aphids produce. Aphids pierce the leaves and suck the sugary sap as food. The sap is then digested and a sugary waste liquid is voided. Many call it honeydew. When I was a young man, my dad said the trees were dropping their sap onto his car. In a way he was right, except it was processed once. Attending ants collect this sugary liquid and use it as food.

Since the honeydew is a waste product, aphids don't mind the ants collecting it — if you can im-



agine an aphid reasoning. In fact, aphids like to have the ants around because they protect them from ladybird beetles (ladybugs) that like to eat them.

Just the other day I observed a situation that was very similar to the ants and aphids. As I walked by a white pine tree I heard it humming. When I looked up at the branches there were scores of wasps and hornets. They were landing on the main branches and walking on the clusters of needles.

Upon close examination, I discovered the branches were covered with small gray colored aphids. Each branch had several large clusters of these insects. Though wasps are predatory, they were not eating the aphids. Instead, they were searching the needles below for the honeydew deposited

by the aphids above. I could actually see the aphids produce large drops of honeydew which fell to the leaves below.

Like the ants, the wasps, hornets and some flies were all feasting on the extensive source of sweet liquid. These aphids were not protected by the wasps, though. Scattered around the branches were both adult and young ladybird beetles.

So intent on eating honeydew, the wasps and hornets were undisturbed by my close inspection of their feeding. It was interesting to see another insect exploit the aphid's source of food.

Tim Nowicki is a naturalist at Independence Oaks County Park in Oakland County. He lives in Livonia. You can leave him a message at 953-2047, Mailbox 1874.

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