



Huxford Wins Lawn Makeover

Press Release and photo courtesy of Bonnie Vastag

By this time next year, Kay Huxford plans to enjoy a front yard filled with attractive and low-maintenance Wisconsin native plants. As the winner of the Flip My Lawn contest, sponsored by the Green Bay Chapter of Wild Ones-Native Plants, Natural Landscapes, Huxford is beginning the transformation of her modest front yard, dominated by two mature maples which take up much of the moisture from the area, into a lush tapestry of textures and colors.

Huxford was selected from 23 applicants throughout Allouez, Ashwaubenon, Bellevue, De Pere and Green Bay who entered the contest. Huxford's prize includes up to \$750 in landscaping materials and plants, a professional design and planting assistance by a crew of Wild Ones members. She also receives a one-year membership in the Green Bay chapter of Wild Ones.

Before the planting crew of Wild Ones members comes in the spring of 2010, Huxford will meet with Andrew Knapp, owner of Bleu River Landscape, who will then design plantings for her yard at 225 S. Michigan, De Pere. Knapp, a member of Wild Ones, has the challenge of very dry and shady conditions, but he's confident there is a large palette of native plants for Huxford. Knapp explained that he enjoys finding plants to match the soil, moisture and light conditions and using plants that would naturally be found growing together.

After living in her home for five years, Huxford admitted that everything she planted in the front yard died. She craved something that would give her house curb appeal and set it apart from the busy street. As she walked through the Brown County Extension Office to take in a soil sample, she spied the poster advertising "Flip My Lawn," the catchy title of the yard makeover, and soon her application was on its way.

Huxford and her sons Ozzy, 6, and Zade, 18, are “really outdoor people. We hike, bike, roller blade and just enjoy being outside whether it’s in our yard or enjoying nature somewhere else.” She’s looking forward to the advantages of her natural landscape – no fertilizing, no pesticides and no watering after the plants are established. In addition, there will be birds, butterflies and insects to observe among the blossoms and berries.

Huxford teaches at West High School in the English Language Learner program and in the college preparatory program, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), and is advisor of *The Purple Parrot*, the student magazine.

Kate Hau, Wild Ones member and coordinator of the lawn makeover contest, noted how difficult it was for the seven committee members to determine a winner. After selecting four finalists, the committee visited each yard, discussing with the owners the process and their reasons for seeking a yard makeover. Huxford’s enthusiasm and her location with lots of vehicle and pedestrian traffic were factors in her selection.

Hau continued, “We look at this contest as a great educational project, teaching homeowners that natural landscapes are adaptable to small areas and that they can vary from a tall, wild prairie to attractive beds and borders, low in height and very controlled. I wish we could have given all 23 applicants a makeover. We encourage them to continue to learn the benefits of this landscaping for the future; at least we were able to present Wild Ones memberships to all the finalists.”

More information about the Green Bay Wild Ones is found at www.for-wild.org/chapters/greenbay. The group holds educational meetings, yard tours and trips to local natural areas and nature centers. If you would like to contact someone in the Green Bay Wild Ones chapter, please call Ceci Kiefer at 336-1662 or Bonnie Vastag at 494-5635.