

a voice
for the natural
landscaping
movement



JOURNAL

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Working toward our next
25 years restoring native plants
and natural landscapes.

Getting Started

The Johnny Appleseed Model of Getting Municipal Ordinances Passed

By Bret Rappaport

This is the third installment in a series written by attorney Bret Rappaport, past-president of Wild Ones, on the subject of getting neighbors, communities, and municipalities to recognize the validity of landscaping with native plant communities. See the July/August 2004 and November/December 2004 issues of the Journal for the first two installments.

Now that you've explored how to show local governments how and why native landscaping is good for everyone, and you've learned why weed ordinances are generally part of the governmental rules and regulations, you might want to encourage your municipalities to consider following the "Johnny Prairie Seed Model" to promote native landscaping. The phases of this model are germination and seedling, maturation, blossom, and full bloom.

Germination and Seedling

- *An Idea Takes Root.* There must be the germination of the idea, marked by a commitment by the municipality to do it. The first step is to identify a person to lead the mission. It must be only one person, and that point person will be "Johnny Prairie Seed." As well as being passionate and committed to getting the project done, he or she must be knowledgeable about native plants and the principles involved. This first prerequisite of a point-person cannot be overstressed. This person must know what will replace the lawn and why it is important that this should happen. It is not enough to have strong feelings about "stopping mowing and watering for the good of the environment." These strong feelings are much more readily defended if backed by information that is presented in a non-confrontational manner. Smile and bring bouquets of wildflowers and grasses!

- *Involve Municipal Departments.* The second step is to involve affected municipal departments. Find out what is the relevant process that needs to be followed. Does your town have a planning board or someone who oversees landscape ordinances? Should public safety, traffic, and public works be involved in the discussion process? An ad hoc committee should be set up to discuss the different implications of native/natural landscaping within the community. This committee should meet several times to discuss and brainstorm about natural landscaping, how it will affect the community in a positive way, and how it should be used, protected, and promoted.

- *Call the Citizens Together.* Create a citizen's advisory committee. A necessary and important component of the Johnny Prairie Seed Model, this committee will bring into the process non-governmental agencies and individuals who will be affected by the program, and who are interested in seeing it come to pass. Members of this committee should represent schools, houses of worship, businesses, and individuals. *Editor's Note: Consider also involving environmental organizations that are active in your community; they may have pertinent information to bring to the table.*

Maturation

- *Your Turn.* Assuming that everything else is on track, the next phase is for "Johnny Prairie Seed," the designated point person, to meet with the municipal attorney. The existing laws should be reviewed, and a model ordinance should be drafted that not only protects, but also promotes, native landscaping in the community. Although citizens advisory committees or other committees should be involved in the actual development of the new

*One of the greatest pains
to human nature is the
pain of a new idea. –
Walter Bagehot, Physics
and Politics, 1869.*

Notes from the President...

Growing the Voice of Wild Ones

"The power of one is to do something—anything!" *John Picard, Environmentalist*



I started writing my *Journal* notes on election night. However, it took me several days to recover from the run-up to Election Tuesday and to deal with the final results. I think you all

would agree that the vote suggests a fairly evenly divided nation on the issues that mattered. While you may or may not agree with the results and the issues that affected the election, we need to move on.

Be you a Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative, as Wild Ones we all agree on the necessity of turning our landscaping practices to a less intrusive and destructive approach. Our very future depends on reducing our impact on the environment. This is the core of our Mission: Wild Ones promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities.

There has been extensive commentary since election day about the grassroots organizational efforts of like-minded people to effect change. If Wild Ones is to succeed in lending a hand toward

If each one of us can bring in one or two new members, our voice will grow stronger and be more effective.

the preservation of biodiversity, we need to take heed of the successes that have resulted from those organizational efforts. To that end, I have requested in my annual appeal to the membership, that each of us recruit someone of similar environmental beliefs to join us in our efforts. Now, more than ever, we need to consolidate and grow our message! If each one of us can bring in one or two new members, our voice will grow stronger and be more effective. If you truly believe in the need to change the way we treat our environment, help

us expand our influence to effect that change.

For those members who simply want to learn how to add native plants to their yards and gardens, this message may seem to be inappropriate for the organization. Nothing could be further from the truth! The founding principle of the organization was to effect change in our landscaping practices to save the future for our children and theirs.

As the closing statement of our mission statement proclaims: "Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization." To increase our ability to advocate, we need to take a lesson from the successful advocacy groups in the past election and grow our voice! *

Joe Powelka, Wild Ones National President
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Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to encourage biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit, environmental, educational, and advocacy organization.

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Pam Westfall is a member of the Greater DuPage (IL) Chapter of Wild Ones. Her article, *From Cropland to Prairie*, is on page 4.

Barbara Bray is co-president of the Oakland (MI) Chapter of Wild Ones. Her *Next Generation* column is on page 5. The skunk cabbage drawing is also hers.

Diane Powelka is a member of the national Wild Ones board, and she and her husband are charter members of the Madison (WI) Chapter of Wild Ones. She is also past State Secretary for the Wisconsin Garden Federation. Her article, *Who Says Teens Don't Care About Native Plants?* is on page 7.

Grandma's Bleeding Hearts, on page 8, was written by **Mandy Ploch**, member of the Milwaukee North (WI) Chapter and former vice-president and *Journal* editor-in-chief.

Beth Storey, who wrote the *Rain Gardens* article on page 10, lives six blocks from the Mississippi River, and spends her time ardently reducing the amount of turf grass in her Minneapolis yard.

Janice Cook is an urban naturalist and a member of the North Park Village Nature Center (IL) Wild Ones Chapter. Her article about environmental thinking is on page 12.

The blackeyed Susan drawing on page 15 is by **Lucy Schumann**. She is the original artist from *The Outside Story*, forerunner of the *Wild Ones Journal*, and is a long-time member of the Milwaukee North (WI) Chapter of Wild Ones.

Could your gift be the one that saves the Earth?



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If you're tired of handing out loud neckties, plaid socks, and wooly underwear, why not give something fun that also shows how much you care about the future of our planet?

Can't think of anyone who would enjoy a Wild Ones membership? How about those new neighbors down the street who aren't sure what to do with their yard? Or maybe those relatives who keep borrowing your lawnmower. And what about the local "weed inspector" who keeps eyeing your prairie? Better yet, just think what a Wild Ones membership will do for the kids at your neighborhood school!

Those neckties and socks will just end up in the back of a drawer, and those underwear – well, we don't even want to know. But your gift of a Wild Ones membership might be the start of a journey that leads someone to saving the Earth, or at least a small part of it.

Three levels of membership are available, and each new gift membership gets one or more Wild Ones promotional items along with the standard benefits and a subscription to the *Journal*. We'll even send them a holiday gift card so they'll know it's from you.

Helping to save the Earth, and your favorite Wild organization, has never been so easy. The journey starts at www.for-wild.org/joining.html. Go there now.

From Cropland to Prairie

By Pam Westfall

Prairie plants such as switch grass can play a role in controlling greenhouse gasses.

On a daily basis we hear about the evils of greenhouse gasses. But we hear little about what we can do to try to limit them. One answer may lie in our own backyards. Prairie soils are very good at holding onto carbon, and very reluctant to let it go.

The whole process of getting carbon to stay in the soil, also known as carbon sequestration, is dependent on many factors. Temperature, soil type, and soil moisture all play critical roles. Plants use the carbon from the atmosphere in the process of photosynthesis to generate the energy necessary for their life processes. They produce the roots and shoots from this energy, and as plant material dies, soil microbes go to work dismantling the complex molecules the plants have built. Where there are warm temperatures and adequate moisture, such as tropical settings, green plant production is the greatest and can store the most carbon. This carbon, however, can be released back into the atmosphere quickly because of the great growing conditions for the soil microbes.

Soil type plays a role too – those lovely heavy clay soils actually can bind some carbon chemically or else form aggregates that can trap carbon. Soil moisture comes into play through microbial activity. The soil-dwelling microbes do not like a dry condition, nor one too wet. In either case, their activity slows down. When moisture content is just right, they go to work.

Their work breaks down some of the plant material and releases the carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere. The remaining plant material is converted into humus, which can remain in the soil for hundreds or even thousands of years. Unbroken soils in the Canadian prairies have been shown to have forty to eighty feet of humus as revealed by core samples taken at the time of highway construction. Prairie soils do a great job of keeping carbon under wraps for one simple reason: their roots.

Most prairie plants have most of their biomass underground. The soil microbes have a harder time breaking down root material than green plant material. Roots contain more lignin, a complex organic molecule that breaks down very slowly.

Because of the difficulty that the microbes have with the roots, the carbon in them is not released into the atmosphere. Instead, it is stored as humus, which can remain in the soil for thousands of years.

Another contributing factor is climate. Our temperate weather moderates microbial activity by providing optimal conditions during only part of the year. This slows the decomposition process and allows for a much slower turnaround of organic material back into CO₂ (carbon dioxide). Prairie soils can also contain a high amount of clay, which can, by virtue of its dense nature, physically keep the microbes away from the carbon.

When the prairie soils were plowed and turned into agricultural fields, much of the carbon in this turned layer was released into the atmosphere. Scientific estimates have placed a figure of roughly 50% on the original carbon in the soils lost to the atmosphere. (Current day levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are around 365 parts per million. Prior to the industrial revolution in the late 1700s, this number was 270 ppm.)

Typical agricultural practices have not helped in reversing this trend. Plowing of fields along with removal of plant residues all contribute to the net loss of carbon from the soil. Current agricultural teaching encourages farmers to try all sorts of new tactics: no-till methods, planting cover crops year-round, and even converting some of the land back to prairie. The last option in particular has garnered a lot of attention. Preliminary studies have shown that a significant increase in carbon in the soil has occurred in farmland converted to prairie, compared to the fields that have been planted with crops.

In addition to curing some of the agricultural woes of erosion, improving water quality, and providing wildlife habitat, restoration efforts are actually helping the environment on another level by aiding in carbon storage. One native prairie grass is grabbing the attention of many in the field of soil-carbon research: switch grass, (*Panicum virgatum*), is known as a C4 grass.

What this means is that this plant has a hard time letting go of carbon. It uses a different metabolic pathway than most plants

in a way that it releases carbon dioxide internally instead of into the atmosphere. Most plants lose about 50% of their CO₂ intake back to the atmosphere through photorespiration. But switch grass doesn't. It keeps most the CO₂ internally. And it's a prodigious grower. It produces more biomass on the same amount of rain than any other plant species.

Further research is focusing on the wonders of switch grass, and how it can be used in different ways to help sequester the greenhouse gas into a dark and deep tunnel in the ground. *

The plant growing on this page is switch grass, (*Panicum virgatum*).

2004 Nobel Peace Prize Takes an Environmental Tone

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2004 to Wangari Maathai (of Kenya) for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace.

The citation presented to Maathai reads: "Peace on Earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment. Maathai stands at the front of the fight to promote ecologically viable social, economic, and cultural development in Kenya and in Africa. She has taken a holistic approach to sustainable development that embraces democracy, human rights and women's rights in particular. She thinks globally and acts locally.

"She founded the Green Belt Movement where, for nearly thirty years, she has mobilized poor women to plant 30 million trees. Her methods have been adopted by other countries as well. We are all witness to how deforestation and forest loss have led to desertification in Africa and threatened many other regions of the world – in Europe too. Protecting forests against desertification is a vital factor in the struggle to strengthen the living environment of our common Earth."

In an Associated Press announcement, committee chairman Ole Danbolt Mjoes noted, "This is the first time environment sets the agenda for the Nobel Peace Prize, and we have added a new dimension to peace."

Stalking the Wild Skunk Cabbage

By Barbara Bray

The hunt was on! We gathered our supplies and pulled on our sturdy boots to venture into the woods. After many weeks of cold and snow, I knew the time was right to search for the "awakening" skunk cabbage. We had been to the same spot a week earlier looking for the small hoods poking up out of the snow, but there was no sign of them at that time. We walked down the muddy path past the low, wet areas still frozen atop with a thin layer of ice.

Up a small hill and past the old fallen tree was our first sighting! Speckled with reddish-purple spots, the spathe rose up about 2 inches from the partly frozen, leaf-covered ground. This showy bract surrounds the minute flowers that grow on the spadix, a rather swollen-looking spike in the center. We bent down to look at the flower more closely. My son, a typical 8-year-old, asked me, "Mom, are you really going to smell that flower?" I said to him, "No, all three of us are going to smell it!" He groaned a bit, but knew he couldn't get

out of the woods until he smelled the skunk cabbage.

We expected to smell a foul odor. Why else would someone name this plant "skunk cabbage" (*Symplocarpus foetidus*)? The scientific name also suggests that a fetid odor is to be expected. I was the first one to smell the skunk cabbage blossom. To my surprise, I did not keel back in dis-

While most other people wait for tulips to bloom in April or May, we can anticipate our first spring flower in late February or early March.

gust. It was actually a very mild, pleasant odor. My daughter went next. She put her nose up close to the plant and then sat back up to say that it smelled like apples. My son, Ben, went last. He was willing to smell the blossom after watching us. His comment was that it smelled like wet dirt. So much for our expectations.

This was our second "Annual Hunt for Skunk Cabbage." It has become a new springtime tradition for us. When my children ask me why we need to look for skunk cabbage every year, I tell them it is the *first* sign of spring. While most other people wait for tulips to bloom in April or May, we can anticipate our first spring flower in late February or early March.

Skunk cabbage is a member of a very unusual family of plants, most of which grow in tropical areas. The arum family, to which skunk cabbage belongs, includes our common houseplants, philodendrons and dieffenbachia. These three plants, as well as others, display an unusual feature: their inflorescences produce heat before pollination. In skunk cabbage, the temperature inside the spathe can become 20 to 25 degrees warmer than the outside air. In philodendrons, temperatures rise to 115 degrees even if the surrounding air temperature is much cooler. The heat causes substances within the plants to release bad-smelling odors that are attractive to flies and beetles. Thus, skunk cabbage can grow up through a layer of snow while everything else is still buried; and it can attract flies to pollinate its flowers.

My hopes for our third "Annual Hunt for Skunk Cabbage" are to really get my children excited about the natural world. I want them to see this unusual plant growing up through a blanket of snow. I want them to be amazed by this on a freezing cold day. And I want them to see flies pollinating the tiny flowers inside the spathe.

If I lived elsewhere in the country, I would look for a plant with which to start a similar tradition. In the western United States, I would go in search of yellow skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanum*), or perhaps one of the desert parsleys (*Lomatium* spp.) if I lived in a drier area. In the southwest I might try searching for an unusual cactus in bloom. Wherever you live, there is always an opportunity to start your first "Annual Hunt." Grab your boots and your kids and go in search of your own amazing plant! *



Skunk Cabbage
(*Symplocarpus foetidus*)

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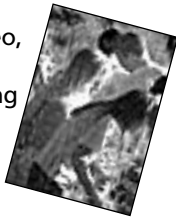
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For maximum convenience, order online at www.for-wild.org/store/



A Bendable Feast

In the wane of autumn, when Arctic winds sandblast north woods with sleet, the paper birch – a.k.a. "white birch" (for the color) or "canoe birch" (for the canoes Indians made with the bark) – feeds hungry wildlife. Across the continent, from treeline through boreal and hardwood realms, to the latitude of Indiana and thence along mountain ranges as far south as Virginia, this sun-loving pioneer of forest openings is heavy with catkins. The females of these long, fuzzy flowers – named for their resemblance to a cat's tail – are packed with double-winged seeds. All manner of birds and small mammals consume the seeds, sometimes directly from the catkins. Deer, moose, porcupines, snowshoe hares, and beavers eat the tree's twigs and bark; grouse pluck its buds. To survive the ice storms that glaze their exposed stands, paper birches evolved their pliability. Years after a storm you'll see them drooping, as Frost wrote, *trailing their leaves on the ground / Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair / Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.* – By Ted Williams. *Audubon Magazine*; November-December, 2004. Reprinted with permission of author.

GIFT IDEA

Landscaping With Native Plants

Our original handbook, which was replaced in 1999 by the *New Member Handbook*, has always been part of the Wild Ones' reference resources. Earlier this year an updated fourth edition was produced as *Landscaping With Native Plants*, edited by Lorraine Johnson, (author of *Grow Wild* and *A Gardener's Manifesto*). Recognizing what an excellent publication this is, the Rock River Valley (IL) and Oakland (MI) chapters have made arrangements with National to have the handbook sent out to all their members.

To make similar arrangements for your chapter, please get in touch with the National office at 877-394-9453 or execdirector@for-wild.org. For additional information see the Wild Store ad on this page.

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Who Says Teens Don't Care About Native Plants? By Diane Powellka

I'm very fortunate to work with the Monona Grove alternative students in the "park," located in the township of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. The park was a rock quarry in the 1930s and '40s, and was later used as a landfill. The landfill was capped in the '80s, and had recently been used as a highway dumping ground for excess gravel, etc. The whole site is probably 15 acres, and we have 5 acres on which to work.

After visiting the prairie in Byron, Illinois, I had the idea to start a native plants park in the township of Sun Prairie. The town clerk, Claudia Quick, suggested we consider the old landfill site. In the fall of 1994, my husband, Joe, and I approached the town board with our request to turn the old landfill into a native plants park. After getting approval, we proceeded to survey the existing plants and trees. What fun it was to discover the different plants and then flag them for identification!

What started as fun soon looked more like a nightmare with the never-ending problem of clearing the area of overgrown vegetation. We would clear an area only to have it become overgrown again. We got



Student using her legs to leverage a rock into the border of the new access stairs.

help from several groups, including the Boy Scouts of America, Troop #333, who helped put in trails on the southwest side. The area has a lot of spring ephemerals, and we have added more from plant rescues. But another boy scout looking for an Eagle Scout project was discouraged at how quickly his former scout colleagues' work became overgrown, and went elsewhere to work on his badge.

Luckily the students from Monona Grove were willing to work on these southwest trails. The students, however, wanted an area they could call their own. After discussion with Holly Turnquist, the students' teacher, we decided to put in trails at the



Monona Grove students demonstrating different work ethics.

north end of the park. This was a big challenge since there were boulders that needed to be cleared from the steep embankment just to get to the area. But the students were really excited about the site and started putting in the path right away.

They cut all the vegetation on the trail and put down wood chips. With grant money from the Madison Area Master Gardeners, we put in railroad ties for steps.

Never underestimate the ingenuity of teens when they face a challenge that they are enabled to solve! We have put in native plants and shrubs, and will be putting in a tree this fall. Additionally, the students have made Aldo Leopold benches and installed a split-rail fence. We also have a picnic table-and-a-half. That's right – someone cut the wood wrong and we ended up with half a picnic table.

We've had some setbacks with the older trails becoming a mess of overgrown vegetation. Communication difficulties with the town road crews led to their dumping piles of road material in front of the trail entrances. Although the piles were moved to a different area, during the process of negotiations we lost access to a butterfly garden, a dry hill prairie, and a woodland area that we developed. We hope to regain these areas in the future.

The last time I was out at the park with the students, one of the them asked me two very interesting questions. "When we have all the overgrown vegetation removed, how are we going to keep it from coming back?" And, "What are we going to plant amongst all the boulders?" This teen was looking to the future of the park. She also said she was looking forward to when it was all cleaned up.

The teens will be back this fall, and I'm looking forward to another opportunity to work with a bunch of great young people. I hope their enthusiasm will inspire others to come work in, or just visit the park. *



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Grandma's Bleeding Hearts

By Mandy Ploch

If you have come to Wild Ones as I have – from a background of traditional flowerbeds and mowed turf grass – you may wonder how some of your favorite plants fit into the Wild Ones picture. Grandma's bleeding hearts, the lilacs that remind you of the last days of school, a favorite plant given by a departed friend – all might have special meaning to a gardener embracing the Wild Ones philosophy of ecological harmony.

To my mind, any implementation of plants native to your area is a step toward healing the Earth and providing a link to the pre-settlement ecology. I have met new and not-so-new members who feel they need to apologize for having non-native plants in their gardens. I feel bad that they feel uneasy about this. Very few of us came into natural gardening as purists. The continuum ranges from people who have only purple coneflowers for the birds, bees, and butterflies they attract, to the enthusiastic environmentalist who understands plant communities and is working to eliminate all non-native plants from their property. There is room for all in Wild Ones. Just being a part of Wild Ones puts members in a setting that allows for learning the whys and wherefores of the importance of harmony with nature. Members travel that path at their own pace. There is also room for treasured plants that carry memories, which are part of our humanity.

Should you be venturing forth, I would like to suggest some of my favorite native plants to work into your traditional perennial beds. You will enjoy telling admirers that these native plants were fully ensconced here long before their ancestors were.

In sunny sites of the upper Midwest/Northeast, prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*), makes a great edger. Prairie dropseed, (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) and little bluestem (*Andropogon scoparius*) grasses add soft punctuation marks. Rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), used as a focal point is sure to provoke interest. Native bluestars (*Amsonia* spp.) can be used as a 3-1/2-foot non-woody hedge. False indigo (*Baptisia* spp.) is a stunning shrub-like accent.

In shady sites where hosta seems to multiply out of all proportion, try wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), Pennsylvania sedge, (*Carex pensylvanica*), Solomon's seal, (*Polygonatum biflorum*), or Solomon's plume, (*Smilacina racemosa*), baneberry (*Actaea* spp.), and various ferns for continuous foliage after the lovely spring ephemerals have retreated for the year.

In many parts of the country, the ubiquitous and disease-plagued crabapple can be replaced with serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.) for four-season interest instead of ten days of apple flowers. If you have an existing canopy, many viburnums and witchhazel, (*Hamamelis virginiana*) are great wildlife food sources as well as fall color accents.

Savor grandma's bleeding hearts. No apologies are needed. But add or replace your existing no-emotional-connection plants with native ones suitable to your site. Gardening is the slowest of the performing arts. Enjoy the ride!

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The Grapevine

By Maryann Whitman

Plant Diversity and Ecosystem Functioning

In a study that mimicked the natural order of species loss in a grassland ecosystem, researchers found that declining biodiversity greatly reduced resistance to invasive species, and that the presence of even small numbers of rare species had profound functional effects. The results have important implications for understanding the biodiversity crisis.

Previous experiments relied on random species removal rather than realistic patterns of loss. When natural patterns and processes are replicated, a more realistic loss scenario is generated: entire groups of plants with unique functions disappeared faster than expected by chance, and invader resistance declined dramatically. The results suggest that biodiversity losses in natural systems can have far greater impacts than indicated by randomized-loss experiments.

The more plant diversity in the experimental plots, the less successful the invader (as measured by bio-mass produced).

"Each species, no matter how few in number, potentially provides different services within the ecosystem," explained Erika S. Zavaleta, one of the researchers from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

"Those extra species in our study are functionally unique. They are alive at different times of the year, and their roots are at different depths," she said. "It turns out that very rare things can matter a lot."

Other research has shown that more diverse communities use resources more efficiently, from water and nutrients to light, said Zavaleta. "By monopolizing resources, they're keeping invaders away," she added. "With fewer species, there are holes in the system and invaders can come in. Just a couple of members of certain species can help plug those holes. There may be only a few sprinkled around, but they can still be exerting a big effect on the way the system works."

Zavaleta likens the ecosystem benefits of retaining rare species to the role of a child plugging a dike with his thumb. "It's a small difference that can have huge consequences," she said. "Most ecologists would like to see natural systems able to do that – resist accidental invasion."

Something I Noticed

I have several large, unwieldy, exotic cactuses that my husband is very fond of; and as a result, I tend to them and take them outdoors to play during the summer. Each fall we carry them in and I inspect the pots for any hitchhikers (tree frogs), and remove any fertile fruit so that it doesn't fall and produce more large unwieldy cactuses. One of these cactuses is a night bloomer that produces gorgeous, softball-size, heavily perfumed blossoms that last for exactly one night. By morning the blossom is wilted, signifying that the appropriate pollinator had visited during the night. Or at least this has been the routine in the past.

This year, once again I saw the blossoms, but they behaved differently. They lasted for more than one night. In the fall when the plants came in I found no fertile fruit on them.

The only thing that occurs to me as an answer to this mysterious situation is that the appropriate night-flying pollinators were missing this year.

I wonder how many of the native plants in the area also missed being visited by these same pollinators.

It May No Longer Be Safe to Plant a Tree

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs), in combination with nitrogen oxides, are responsible for ground level ozone and smog. Smog has both health and environmental impacts. While industry has dramatically cut its emissions of these pollutants, the journal, *Global Change Biology*, (vol. 10, p1737), reports that those cuts have been more than offset by the amount of VOCs churned out by trees.

Researchers at Princeton University used the U.S. Forest Service Industry Analysis, a database of 250,000 randomly sampled forest plots around the country, and the known VOC emission rate for each tree species for the study.

They calculated that vegetal sources of certain VOCs rose by 17% during the 1980s – equivalent to three times the industrial reductions. Farmland reverting to scrub, pine plantations, and the "invasive" sweet gum tree (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) were behind most of the increases in the United States.

The word "invasive" was used in the scientific report. American sweet gum is in fact native to the United States, from Connecticut south to Florida, and on into Central America. It has been planted for its valuable timber and for the styrax it produces, which is important to medicine and perfumery. It's also a hardy ornamental shade tree, with brilliant autumn coloring, used for street and house plantings. I would have preferred they use a term like "successful self-seeding" instead of "invasive."

Waipuna

The Bureau of Land Management in Oregon is testing a method of killing weeds that basically involves steam-killing them. Water at 200 degrees (boiling point of water is 212 degrees) is the key actor. A surfactant foam that is a biodegradable mixture of corn and coconut sugar extracts, is delivered by wand, with the water, and serves to trap the steam, maintaining a temperature sufficient to cause a cellular collapse of the treated above-ground vegetation. By the same method, the seed bank at the soil surface is depleted. Since it is not toxic, problems associated with wind blown chemicals and urban runoff are non-existent.

It has been found to be most effective on all seedlings, some forbs, and species of grasses like false-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), an invasive woodland grass rapidly expanding in the Pacific Northwest. It is less effective on woody species and species with extensive root systems.

A drawback for the home-owner/user is the cost of the machinery needed to deliver the very inexpensive foam. *



Purple coneflower in winter. Kumquat Prairie, Minnesota.

With changing federal laws governing water quality, many municipalities are enacting storm water management plans that require homeowners to disconnect their downspouts from the municipal sewage system. The most self-evident ways to deal with this water are to recycle it somehow, evaporate it, or infiltrate it into the soil. The procedures developed to handle storm water vary dramatically from community to community – catch basins, infiltration systems, and open ditches. Whatever method is chosen, it is more easily accomplished on a small scale than large. Many homeowners are opting for infiltration in the form of “rain gardens.” Anyone who has ever put shovel to soil knows that infiltration is most easily accomplished on sandy soil and almost impossible on clay soil.

The concept behind a rain garden is quite straightforward: it is designed with a central depression to retain rainwater runoff and give it time to seep into the soil. This infiltration helps recharge groundwater and protects local water quality by reducing polluted runoff. Rain gardens can feature hardy native plant species that thrive without fertilizers and pesticides. These native plants also have elaborate root systems that create channels into the soil causing it to more readily absorb water.

The traditional turf-style lawn creates an impervious surface, and standard turf-care practices often have a higher environmental impact than the limited care required for native plants. Your rain garden will also attract new friends. Not only will neighbors admire the vibrant health of a well-designed garden, but also birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects will find your yard more interesting than any mowed grass lawn.

What About My Soil?

Whether over the soil or through it – water moves. And when it moves across hard surfaces, it moves very differently than when it moves across and into soil. Infiltration of water is key to a successful rain garden, and soils vary greatly in drainage capability. Your rain garden –

or technically speaking, bioretention pond – must be able to absorb the water coming off your sidewalk or from your downspout within two days. According to most professionals, a true rain garden has wildlife and water quality benefits. So without this rate of drainage you’ll miss out on the groundwater recharge and storm water management advantages of soil infiltration.

RAIN GARDENS ON CLAY SOIL SITES

If all the world’s water were to fit into a gallon jug, the amount of fresh water would be just one tablespoon full. Yet almost half of our nation’s 3.6 million miles of rivers and streams are threatened or impaired. Search out practical tips on things you can do to protect and improve the quality of the rivers close to you. – The Nature Conservancy

By Beth Storey



Above: A well-planned and done rain garden need not look particularly different from the usual flower bed. A discriminating eye will of course recognize the native plants.

Right: This informal kidney shape is comfortable to lay out and work with. It’s also easy to enlarge this shape if the need arises.

Sandy soil, which drains well, feels gritty and coarse. Clay soil is sticky, clumpy, and will require different preparation. If the site you’ve selected (*see sidebar*) seems to have clay soil, test the drainage with a percolation test by digging a hole 8 inches wide and 8 inches deep. Pour a bucket of water into the hole and allow it all to infiltrate. Pour in another bucket of water and monitor how long it takes to sink in. If infiltration

is slower than 1 inch per hour you’ll have to do extra work to improve the soil’s absorption ability.

Soil Replacement

If you have slow-draining clay soil, you’ll have to excavate the clay. Remove the top 10 to 12 inches of soil and replace with a composition of roughly 40% sand, 20% topsoil, 20% compost, and 20% clay.

This soil mix will support plant growth and improve infiltration. Leaving a small percentage of clay in the mix will prevent a “layering effect.” In other words, if no clay is mixed into the replacement mix, plant roots may behave as if they were in a clay bottomed pot and stay in the top layer of soil, and water will not move through the soil as is your intention.

In a similar approach, 3 to 6 inches of clay soil can be removed, replaced with a sand/topsoil/compost mixture, and tilled 4 to 6 inches. Gardens with these types of replacement soils are often planted with wet prairie species, and the very center of the garden is made a bit shallower (less than 6 inches) to increase absorption rates.

Photos by Roger Bannerman, Wisconsin DNR.



Size and Slope

The typical rain garden is 150 square feet (the size of a 10 x 15-foot room) and 4 to 6 inches deep. But for more detailed instructions on determining the appropriate size for your garden based on the area that will drain to it, see *Rain Gardens: A How-To Manual for Homeowners* from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. (I also like raingardens.org but it suggests *Equisetum* which is invasive and

impossible to eradicate). The garden will be deeper at the outer edge and slope upward to 3 to 6 inches at the center. The center of the garden should be as level as possible to create the greatest amount of surface area for water to infiltrate. Because creating a level garden base is so important, an area with a slope greater than 10% is not a desirable site for your garden. Follow these steps to find the slope of your lawn (see illustration below):

Plant Selection

The temporary pool created by an occasional summer thunderstorm will be attractive to thirsty birds and other wildlife, but this fluctuation in water level makes plant selection important. The soil will retain the greatest amount of moisture at the center of your garden and should be planted with species native that tolerate wet, clay soils and that are native to your area. Note that these plant lists are most appropriate for the Northeast and upper Midwest:

Wildflowers

Sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*)
Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)
New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*)
Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*)
Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*)
Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)
Prairie Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnostachya*)
Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)
Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*)
Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*)
Common Ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*)

Grasses

Fringed brome (*Bromus ciliatus*)
Porcupine Sedge (*Carex hystericina*)
Fox Sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*)
Cord Grass (*Spartina pectinata*)

Species suited to the drier soil on the upper edges of the rain garden include:

Wildflowers

Nodding Pink Onion (*Allium cernuum*)
Lead Plant (*Amorpha canescens*)
White Wild Indigo (*Baptisia leucantha*)
Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)
Purple Prairie Clover (*Petalostemum purpureum*)
Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
Stiff Goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*)

Grasses

Sideoats Grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*)
Prairie Brome (*Bromus kalmii*)
Copper-shouldered oval sedge (*Carex bicknellii*)
Narrow-leaved oval sedge (*Carex squarrosa*)

Native Plant Landscaping

Another option for implementing some storm water management in a clay-rich garden site is to replace turf grass with

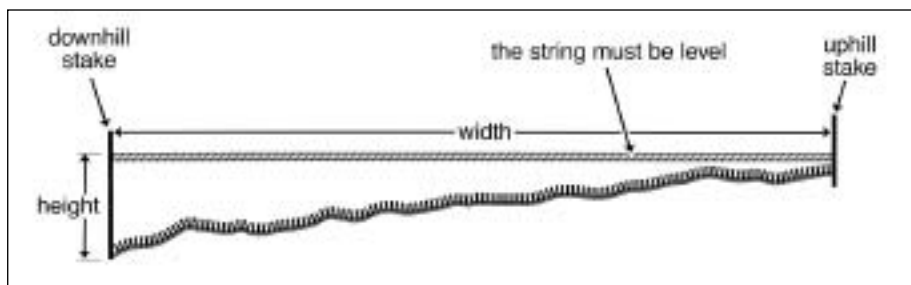


Note the roto-tiller in the background. To increase infiltration, it's easier to break up the soil and work in amendments with a tiller.

Choosing a Site for Your Rain Garden

Locate your garden at least 10 feet away from structures to avoid water seeping into foundations. ■ Low, wet areas in your lawn are not good choices since these are areas where infiltration is slow. ■ Look for sunny areas that are less than a 10% grade. ■ Avoid areas near a septic system. ■ For more info on preservation and restoration of native plant communities, see www.for-wild.org/native.html.

wet-tolerant native plants without creating a depression. Native plants will greatly improve the clay site by making the best use of water and soil resources, and also build up the soil. Landscaping in clay without a depression will not technically create a rain garden, but runoff will still be reduced since deep-rooted natives create channels for infiltration in even the tightest clay soils.



Determining Your Slope. Place a stake at the uphill end of your proposed garden site, and another at the downhill end. ■ Tie a string between stakes and make the string horizontal using a level. ■ Measure the width in inches between the stakes and the height in inches on the downhill stake between the string and the ground. ■ Divide height by width; multiply by 100 to find the lawn's slope. It should be less than 10% slope, and 3 to 6 inches deep: $\text{Height/Width} \times 100 = \% \text{ slope}$. Drawing by Bruce Webendorfer. University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. *Raingardens: A How-To Manual for Homeowners*, 2003. University of Wisconsin Extension, UWEX Publication GWQ037.

This garden will also attract desirable wildlife and beneficial insects. Some wet prairie species that grow in clay soils include blue flag iris (*Iris versicolor*), water plantain (*Alisma subcordatum*), porcupine sedge (*Carex hystericina*), and some bulrushes (*Scirpus atrovirens*, *Scirpus acutus*).

Mosquito Concerns

While planning their rain gardens, some homeowners worry about creating mosquito-breeding grounds. Mosquitoes, however, need at least five days to hatch eggs, and develop beyond the water-obligate pupa stage, longer than the two-day maximum that standing water should remain in a properly built rain garden. A garden that dries out completely in the proper amount of time should not produce mosquitoes. This makes attention to good garden design even more important – garden size, slope, soil type, and drainage are crucial. And, once again, rain gardens attract beneficial insects and animals that aid in keeping mosquito populations in check. *

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CONVERSATIONS

Three Current Thinkers Weigh in on Our Environment Professors Wilson, Meyer, and...ummm...the Once-ler?

By Janice Cook

Recently, I was fortunate enough to hear Dr. E. O. Wilson, of Harvard. His talk was on *The Future of Life*, the same title as his newest book. It's a vast subject, and he covered it from a broadly based perspective.

He used the acronym, **HIPPO**, to describe the basic problems facing the Earth:

H is for habitat destruction.

I is for invasive species taking over many habitats worldwide.

P for population growth.

P for pollution.

O for the over-harvesting of forests, fisheries, birds, land.

I'm sure that you quickly see the inter-relationships among these five items. Dr. Wilson used statements like our "ruinous environmental practices" and that we, as a society, are in a "freefall of rising consumption and rising population."

The other speaker who has moved me to much contemplation is Stephen M. Meyer of MIT. His paper, "End of the Wild," is on the Boston Review page on the internet. His point is that the wild is already functionally gone. Wild lands are fantasies. What he predicts is relicts living in protected regulated refuges and preserves. These species, though protected, would still run into boundary conflicts, problems with genetic diversity, management, and all of the above HIPPO predicaments, plus the changes due to global warming. He paints a very gloomy and sobering picture for those of us planting our little plots. The daily news does not contradict his assessment of societal values and pop diversions.

Yet E. O. Wilson held out great hope. It would only take 1/1000 of the world's annual domestic product to save what he describes as twenty-five terrestrial hot spots, in turn protecting 40% of the world's species. At the same time the financing would go a long way to "raise the poor to an enduring way of life" while preserving bio-diversity through financing, conservation easements, and education.

Because of his experience working with politicians through worldwide conservation organizations, he feels that even political conservatives are interested in conservation, so long as there is concrete

recognition of the problems, understanding of the steps for a solution, education of the public, and a finite cost estimate.

"All it will take is a moral commitment." He thinks we can tip the balance. And, maybe we can. After all, smoking was once universally accepted; now it is the exception. Civil rights became the rule, not the exception. We have organizations to protect our food and drugs.

I highly recommend that you read both points of view, and also read the *The Lorax*, by Dr. Seuss. The Lorax and the Once-ler explained the HIPPO problem years ago. Dr. Seuss even alluded to the need for our moral commitment with, "But now, says the Once-ler, now that you're here, the word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear, unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not." *

To read the complete poem *The Lorax* go to www.geekteacher.net/lorax.html.

To read Stephen Meyer's treatise go to www.bostonreview.net/BR29.2/meyer.html.



Photo by Theo Andersen, Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter. South Woods, Ripon, Wisconsin, during a Wild Ones field trip.

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In total, Wild Ones National received funds through this year's conference totaling nearly \$2,500 from their Silent Auction, merchandise sales, book sales, and from donations. This was a great success for our first effort at fundraising during a Wild Ones annual meeting/conference.

A thank you also goes out to the **Environmental Protection Agency** for its assistance in printing Wild Ones' most recent book offering. Formerly known as the *Wild Ones Handbook*, this publication has been broadened to include information relative to the entire United States, and retitled as *Wild Ones Landscaping with Native Plants*. It can be purchased through the Wild Store at www.for-wild.org/store/#HAND or by calling the national office, toll-free, at 877-394-9453. The original Midwest version of this publication, although no longer available in print, can be viewed in its entirety at www.epa.gov/greenacres/wildones/.



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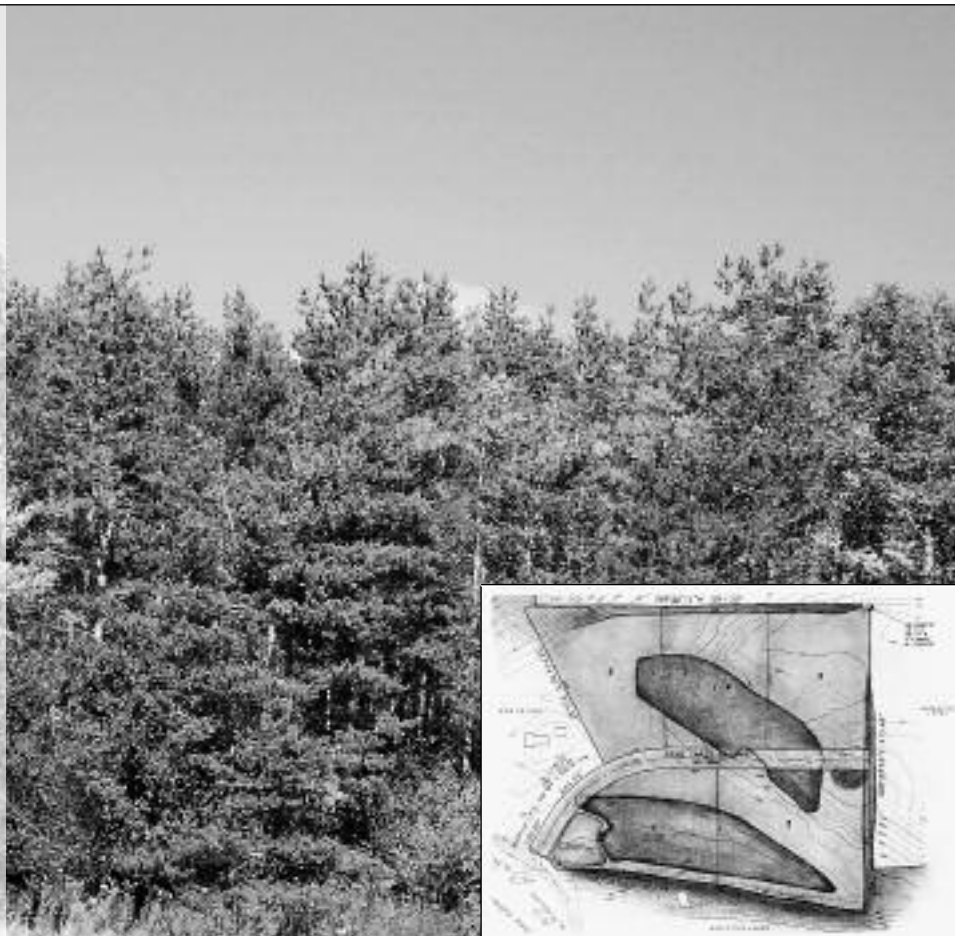
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Chapter Notes some good ideas

The Twin Cities (MN) Chapter of northwest Minneapolis area reports that at their May meeting they had a wonderful native woodland tour of four gardens – despite the rain. Like Steve Hazell's song, *This Land's in Harmony*, says, "Stormy weather come our way, Wild Ones go out anyway." Three of the hosts were gifted membership subscriptions. – *Marty Rice, President*

The Fox Valley (WI) Chapter of the Appleton/Oshkosh area in Wisconsin, met at member Barb Schrage's house for their September program. As the winner of their Extreme Makeover Contest this spring, Barb received a consultation by Randal Maurer of Native Solutions and a demonstration planting of native plants on her property. The members saw the results of the planting and heard Randal's advice for incorporating natural landscaping with native plants into her site. This was also be the site for picking up orders for the fall Wild Ones plant sale. – *Karen Syverson, Co-President*

This fall, volunteers from the **Columbus (OH) Chapter** participated in the Affair of the Hort at Inniswood Metro Gardens in Columbus, Ohio. Neil Diboll of Prairie Nursery in Wisconsin spoke during this two-day event. As a representative of Wild Ones, Marilyn Logue, president of the chapter, spoke in the exhibitor's tent on "Native Plants for Attracting Backyard Wildlife." Two volunteers were scheduled for each time slot. – *Marilyn Logue, President*



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The Meeting Place

Chapters, please send your chapter contact information to:
Calendar Coordinator Mary Paquette
N2026 Cedar Road • Adell, Wisconsin 53001
920-994-2505 • meeting@for-wild.org
Chapter ID numbers are listed after names.

Meet us online at www.for-wild.org



ILLINOIS

Greater DuPage Chapter #9

Message Center: 630-415-IDIG
Pat Clancy 630-964-0448, clancypj2@aol.com
Third Thursday Jan., Feb., Mar., Sept., Oct.,
Nov., 7 p.m. Willowbrook Wildlife Center,
525 South Park Blvd. (at 22nd Street), Glen Ellyn.
See web site for details.

Lake-To-Prairie Chapter #11

Karen Wisol 847-548-1650
Meetings at Prairie Crossing, Grayslake, west side
of Rt. 45, south of IL 120, north of IL 137.

Macomb Chapter #42 (Seedling)

Margaret Ovitt 309-836-6231
card@macomb.com
Macomb, Springfield, Decatur area.

North Park Chapter #27

Bob Porter 312-744-5472
bobporter@chicagoparkdistrict.com
Second Thursday, 7 p.m.,
North Park Nature Center
5801 N. Pulaski, Chicago

Rock River Valley Chapter #21

Tim Lewis 815-874-3468
natives.tim@insightbb.com
Third Thursday, 7 p.m., usually at Burpee Museum
of Natural History, 737 N. Main St., Rockford.

INDIANA

Gibson Woods Chapter #38

Joy Bower 219-844-3188 jbower1126@aol.com
First Saturday during winter, 10 a.m.,
Gibson Woods Nature Center,
6201 Parrish Ave., Hammond

KENTUCKY

Frankfort Chapter #24

Katie Clark 502-226-4766 katieclark@vol.com
Second Monday, 5:30 p.m.,
Salato Wildlife Education Center
Greenhouse #1 Game Farm Rd, Frankfort
off US 60 W (Louisville Rd.).

Lexington Chapter #64

Susan Hofmann 859-252-8148
sillyserpent@wildmail.com
First Wednesday of month, 7:30 p.m.,
McConnell Spring

Louisville Metrowild Chapter #26

Portia Brown 502-454-4007
wildones-lou@insightbb.com
Fourth Saturday of January and February at
Wildflower Woods, Cherokee
See web site for meeting schedule.
Woods Saturday Work Day:
Ward Wilson: 502-299-0331,
ward@wwilson.net
Allan Nations: 502-456-3275,
alan.nations@loukymetro.org

MAINE

The Maine Chapter #75 (Seedling)

Barbara Murphy 207-743-6329
bmurphy@umext.maine.edu
Oxford County

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor Chapter #3

Susan Bryan 734-622-9997
susanbryanhsieh@yahoo.com
Second Wednesday of month (except April), 7 p.m.,
Matthaei Botanical Garden, Room 125

Calhoun County Chapter #39

Carol Spanninga 517-857-3766
spanninga8@hotmail.com
Fourth Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Calhoun Intermediate School District building
on G Drive N. at Old US27, Marshall.

Central Upper Peninsula Chapter #61

Pat Landry 906-428-4053
aries1@chartermi.net

Detroit Metro Chapter #47

Connie Manley 248-538-0654
cmanfarm@mich.distance.net
Meeting dates and times vary. Please call for details.

Flint Chapter #32

Ginny Knag 810-694-4335
mtknag@ameritech.net
Second Thursday, 7 p.m.,
Woodside Church, 1509 E. Court St., Flint

Kalamazoo Area Chapter #37

Nancy & Tom Small 616-381-4946
Fourth Wednesday of month, 7:30 p.m.
Christian Church, 2208 Winchell, Kalamazoo

Red Cedar Chapter #41

Mark Ritzenhein 517-336-0965 mrirtz@acd.net
Third Wednesday, 7-9 p.m.
Room 139, Radiology, MSU campus.
For details: www.for-wild.org/redcedar

Oakland Chapter #34

Barbara Bray 248-601-6405
kbray@bigzoo.net
Third Thursday, 7 p.m.,
Old Oakland Township Parks/Police Building,
4392 Collins Rd., Oakland Township.
See web site for program info.

MINNESOTA

Arrowhead Chapter #48

Carol Andrews 218-727-9340
candrews@barr.com
September through April, Wednesdays 6 p.m.,
Hartley Nature Center.

Otter Tail Chapter #25

Karen Terry 218-736-5520 terry714@ptel.com
Fourth Monday, 7 p.m.,
Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, Fergus Falls

St. Cloud Chapter #29

Greg Shirley 320-259-0825 shirley198@charter.net
Fourth Monday, 6:30 p.m., Heritage Nature Center.

St. Croix Oak Savanna Chapter #71

Mary-Clare Holst 651-351-7351
mcholst_7351@msn.com
Third Thursday, 7 p.m., Stillwater Town Hall

Twin Cities Chapter #56

Marty Rice 952-927-6531 jcrmrfr@msn.com
Meetings third Tuesday of the month, Social/set-up,
6:30 p.m., meeting 7 p.m.,
Nokomis Community Center,
2401 E. Minnehaha Pkwy, Mpls.

MISSOURI

Mid-Missouri Chapter #49

Scott Hamilton 573-882-9909 x3257
scott.hamilton@mdc.mo.gov
Second Saturday, 10 a.m.
Location varies. See: wildones.missouri.org

St. Louis Chapter #31

Scott Woodbury 636-451-3512
scott.woodbury@mobot.org
First Wednesday except January, 6:00 p.m.
Location varies. See web site.

NEW YORK

Habitat Gardening Club of Central New York #76

Janet Allen 315-487-5742
jkallen@twcny.rr.com
Meeting January 23, 2 p.m., Liverpool Library,
310 Tulip St., Liverpool 13088

OHIO

Greater Cincinnati Chapter #62

Roberta Trombly 513-751-6183,
btrombly@fuse.net
Chris McCullough: 513-860-4959,
gordchris@fuse.net
Monthly meetings or field trips; see web site.

Columbus Chapter #4

Marilyn Logue 614-237-2534,
mlogue@sprintmail.com
Second Saturday, 10 a.m.,
Innis House, Inniswood Metropolitan Park,
940 Hempstead Rd., Westerville
Field trips: See web site or contact above.

Maumee Valley Chapter #66 (Seedling)

Jan Hunter 419-878-7273
naturallynative@buckeye-express.com

Toledo Chapter #77 (Seedling)

Todd Crail 419-539-6810
tcraill@utnet.utoledo.edu

Western Reserve Chapter #73

Barb Holtz 440-473-3370
bph@clevelandmetroparks.com
Meetings every third Thursday, 7 p.m.,
North Chagrin Nature Center (North Chagrin
Reservation, Cleveland Metroparks, off Rte. 91
in Willoughby Hills).

Continued next page.



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Wild Ones National Quarterly Board Meetings

All members are invited and encouraged to attend the quarterly meetings of the National Board of Directors. If you'd like to participate in the meeting by conference call, please contact the national office (toll-free) at 877-394-9453 for instructions.

February 26 Calhoun Chapter (Q01) at the Albion College Whitehouse Nature Center in Albion, Michigan. Following the board meeting, we will be touring the nature center at the college so please bring hiking boots and dress for the weather.

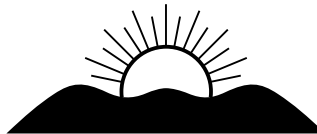
May 5 Menomonee River Valley Chapter (Q02) at Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

September 9 & 10 Twin Cities Chapter (Q03 and annual meeting) at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

October 8 Greater Cincinnati Chapter (Q04) at Cincinnati, Ohio.

Other Conferences and Meetings

February 26, Crystal Lake, Illinois
The Wildflower Preservation and Propagation



On the Horizon

Committee of the McHenry County Defenders (Illinois) presents the 2005 Natural Landscaping Seminar, "From

Vast Spaces to Cozy Places, Natural Landscapes in Your Own Backyard." McHenry County

College, 8900 U.S. Route 14, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. E-mail forsix@aol.com for information.

March 6-7, East Lansing, Michigan

Wildflower Association of Michigan 17th Annual Conference. Kellogg Center on Michigan State University campus. Keynote speaker: C. Colston Burrell, garden designer, photographer, naturalist, and award-winning author, *Native Plants and Ecological Design: Myths and Realities*. For further information and registration form (PDF), go to www.wildflowersmich.org or contact Marilyn Case, Registrar, 15232 24 Mile Road, Albion, Michigan 49224; phone 517-630-8547 or e-mail MCase15300@aol.com.

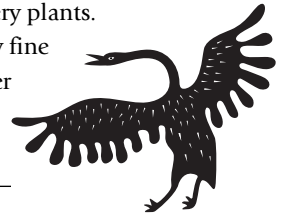
For information on other relative native landscaping conferences, please see Wild Ones web site at www.for-wild.org/chapters/Conf.

Next year's Annual Meeting/Conference will be held in Minneapolis-St. Paul.

New Business Members

Wild Ones is pleased to have **Northern Sunset Perennials** renew their business membership. Northern Sunset Perennials is a wholesaler of nursery plants.

Look for the "Native, Naturally!" logo on the tag available at many fine retailers in Southeast Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. For further information, go to www.NorthernSunset.com or e-mail info@northernsunset.com.



The Meeting Place (continued from previous page)

PENNSYLVANIA

Susquehanna Valley Chapter #68

Angela Eichelberger 717-793-8440
wild_ones@earthlink.net
Third Saturday, 5 p.m.
Spoutwood Farm, 4255 Pierceville Rd.,
Glen Rock, PA

WISCONSIN

Central Wisconsin Chapter #50

Dan Dieterich 715-346-2849
dan.dieterich@uwsp.edu
Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m., Rooms 1&2,
Portage County Extension Building,
1462 Strongs Ave., Stevens Point.
Times, places vary in summer. Check web site.

Coulee Region Chapter #67

Chuck Lee 608-785-2205, speakbobo@aol.com
Second Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
LaCrosse Main Branch Public Library

Door County Chapter #59

Judy Reninger 920-839-1182
jreninger@dcwis.com
Time & location vary; check web site.

Erin Chapter #57

Bob & Bev Hults 262-670-0445
twowildones@juno.com
Third Thursday, 7 p.m., Erin Town Hall,
1846 Hwy. 83, Hartford

Fox Valley Area Chapter #8

Karen Syverson 920-987-5587 ksyve@core.com
Sharon Duerkop 920-734-1419
sduerk@execpc.com
Meeting Thursday, Nov. 18, 7 p.m.,
Evergreen Retirement Center, Oshkosh, WI.

Green Bay Chapter #10

Debi Nitka 920-465-8512, debnitka@new.rr.com
Cindy Hermesen, 920-434-6866,
scentedgardens@athenet.com
Usually third Wednesday. Most meetings at Green
Bay Botanical Garden, 2600 Larsen Rd., except in
summer.

Lake Woods Chapter #72

Jeanne Munz 920-793-4452
flower_power@wildmail.com
Woodland Dunes Nature Center,
Hwy 310 just west of Two Rivers

Madison Chapter #13

Laurie Yahr 608-274-6539, yahrkahl@sbcglobal.net
Winter meetings, last Wednesday of the month.
See web site for details.

Menomonee River Area Chapter #16

Jan Koel 262-251-7175
Diane Holmes 262-628-2825
Indoor meetings: third Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.,
teachers' lounge, Valley View School,
W180 N8130 Town Hall Rd.,
Menomonee Falls.

Milwaukee North Chapter #18

Message Center: 414-299-9888
Second Saturday of month, 9:30 a.m.,
Schlitz Audubon Center,
1111 E. Brown Deer Rd., Bayside.

Milwaukee Southwest-Wehr Chapter #23

Message Center: 414-299-9888
Second Saturday, 1:30 p.m., Wehr Nature Center,
9701 W. College Ave., Franklin

Root River Area Chapter #43

Nan Calvert 262-681-4899
prairiedog@wi.rr.com
Sept.-May, first Saturday, 1:30-3 p.m.,
Riverbend Nature Center, Racine.

Wolf River Chapter #74

Marge Guyette 715-787-3482
jkgmeg@athenet.net
Menominee, Oconto & Waupaca counties.

Wisconsin Northwoods Chapter #63

Diane Willette 715-362-6870 diane@bfm.org
Fourth Monday of month, Fireside Room,
Univ. Transfer Center at Lake Julia Campus of
Nicolet Area Tech. College, Rhinelander area.

ordinance, the law must be drafted by the municipal attorney. Experience has shown that when committees get involved with the actual drafting of the ordinance, what emerges is an incomprehensible, ineffective, and complicated law. The goal is to make the law simple, and then simplify even further.

- *Meet With Your Client.* The final step in the maturation process is for “Johnny Prairie Seed” and the municipal attorney to meet with local government officials to adjust and fine-tune the draft ordinance. Keep changes simple and do not engage in a comprehensive rewrite.

- *Reconvene the Committee.* To allow the native landscape program to blossom in the community, the sixth step in the Johnny Prairie Seed model is to reconvene the citizens committee to coordinate (i) events, (ii) publications, (iii) short-term and long-term projects, (iv) any other aspects of the natural landscape project, such as integrating the local historical society, or other community aspects into the process.

Blossom

- *Get It Passed.* The municipal council should pass the ordinance as part of a ceremony that presents the concept as part of an overall city beautification and quality of life initiative.

Full Bloom

Once the ordinance is passed, the municipality must take that project – now in full bloom – and continue to promote it.

- First, municipal properties should be naturally landscaped.
- Second, municipal resources should be made available to homeowners who wish to landscape with native plants. This doesn’t mean that the city should pay the homeowners to plant native plants, but if the municipality has the resources for a staff botanist or naturalist, that person’s services should be made available to residents.
- Many cities also have beautification projects where they share the cost of street side plantings or trees with homeowners. The trees offered should all be native.
- Publications should be made available to educate and encourage others to get involved in the natural landscaping efforts. Some communities, like the city of Highland Park, Illinois, and Dane County, Wisconsin have published entire brochures on natural landscaping in their communities.

Ordinance Guidelines

The following guidelines should be used by communities in drafting new weed ordinances that are aimed at a more benign relationship between yards and nature:

- The ordinance should protect the fundamental right of residents to choose their own landscaping.
- The ordinance should apply equally to all residents, as well as the municipality itself and the state, if possible.
- Any restrictions should have a rational basis, i.e., a legitimate interest in public health, safety, or welfare.
- The ordinance should not require the filing of an application, statement of intent, or management plan, and there should be no review or approval process, or fees assessed against residents who intend to engage in legitimate natural landscaping.
- In order to avoid harassment of natural landscapers, the municipality’s “weed commissioners” who will enforce the Natural Landscaping Ordinance should be trained to distinguish between those people who are growing permitted natural landscapes and those with unpermitted growth.

- Enforcement of the ordinance should be undertaken through due process of law that guarantees individuals the right to fair adjudication of their rights.

- The ordinance should actively address the problems of environmental degradation brought about by proliferation of high maintenance monoculture landscapes and the indiscriminate use of toxic chemicals in landscape management. It should encourage the preservation and restoration of diverse, biologically stable natural plant communities, and environmentally sound practices. This would reduce not only contaminants to the environment such as pesticides, fertilizers, pollutants, and noise, but would help reduce the accumulation of yard waste.

Ordinance Model

A model for a good, fair, and workable modified weed ordinance, one that is simple, easily understood, and allows for natural landscaping, is as follows:

Public Nuisance: Untended, Rank, and Unmanaged Vegetation

1. Prohibition

Untended, rank and unmanaged growth of vegetation on any property within the City which is visible from any public way, street, sidewalk, or alley is declared to be a public nuisance and may be abated in accordance with the procedures set forth in 2-3 of this Ordinance. This prohibition shall not apply to vegetation native to [State or region], provided there is a setback of not less than four (4) feet from the front lot line of vegetation not in excess of eighteen (18) inches exclusive of trees and shrubs.

2. Procedure

The City shall issue a written citation to a Landowner whose property is in violation of Section 1 of this Ordinance. This citation shall inform said Landowner of the basis of the citation and shall include the following information:

- (1) the date of any inspection and the name of the inspector; and
- (2) the names and addresses of any neighbor(s) of the Landowner or other person(s) who contacted the City or was contacted by the City regarding the alleged violation of 1 of this Ordinance. The Citation shall be adjudicated in accordance with Art. _____, of the Municipal Code relating to adjudication of [traffic offenses].

3. Abatement and Penalty

Upon a finding of guilt in accordance with Section 2 of this Ordinance, the Landowner shall have twenty-eight (28) calendar days in which to abate the nuisance. If he/she does not act, the City may take whatever reasonable action is necessary to abate the nuisance. The costs of such abatement shall be assessed against the Landowner and shall constitute a fine, the collection of which may be made pursuant to the provisions of this Art. – [relating to the imposing a lien on the property].

The result is a community with a landscape ordinance made for the 21st century. Natural landscaping as municipal policy is about looking forward, but it also looks to the past, and recognizes that Mother Nature knows best. Long ago, she determined what plants are best suited to a particular place. The bottom line is that natural landscaping is not only a good idea; it is a key component for creating a healthier, more beautiful, and sustainable landscape in your community. We are a part of nature, not apart from nature. Natural landscaping is a concept that manifests that ethic, and it is an idea whose time has come. *

For more information about weed ordinances and natural landscaping go to the Wild Ones web site at www.for-wild.org/weedlaws/weedlaw.html or www.for-wild.org/landscap.html.

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Chapters listed in "The Meeting Place."

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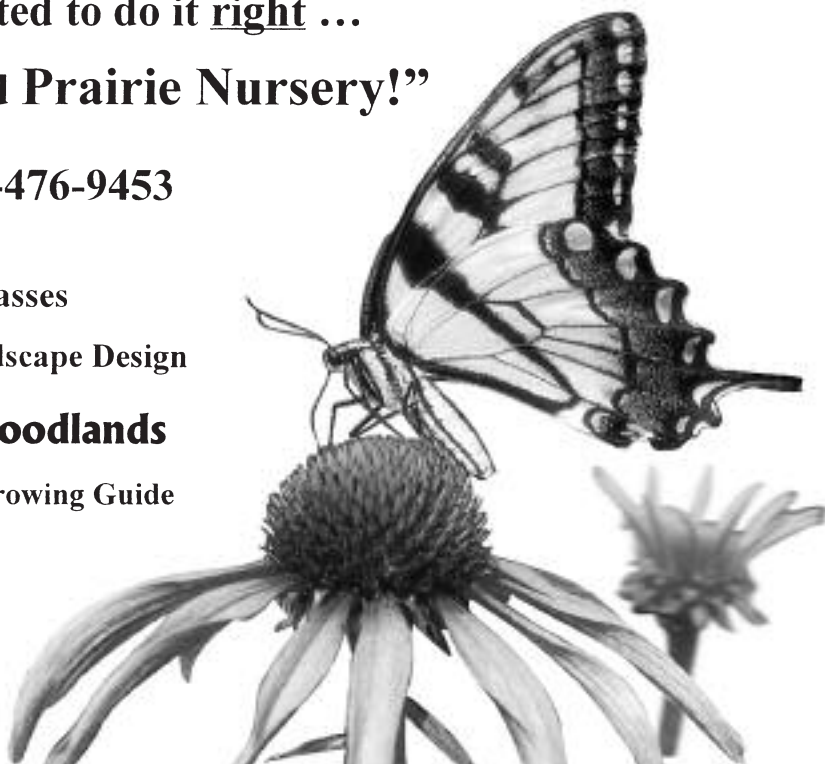
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You can mail your address information to Wild Ones, P.O. Box 1274, Appleton, Wisconsin 54912, call toll-free at 877-394-9453, or go to the Wild Ones members-only pages at www.for-wild.org.

Click on item 2 (Update Personal Membership Info) and enter the appropriate changes.

Maintaining Your Habitat In **WINTER**

By Maryann Whitman

Winter is here for us and for the wildlife with whom we share our landscapes.

We need to help them through the winter in the hopes that some will stay to nest in our gardens in the spring.

- Every few weeks clean your bird feeders with soap and hot water. You can get large bottle-cleaning brushes for cleaning your tube feeders. The cleaning is to prevent the spread of disease in what is an artificially concentrated population.

- High-calorie food is important throughout the winter months – suet, peanut butter smeared on pine cones, chopped dried fruit, and nuts.

- Provide fresh warm water on particularly frigid days. Empty and refill frozen bird-baths. If you find that a lot of animals come for the water, you might consider getting a small outdoor water heater.

We redirect the water discharged from our geothermal units (which heat our house) onto a frozen-over wetland. Every variety of two- and four-legged creature can be seen there at various times of day.



- Be sure to leave seed heads on both flowers and grass stalks. Small animals find refuge in the dried grass and leaves.

- To prevent damage, gently brush heavy snow off your evergreens.

- On icy walks and driveways consider using plain sand and non-toxic ice-melters – ammonium sulfate, calcium chloride, potassium chloride, and magnesium chloride will all melt ice, and (in reasonable quantities) won't damage vegetation. Stay away from rock salt, which is sodium chloride, even when in combination with one of the other salts just mentioned. It does damage vegetation.

- Repair old nesting boxes and put them back out immediately with a fistful of clean straw inside. Birds use them to roost in. One frosty morning I

watched as five bluebirds exited a bird house. They had been warm and protected during an arctic-like night.

- I hope you saved your Christmas tree and put it out in the back yard for the birds to shelter in.