

conduct habitat and biological surveys.

Chicago Master Naturalist, and member of the state Master Naturalist advisory committee, Jerry Hossli participates in the third type of Master Naturalist volunteer work—Educational Efforts.

“We take youth on self-guided learning adventures where we try to teach scientific methods and encourage a connection to nature,” said Hossli of the work during inquiry adventure field trips to the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Master Naturalists are ambassadors for the nearly 69,000 acres of Forest Preserves in Cook County.

The Kim St. John Wildlife Prairie Park Butterfly Habitat near Peoria is an example of a Master Naturalist/Master Gardener collaboration project. This 2,600 square foot metal hoop house is filled with larval and nectar plants that attract native butterflies. Annually the garden reaches more than 25,000 children and adults through educational programs at the park, including educational sessions at the habitat.

I invite you to join the growing Master Naturalist teams across Illinois. Discover for yourself exciting ways to educate others in your community about the wondrous natural world. 

BIOS

Rhonda Ferree is Statewide Master Naturalist Coordinator and an Extension Educator in Horticulture serving Fulton, Mason, Peoria and Tazewell counties. She has been with University of Illinois Extension for more than 25 years where she has held several positions and received many awards. Ferree has a master's degree and a bachelor's degree in horticulture from the University of Illinois.

DON'T BE SHALLOW VOTE FOR MALLOW



KANKAKEE MALLOW
FOR
ILLINOIS STATE FLOWER

HABITAT2030.ORG

Story By Robbie Q. Telfer



Violet

VS



Mallow

On April 1, 2015, Robbie Telfer, sat down with the state of Illinois' incumbent state flower, the violet, to discuss Robbie's campaign to unseat the violet and replace it with *Iliamna remota*, the Kankakee mallow. What follows is a brief excerpt of that conversation.

RT: Thanks for taking the time to talk with me; to be honest, I didn't think you'd want to.

V: *Why not?*

RT: Well, because I don't want you to be the state flower anymore.

V: *I know! I'm pretty pumped about it. Go mallow!*

RT: Don't you want to be the state flower anymore?

V: *Nope! I want to try something new. Maybe take up some kind of martial art.*

RT: But you've been the state flower for so long, don't you like being an Illinois celebrity?

V: *Yeah, it's been great these past 108 years, but the world has changed a lot since I was elected.*

RT: How so?

V: *Well at the turn of the last century, most people were still pretty sure the world's resources were endless. The passenger pigeon hadn't gone extinct yet. We didn't know invasive species were a thing. And search engines were*

Continued on page 25

What are the biggest challenges for conservation in your area?

One of the challenges is the fact that many of our members are not as young as they used to be. We need to address the need for attracting young people to the world of natural resource preservation and management. Another challenge is the increasing use of neonicotinoids (a class of neuro-active insecticides chemically similar to nicotine), which cause neurological problems for butterflies and other insects. As more evidence is collected, the negative impact of neonics upon birds is a cause for concern, too.

For the backyard birder ready to take it to the next level, how can membership in the Birdsong Chapter be beneficial?

You get the benefit of enjoying nature and learning from others. There are several members with a very high level of expertise (i.e. birds, plants, butterflies, reptiles, insects and so forth). Hiking with these experienced naturalists is edifying and enjoyable. 



©Deb Carey

BIO

Dinah Rod is the newly elected president of the Birdsong Audubon Chapter. For 30-plus years, she has enjoyed sharing all facets of nature with children and adults, including birding, prairie forbs and grasses, and woodland flowers. Rod holds the position of chairperson of the LaSalle County Natural Area Guardians. Rod and her husband, Gene, own a golf cart sales and service business located near Mendota.

literal steam-powered trains used for scouring the halls of our largest libraries. Now, I think it's time for a state flower that can do the job of educating people about our various environmental crises.

RT: That's refreshing to hear—I was pretty sure you'd cling on to your office like human politicians do.

V: *No, no, no, I want out of the game!*

RT: Some people thought that my campaign for the Kankakee mallow was disrespectful to you. More than one person has said on Facebook that I should just "leave the violet alone."

V: *See, that's why I deactivated my account—so much useless conflict! And let me show you something.*

(The violet takes off its hat and shows Robbie the top of its petals.)

V: *What's missing from this picture here?*

RT: Um, bangs?

V: *No! A brain! I don't have a limbic system to feel things like disrespect or meanness. I don't have any human emotions at all in fact. The real disrespect is that people would anthropomorphize me in the first place when our native ecosystems are so threatened. That's humans' problem in general—you all can't help but to make everything in your own image, you ascribe human motivations to every single organism and thereby rob it of its right to be its own fungus, flower or flying squirrel.*

RT: And that's why the Kankakee mallow is the ideal candidate for state flower?

V: *Oh yes. It's brilliant! Here's a flower whose native habitat is a single, 20-acre island in the Kankakee River, and without human intervention, the native mallow population will disappear forever. Without human intervention, whole hosts of creatures will disappear. And while I'm pretty ubiquitous now, maybe even I would disappear without protection. That's what the mallow stands for, and that's why I stand with it.*

RT: Except you can't stand.

V: *Now you're getting it.*



BIO

Robbie Q. Telfer is the co-founder of The Encyclopedia Show, a live literary variety show that's been staged in dozens of cities around the world. A National Poetry Slam finalist, he is the author of the collection *Spiking the Sucker Punch*. He's a member of the internationally touring teaching poet collective Project VOICE and for six years was the principal organizer of the world's largest youth poetry festival, Louder Than a Bomb. He currently is organizing habitat restoration professionally with The Field Museum in Chicago. For a full transcript of the original 20-hour dialogue, visit habitat2030.org.