

Welcome to

Oak Hills Farm Prairie & Arboretum



If you were looking for a few acres to build a cottage on, and found a beautiful 101 acre property, what would you do with the extra land? That was the issue we faced in 2005.

We bought the property and decided to rent out about 60 acres to a local farmer, who uses best practices to farm the land in a sustainable manner with minimal use of pesticides. Thirty acres were left as a woodlot and wild area for the enjoyment of some deer, wild turkey, foxes and a family of osprey.

After building a house and planting a garden, about five acres were left to recreate a natural environment and habitat. The south shore of Rice Lake was covered in a tallgrass prairie when European pioneers such as Catherine Parr Traill arrived. In 2008 we planted a prairie to recreate this type of habitat, which is now very rare in Ontario.

Tallgrass prairie consists of grasses such as big bluestem and Indian grass, which can grow over six feet tall, and flowers such as black-eyed Susan and bergamot. It supports a wide range of birds, bees and butterflies which need this specific type of habitat for food and shelter.

In 2007 we started to collect native woody plants, which developed into an arboretum of over 120 native Ontario trees, shrubs and vines, around the edges of the prairie.

A Brief History of Oak Hills Farm

2004: December: Decided to buy a 101 acre property near Bewdley, overlooking Rice Lake, covered in corn crop. No house, water or electricity.
2005: April - May: Purchase completed. Built treehouse and garden shed, followed by cottage in August. 550 trees and first prairie area planted.
2006: March: Cottage mostly finished. Planted 693 trees.
2007: September: Start of arboretum. Total of 404 trees planted.
2008: May: Main prairie area planted.
2009: October: Granted NANPS Garden Award
2010: September: NANPS Prairie Tour. 121 different native trees and shrubs.
2011: National Wildlife Federation designated natural habitat. Began developing mowed paths in woods. Rice Lake Horticultural Society Tour.
2012: Moraine Hero award. Plastic plaques on all trees and shrubs
2014: April: Planted a three acre field with 4,000 trees and shrubs.
June: Property is part of Trails Open Ontario.

Some ground rules:

This is a natural area, enter at your own risk.

Please stick to the paths and keep children and pets under control.

Watch out for poison ivy. Closed shoes and long pants are recommended.

No smoking or hunting.

Do not pick the wildflowers. You may collect some seeds for personal use.

Respect our privacy:

Obey the red "No Entry" signs around our home.

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