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for the natural
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movement

Wild Ones®

NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

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Celebrating natives plant and natural landscapes since 1979.

The Grapevine

By Maryann Whitman

Got Milkweed?

In my area, my truck is recognized by my Wild Ones"Got Milkweed?" sticker in the rear window. It was designed by Jim Gallion, Wild Ones Partner-at-Large from Maryland, who is very active in the Monarch Watch program. Wild Ones donates a portion of the proceeds from sales of the bumper sticker to Monarch Watch. Jim has just completed a sign that reads "Monarch Waystation," to help raise funds for Monarch Watch. While the Monarch Waystation web site promotes all naturalized landscaping that can serve as habitat, and does not promote native plants exclusively, I think that Wild Ones can get behind this effort.

Jim says, "The idea is to get more people interested in using milkweed, as well as creating or restoring habitat, and using fewer pesticides or herbicides. These folks at Monarch Watch are 'bug people.' They are learning. We need to be patient with them as they develop better plant lists." Maybe we can gently nudge them along by gifting them a Wild Ones membership.

Some of our favorite garden signs, including the new Monarch Waystation at bottom of post. For more information, check www.monarchwatch.org/ws.

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Something to think about: Benefits of a messy yard

Winter is months away, but since we may not be able to afford a November/December issue of the Journal, this seems like a good time to mention some fall caretaking strategies for our native plantings. Here are some things to think about:

Remember that what you have planted is a habitat garden. That habitat may be occupied by lots of pretty butterflies, as you intended, but don't forget all the other insects that are probably "invisible." This would include the pollinating bees that like hollow stems for overwintering, the beneficial ladybug beetles and the lacewings who overwinter in crowns of native grasses and just plain garden duff, and the moths and butterflies who spend the winter in the pupa or chrysalis stage or the adult stage somewhere on the ground under leaves.

An article by researchers Tooker and Hanks, in the September, 2004, issue of Biodiversity and Conservation, reported that compass plant and prairie dock (Silphium laciniatum and S. terebinthinaceum) harbor the greatest numbers of insects in their detritus.

Maryann is Editor of the Wild Ones Journal, and comes to the position with an extensive background in environmental matters of all kinds.