



JENNIFER HARNISH /

Garlic mustard was pulled out of the ground and shrubs were cut back Saturday at Kleinstuck Preserve by volunteers, including John Brady, left, Cassidy Haan, center, and Lai Brady, right. Their efforts were part of Earth Day observances that included a garlic-mustard pull at the Kalamazoo Nature Center.

From invasive to the table

Volunteers observe Earth Day by helping to restore ecosystems

BY JANE C. PARIKH

jparikh@kalamazoogazette.com
388-8558

KALAMAZOO — When life gives you garlic mustard, make pesto.

The sage advice is from Lisa Panich, who coordinated the cookbook "Garlic Mustard From Pest to Pesto," a collection of recipes from local chefs using the nuisance plant, which was up-

INSIDE

✓ List of local Earth Day events / B5

the Kalamazoo Nature Center as part of Earth Day observances. Earth Day will be officially celebrated on Tuesday.

Grace Morris, a retiree living in Kalamazoo, said she pulled a few

rooted Saturday by volunteers at Kleinstuck Preserve and

of the plants at the Nature Center because she wanted to see what it looked like.

"Now I'm going to go back and look in my yard because I know what to look for," Morris said.

Garlic mustard is a biennial plant that grows year-round and flowers in late April to June into a rosette of kidney-shaped, dark purple to green leaves with scalloped edges. The leaves have a

pungent garlic smell when crushed, said Panich, spokeswoman for the Nature Center.

"We were pulling it from our beech-maple forest because if it remains there it will take over and choke everything else," Panich said of the 50-volunteer effort.

COMING MC

✓ Cold spring weather no same as glo warming.

✓ How to red your carbo footprint.

See **VOLUNTEERS**, B5



JENNIFER HARNISH / GAZETTE

Tristan Woodsmith, 10, carries an armful of invasive plants uprooted Saturday at Kleinstuck Preserve in Kalamazoo. Woodsmith was part of a group of about 40 volunteers who removed the plants and planted trees and shrubs native to Michigan in observance of Earth Day.

>> CONTINUED FROM B1

Volunteers observe Earth Day by helping restore damaged ecosystems

"Garlic mustard grows in little clumps by logs and will surround a tree."

About 40 volunteers at Kleinstuck Preserve pulled garlic mustard and other invasive plants and planted native shrubs and trees such as American plum, nannyberry and Michigan holly. On Mother's Day, the Stewards of Kleinstuck, a volunteer group made up of residents of neighborhoods bordering the 48-acre preserve, will plant native wildflowers.

"Not only are we getting rid of certain kinds of plant that are damaging to the area, but we are also planting native plants that are good for the area," said Nate Fuller, stewardship and conservation director for the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy.

Fuller said about 10 percent of the preserve, bordered by Bronson Boulevard, Edgemoor Avenue, Oakland Drive and Maple Street, is considered high-quality with a good ecosystem. He said efforts will continue to replace invasive plants with native plant species to improve the health of the entire preserve.

Although controlling the spread of garlic mustard at Kleinstuck and the Nature Center will be ongoing, Panich said the cookbook may provide an added incentive to pull the pesky plant.

"The flowers, leaves and stems are all edible," she said. "Right now is a great time to pull it."

The cookbook is available at the Nature Center.

April 20, 2008

Kalamazoo Gazette

By Jane C. Parikh

© 1970-2004 KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

All rights reserved.

Used with permission of KALAMAZOO GAZETTE