

a voice
for the natural
landscaping
movement

Wild Ones

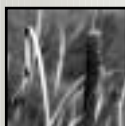
NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

JOURNAL

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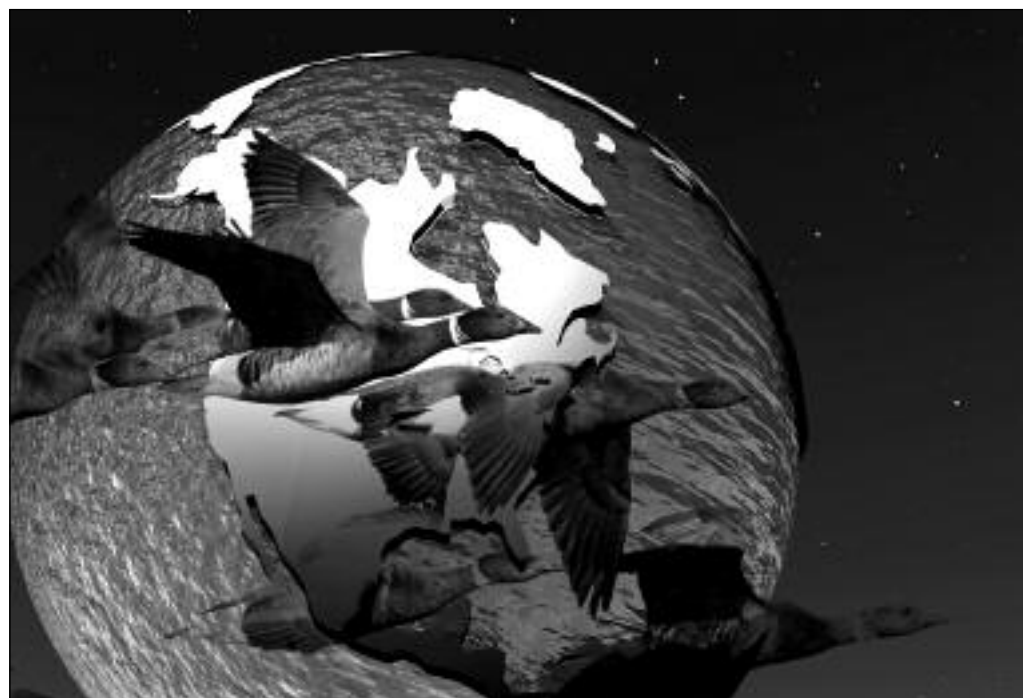
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Thank you. Back cover.

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



Rest Stops for the Weary

When you've flown 600 miles
without a break, a back yard full of
native plants is a welcome sight indeed.

By Janet Marinelli

A few days they're gone, replaced by yellow-rumped warblers, black-and-white warblers, and various vireos, flycatchers, and thrushes.

I've been known to complain about the two-and-a-half-hour drive from my Manhattan apartment to my family's summer cottage on Shelter Island. But at least I know where I can stop for some comfort food when I've had my fill of the road rage on the Long Island Expressway. Alas, that's not the case for migrating songbirds. The rigors of migration leave them in unfamiliar landscapes when they're close to their physiological limits. They don't have the luxury of seeking a better meal or a place to rest.

Every spring millions of migrants fly 600 miles or more from the Yucatan Peninsula clear across the Gulf of Mexico. The avian voyagers proceed in waves up through the East, Midwest, and Plains states. Many continue to the vast coniferous forests of Canada, or as far north as the Arctic. Species that breed in the western states, including the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher, may have to fly for hours over inhospitable terrain in the Chihuahuan Desert before they can find refuge in the relatively lush vegetation of bosques along the middle Rio Grande. And since the 1950s these biannual migratory marathons have become even more of a challenge: Vast stretches of natural habitat along North America's major coastal and inland

It isn't really spring in my yard until the palm warblers arrive. These pint-size songbirds with streaked breasts, bright olive rumps, and rufous caps are among the first migrants to find their way to my garden on Shelter Island, New York. Come April, they flit from branch to branch in the thicket of shrubs, young wild cherry and sassafras trees, and wild grape vines that edge the small moss lawn behind the house, feeding on tiny caterpillars and other emerging insects. In a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Advocacy: It's what we do. And we can't do it without our funding appeals.



The annual appeal letter has gone out to our membership, and here's hoping that each of you will have, or intend to respond in a positive manner by contributing to our communications programs! The Fast Forward Communications Campaign allows local membership to support our national effort in promoting the use of native plants in our landscaping. Please help make our third Fast Forward

Communications Campaign a huge success!

You will note in my appeal that I talk a great deal about advocacy. As suggested, the Board has been discussing this issue. The term "advocacy" may sound too political to some of our members. I would like to suggest that if Lorrie Otto and her peers did not advocate the use of native plants when this organization was founded, we would not have a national organization of 44 chapters and four seedling chapters in a dozen states, with approximately 2,800 members in 49 states and three Canadian provinces. Advocacy is a positive and powerful tool in spreading the word of the benefits of native plants in our landscapes. When we educate others on the use of native plants, we are advocating their use. How can the term "advocacy" be negative? It's what we do!

Also, as a postscript to my appeal, I talk briefly about a spring fundraiser that National will be initiating. As was suggested, our efforts to achieve 100 percent outside funding for the purchase of the National HQ were not successful. We have achieved partial funding. To raise the remaining funds necessary, we are appealing

to both our membership and to other benevolent sources. We appeal to our membership because their giving demonstrates an internal commitment to the future of our organization. We appeal to philanthropic agencies to increase our funding basis.

The term "advocacy" may be too political for some of our members, but what's wrong with saying it? After all, advocacy is what we do, and without advocacy we wouldn't be here.

These two funding appeals are very different in their basis. The F²C² III campaign is a regularly scheduled event to appeal to the generous giving spirit of our membership during the holiday season and the close of another year. The upcoming Capital Campaign is a rare occasion for committed members to provide a long-term legacy to Wild Ones. A National HQ will provide a physical presence on the landscape and an opportunity for us to demonstrate what our philosophy is. Please consider these differences and give to both in a manner that represents your commitment to Wild Ones and our future on this planet.

Thank you. •

Joe Powelka, Wild Ones National President
president@for-wild.org

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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Fabulous Photo Expo

We showed a few of the 2006 Wild Ones Photo Contest winners in a recent issue of the *Journal*, but it's hard to see the beautiful colors in those photos on a black-and-white page. Since these photo winners deserve to be seen in their natural color space, radiant RGB digital color, we have created an online digital exhibition of the contest-winning photos.

Go to www.ecoscaper.org/photo2006/ for a look. You'll see beautiful native plants, interesting bugs (not the computer kind), and even a stray Wild Ones member or two. Check it out. Get inspired. Be ready for next year's Wild Ones Photo Contest 2007.

Make Our Wild Ones Amazon-Associate Bookstore Your Technology Playground

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www.for-wild.org/store/bookstore/

Jim McCormac Will Be Keynote Speaker at Annual Meeting and Conference

Kathy MacDonald, Cincinnati (OH) Chapter, a member of the committee arranging our 2007 Wild Ones Annual Meeting and Conference, says that Jim McCormac, whose knowledge of "birds and botany" is outstanding, will be our keynote speaker.

Jim McCormac's Topic: In an increasingly urbanized landscape, the role of habitat restoration – backyards or bigger projects – takes on growing importance. The use of native flora is vital to the success of such projects. We'll explore some fantastic and little-known plants, and the interesting ecological relationships that spring up around them. Our urban landscapes become globally important when one considers their value to winged wildlife, and we'll look at the big picture of urban landscape roles. With native plants, we can paint a picture of beauty and biodiversity that no ornamental garden of non-natives can match.

Jim McCormac's Bio: Jim McCormac works for the Ohio Division of Wildlife, where he specializes in ornithology. Prior to that, he was a botanist for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Jim has botanized, birded, and otherwise explored nature throughout Ohio, North America, Central America, and beyond – and is intensely interested in relationships between flora and fauna. He has published numerous articles and papers on botany and ornithology, is author of *Birds of Ohio* (Lone Pine 2004), and is coauthor of the Ohio Floristic Quality Assessment Index, a methodology for evaluating the quality of habitats. He is at work on a book illustrating the best remaining natural areas in Ohio, his home state. •



Marty Rice Talks About the Ecoscaper Program



Marty Rice (left) receiving her Ecoscaper Level I pin.

By Marty Rice – Twin Cities (MN) Chapter

Not looking forward to the cold and gray couple of months ahead of us? Longing for some green and colorful plant life? Consider the Wild Ones Ecoscaper program – it's fun, it's green, and it's a great chance to read and think about summer landscaping with the natives! (Rather like reading about Hawaii in winter to keep warm, or the Antarctic in summer to keep cool.) You may find yourself starting to think about plans for your garden, or for your friends or neighbors. Or maybe a garden in some public spot or at a school or church. It's designed for those of us who don't have the time, talent and/or finances to become landscape designers or architects, but still understand and want to contribute to the growing interest in native landscaping. Of course, it's also the perfect credential for the "Show Me / Help Me" program. Consider signing up now – you have up to two years to complete each level. •

migration routes have been carved up and developed, contributing to the decline of some songbird species.

Much of what is recommended as “landscaping for birds” ends up helping blue jays, chickadees, and other species that flourish in the scattered trees and turf typical of suburbia. But we can do more, transforming our backyards into bed-and-breakfasts for migrants, and easing the plight of warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other threatened songbirds.

With all these problems, these flying migrants need our help

To ensure that they reach their breeding or wintering grounds alive, migrants must put on enormous amounts of fat. A blackpoll warbler, for example, which breeds in Canada, can almost double its weight, ballooning from about 12 grams (half an ounce) to more than 20 grams. The extra fat makes it possible for the tiny bird to fly nonstop between the New England coast and the north coast of South America. But most songbirds can't accumulate enough fat to make their trips in one continuous flight; they need to stop several times to rest and refuel. They depend on finding suitable “stopover” habitats, places with an abundant supply of emerging insects in spring, and fruits and bugs in fall.

The tiniest of all migrating birds are hummingbirds. In spring, 3-inch-long ruby-throated hummingbirds, which spend the winter as far south as Panama, begin the long flight across the Gulf of Mexico, making landfall in the southeastern states. Many continue up into southeastern Canada. Rufous hummingbirds, which winter in Mexico, move through the Pacific lowlands to nest as far north as Alaska – farther north than any other hummer. Hummingbirds look for both bugs and nectar from tube-shaped flowers.

If high-quality habitat is not available, even exhausted and emaciated migratory birds must continue until they find adequate food and cover. If they're too thin or weak to continue, they'll either starve or succumb to predators. It's estimated that half of all migrants heading south for the winter won't return to breed in spring.

Scientists who study songbird population declines have devoted most of their time to investigating losses of nesting and winter habitat. Until quite recently, stopover habitat received scant attention. However, according to the small but growing cadre of stopover ecologists, even small patches of stopover habitat can mean the difference between successful migration and starvation for many species. In one study, biologists compared the migrants' use of large, continuous bands of streamside vegetation with the use of

fragmented habitat islands, less than 2-1/2 miles long, in southeast Arizona. They found that migrating birds in need of refueling used the isolated patches as much as the larger corridors, if not more. Other studies have demonstrated that shelterbelts – long, narrow plantings of trees and

shrubs first promoted in the mid-1930s to reduce soil erosion – are important stopover habitats in the Plains states. After reviewing the existing research on habitat needs during migration, another group of scientists concluded that even habitat islands in the middle of urban and agricultural landscapes can provide much-needed stopping places for famished songbirds.

What we can do in our own yards.

In our own yards, we can make life easier for migrating land birds by providing areas with as many of the different layers of plants found in a healthy forest as possible: the tallest trees that form its roof or ceiling, smaller under-story trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. Vines often connect the various vertical layers, coming up bushes, and high into the trees. Landscapes with all these layers, especially shrubs loaded with berries, are magnets for migrating songbirds. Because these shrubs appeal to people, too, “gardens can often provide good stopover habitat,” says Robert Askins, a biologist at Connecticut College and the author of *Restoring North America's Birds*.

The goal is to re-create the gamut of habitat niches preferred by different species. Evidence suggests that migrant songbirds aren't fussy about vegetation type, the particular species that make up a plant community – an oak and hickory forest, for example, or a boreal forest of spruces and firs. Blackburnian warblers, for example, breed in the coniferous forests of Canada, but feed in deciduous forests while migrating through most of the United States. However, migrant songbirds are more particular about vegetation *structure* and vertical layers: The mourning warbler has a definite affinity for shrubby thickets, whereas the magnolia warbler favors both tall and under-story trees. Two-thirds of all the migrants observed in one study were found in shrubs and under-story trees – the layers most often missing in the typical suburban landscape.

Whether your property is a small city lot or a vast estate, concentrate on restoring these vertical layers. If you live in the East, South, Midwest, or Plains states, and there are tall trees on your property, plant under-story trees – dogwoods are among the best. Fill in the gaps with shrubs, the more different types the better. Many migrants are attracted to thickets, dense masses of fruiting shrubs, vines, briars, and brambles. **Native trees and shrubs are best, because they are genetically programmed to leaf out, bloom, and fruit at precisely the right time for the migrants with which they've co-evolved.** Along the edges of your stopover garden, plant shrubs with lots of fall fruit, as well as clumps of nectar-rich flowers for hummingbirds. For specific recommendations, see “Furnishing a Backyard B&B” on the next page. And while you're at it, include some milkweeds and goldenrods, favored plants of migrating monarch butterflies.

If there are no tall trees in your yard, consider planting a songbird hedge or hedgerow. I'm not talking about a formal (and backbreaking) hedge that needs to be clipped as meticulously as a poodle, but rather a spectacular mixture of flowering and evergreen trees and shrubs left to follow their own growth habits. As recently as 60 years ago, fields and pastures bordered by hedgerows dominated the landscape in the eastern two-thirds of the country. Mature hedgerows typically included some canopy species, along with beautiful under-story trees and shrubs such as native viburnums. Songbirds flourished in this environment. Unfortunately, hedges



Singing palm warbler (*Dendroica palmarum*), in Everglades National Park.

and hedgerows have been replaced in communities across the country with warrens of wooden stockade fences that are uninviting to birds as well as next-door neighbors.

To create a hedge or hedgerow, plant the center or tallest part first, with a few scattered oak, tulip, or other canopy trees. Consider buying the more natural clump forms rather than the standard single-trunk, shade-tree forms. On either side, and among the taller species, plant flowering and evergreen under-story trees. After all the trees are installed, add a diverse mixture of fruiting shrubs and a vine or two. Finally, include nectar plants for the hummingbirds and butterflies. If your property is small, leave out the largest trees and choose the more compact varieties of under-story trees and shrubs.

In the western states, streamsides and washes are by far the most important habitats for migrating and breeding birds alike. Yet these are among the most threatened habitats in North America – more than 95 percent of the riparian habitat in the western United States has been destroyed or degraded, according to Askins. Gardeners and landowners have a major role to play in the restoration of critical floodplain habitats.

To restore a floodplain, re-create the series of ascending zones or terraces found in these habitats, because different sets of birds use the different areas. Closest to the water is the first terrace, covered with a tall, multilayered woodland of cottonwoods and willows frequented by willow flycatchers and yellow warblers, among others. Plant this zone densely with a mixture of trees and shrubs.

As the ground rises, make the plantings more scattered, as is typical of upland areas. Black-tailed gnatcatchers and Lucy's warblers are just two of the songbirds that use this type of open woodland. In the Southwest, mesquite, wolfberry, saltbush, and other plants that prefer drier soil grow on upper terraces. The particular collection of species varies somewhat by region and elevation, so look for those that are native to your area and situation. Try to use at least three different species and ideally more than seven. For recommendations, see "Furnishing a Backyard B&B" below.

After the planning and the planting, your stopover garden will require very little work. In return for the initial effort, you'll get a great deal of pleasure. Each spring and fall, you'll look forward to the succession of beautiful flowers and fruits, as I do in my Shelter Island garden. The birds arriving in your backyard stopover habitat will seem like old friends. Best of all, you'll be making migration a little less perilous for these songbirds on the move. •

This article previously appeared in *Aubudon* 2001.



That tiny hummingbird flitting around your yard may have just finished a 1,000-mile trip.

Furnishing a Backyard B&B

The following native plants will help you create a fine resting and feeding spot for migratory songbirds, hummingbirds, and butterflies. Combine several species from each category, making sure that they are winter-hardy in your area and that your soil, sun, and water conditions are appropriate.

East, South, Midwest, and Plains States

CANOPY TREES

Oaks, *Quercus* species
Black gum, *Nyssa sylvatica*
Southern magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora*
Sweet-bay magnolia, *Magnolia virginiana*

UNDER-STORY TREES

Flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*
Pagoda dogwood, *Cornus alterniflora*
Silky dogwood, *Cornus amomum*
Gray dogwood, *Cornus racemosa*
Rough-leaved dogwood, *Cornus drummondii*
Sassafras, *Sassafras albidum*
Hackberry, *Celtis occidentalis*
Dahoon holly, *Ilex cassine*
Yaupon holly, *Ilex vomitoria*
Staghorn sumac, *Rhus typhina*

SHRUBS

Spicebush, *Lindera benzoin*
American elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis*
Chokeberry, *Aronia arbutifolia*
American beauty-berry, *Callicarpa americana*
Mapleleaf viburnum, *Viburnum acerifolium*
Arrowwood, *Viburnum dentatum*
Smooth witherod, *Viburnum nudum*
Rusty haw, *Viburnum rufidulum*
Possumhaw holly, *Ilex decidua*
Inkberry holly, *Ilex glabra*
Eastern red cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*
Willows, *Salix* species, including coastal plain willow, *S. caroliniana*

VINES

Virginia creeper, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*
Wild grape, *Vitis vulpina*
American bittersweet, *Celastrus scandens*
(not Oriental bittersweet, *Celastrus orbiculatus*)

NECTAR PLANTS

Eastern columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*
Fringed bleeding heart, *Dicentra eximia*
Coral bells, *Heuchera americana*
Virginia bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*
Cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*
Jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*
Swamp azalea, *Rhododendron viscosum*
Coral honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*
(not Japanese honeysuckle, *Lonicera japonica*)
Trumpet creeper, *Campsis radicans*

Western States

CANOPY TREES

Fremont cottonwood, *Populus fremontii*
Black cottonwood, *Populus trichocarpa*
Valley oak, *Quercus lobata*
Arizona sycamore, *Platanus wrightii*
California sycamore, *Platanus racemosa*
Arizona ash, *Fraxinus velutina*
Oregon ash, *Fraxinus latifolia*
Alligator-bark juniper, *Juniperus deppeana*
Lodgepole pine, *Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*
Jeffrey pine, *Pinus jeffreyi*
Ponderosa pine, *Pinus ponderosa*

UNDER-STORY TREES

Screwbean mesquite, *Prosopis pubescens*
Honey mesquite, *Prosopis glandulosa*
Netleaf hackberry, *Celtis reticulata*

SHRUBS

Gooding willow, *Salix goodingii*
Coyote willow, *Salix exigua*
Sandbar willow, *Salix sessifolia*
Seep willow, *Baccharis glutinosa*
White alder, *Alnus rhombifolia*
Wolfberry, *Lycium* species
Box elder, *Acer negundo*
Saltbush, *Atriplex polycarpa*
Quail bush, *Atriplex lentiformis*
Blue elderberry, *Sambucus cerulea*
Mexican elderberry, *Sambucus mexicana*
Snowberry, *Symphoricarpos* species

VINES

Canyon grape, *Vitis arizonica*
California wild grape, *Vitis californica*

NECTAR PLANTS

Twinberry, *Lonicera involucrata*
Salmonberry, *Rubus spectabilis*
Pacific madrone, *Arbutus menziesii*
Salal, *Gaultheria shallon*
Flowering currant, *Ribes sanguineum*
Paintbrushes, *Castilleja* species
Scarlet bugler, *Penstemon barbatus*
Autumn sage, *Salvia greggii*
Scarlet gilia, *Ipomopsis aggregata*

Microsoft Vista Is Ready. Are You Ready for Vista?

By Christian Nelson

Unless you've been living under a rock somewhere, you've probably heard about Windows Vista, Microsoft's long-awaited new computer operating system. We know Wild Ones members don't live under rocks. We also know that many Wild Ones members are enthusiastic computer users. So it's a safe guess that many of you are planning to upgrade to Vista when the consumer version is released January 30.

Maybe you're hoping Vista's long-promised features will help cure your case of Mac OS X envy. You're hoping for relief from all the viruses, worms, spyware, adware, and the other malware that has afflicted Windows users. And aside from these nuts-and-bolts issues, you're anxiously awaiting some of the fun features Microsoft has promised for so long.

How about a better way to actually do something with your wildflower photos? A modern, up-to-date look for your desktop would help. And wouldn't you like a better way to keep track of those notes you wrote up about restoring your back yard next year?

Can your computer carry the load?

Microsoft promises that you will have all these new options and more. Sounds great, doesn't it? But before you plunk down your cash, and before you expunge your old version of Windows, you'll want to be sure your computer is ready for the demands of Vista. Just because your PC is relatively new doesn't guarantee it's up to the extra load imposed by Vista.

Of course we could quote you the megahertz, megabytes, RAM, and other confusing requirements. You could spend lots of time looking for the answer in countless technical articles. Or you could trust your fate to the winds. But we have a better idea: To help you avoid the heart-break of "Vista Insufficiency," Microsoft has come up with the Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor, just about guaranteed to remove the uncertainty.

Just point your browser toward www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/upgradeadvisor/default.mspx and download the Upgrade Advisor. This free software will analyze your system, will let you know if your hardware is ready for Vista, and will also recommend the Vista version that's "best" for you.

Older systems may need more help.

Unfortunately, the Upgrade Advisor will only help if you're already running Windows XP. If you're still running any of the older versions of Windows, such as Windows 2000, Windows 98, Windows ME, or Windows 95, the process may hurt a bit more. You can find Microsoft's advice for that situation at their "Get Ready Site" at www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/default.mspx.

Windows in the 21st century.

No matter which version of Vista you go with, it's likely that your computer experience will improve. After years of frustrating delays, Vista is finally ready for prime time. Some of the promised features won't quite be there yet, but you can reasonably expect fewer crashes, fewer viruses, and a look and feel that will bring you a bit closer to some of the more advanced operating systems Microsoft is still chasing. As a Wild Ones member, you expect the best in your backyard, and now you can get closer to the

best for your computer activities.

But the big question still remains. Will Vista transform your low- or medium-priced PC into something that rivals the cool user interface and the multimedia powers of the Macintosh OS X? Some experts say you'll be disappointed, because while your PC may be able to run Vista, it may not be able to handle the "good stuff." They say if you're running the "typical cheap PC" you're going to miss out on the "spectacular visual effects" of the Windows Vista Aero environment.

Windows Vista Home Premium Edition is the version most home users are going to want if they're looking for rough parity with Macintosh OS X – and the real test will come when Windows XP users start actually loading this version of Vista into their PCs. For the best chance to avoid disappointment *later*, run the Upgrade Advisor *now*, so you'll know what to expect. ●



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Who Planted All The Seeds? Ants, You Say?

By Barbara Bray

On your next walk through the woods, take a moment to ponder this question: How did the trees and plants get there? It's a question that a child might ask, perhaps wondering if people planted everything, or if somehow, magically the forest just "popped up" to grow in that spot. Walking through a forest, children see the trees, shrubs, and flowers, but they don't pause long enough to see the details. Their minds are flying ahead to what's over the hill or around the next curve. Would they stop for a moment, if they knew that "animal gardeners" of all shapes and sizes plant many of the species in our deciduous forests?

Plants have three main ways to utilize animals for seed dispersal: they produce seeds that stick to fur, they surround their seeds with fleshy fruits, or they offer seeds good for storage. Most of us have encountered the first type of seeds when walking outside: seeds with hooks, spines, or bristles that cling to our socks and pants. Plants encountered might include white or yellow avens or a weedy burdock. Woodland species such as Baneberry (*Actaea spp.*) and Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*) have small fleshy fruits dispersed by mammals and birds. These plants as well as others require ingestion to remove germination-inhibiting chemicals on the seed. The seed passes through the animal and is deposited in a pile of droppings. The third type of dispersal involves animals, like squirrels and chipmunks, that bury and store nuts for the winter. Some of the forgotten nuts will germinate in the spring. Blue jays are also major dispersers for acorns and other seeds.

There is another major dispersal agent in deciduous forests. Plants requiring this animal for seed dispersion may comprise up to 40 percent of the species on the forest floor. What is it? Would you believe, ants? Spring wildflowers such as anemones, wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), Dutchmen's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), trilliums (*Trillium spp.*), bellworts (*Uvularia spp.*), hepaticas (*Hepatica spp.*), trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), violets (*Viola spp.*), and foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) all rely upon ants for dispersing their seeds (Mitchell et al. 2002).

Ants are attracted to a bump, called an elaiosome, on the seeds. This "bump" contains fatty acids and carbohydrates which induce the ants to carry the seeds back to their nest. Once in the nest, the elaiosome is eaten by adult ants or fed to larvae. The seeds are eventually discarded with other garbage from the nest, where they often end up sprouting into new plants. Just how important are ants to a forest? Studies suggest that ant dispersal offers many advantages: it prevents competition between parent and offspring plants, decreases predation by mice and other seed predators, protects the seeds from fires, and helps the seeds end up in a fertile location.

If the idea of animal gardeners excites your children, then you might want to consider these two projects. In the spring time, look for an ant colony under a rock or log. As long as you carefully replace the rock or log when you are done, you won't disturb them much. Look for ants carrying seeds, or look for their refuse piles nearby. Are there any seeds sprouting? If you do not live near

a forest, your child can explore ants that live nearby.

Find an ant colony (away from your building). Divide a paper plate into eight sections, and place equal portions of different foods on the plate. Place the plate on the ground near the ants. Return a few hours later and see if the ants have found the food, and note how much of each was taken. (Hint: try tuna fish too – it contains a substance found in elaisomes). Which way did the ants take it? What foods did they like? Dislike? •



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Grapevine

By Maryann Whitman

Advocacy at work

The Meijer grocery-retail chain, with 170 stores in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky has entered into a partnership with The Nature Conservancy to combat invasive plants.

Not only is the Meijer's chain donating \$450,000 to the Nature Conservancy to support its efforts against invasives in the Great Lakes dunes, but next spring they will stop selling a number of invasive plants, and launch a campaign to promote non-invasive plants. "People want to help the environment, but don't often know how," Hank Meijer, co-chairman and co-CEO of Meijer, said. "This will help educate consumers, while they're shopping, about what plants are best-suited for their back yard to avoid a detrimental effect on the landscape we all share."

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. The Nature Conservancy embraces a *non-confrontational, market-based approach for accomplishing its science-driven mission.*

Wild Ones efforts are at a more "grass-roots" level, specifically advocating the use of regionally native plants to further our equally "science-driven" mission. Is it possible that the time for these ideas has finally come? One can only hope...

The kind of friend Wild Ones Headquarters needs

The Helen Bader Foundation will donate \$750,000 to build a model of the Great Lakes at the Discovery World at Pier Wisconsin. The model will show museum visitors how the Great Lakes are connected, explain their features, and detail how water circulates through the lakes, ground, and atmosphere. "Teaching people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds about freshwater will help families and communities understand how to better use and appreciate this great resource," said Daniel Bader, president of the family foundation.

Ask Wal-Mart, Home Depot, and Lowe's to stop selling cypress mulch

As the nation looks to invest billions to restore coastal Louisiana, endangered

cypress stands are being clear-cut to feed an unsustainable and unnecessary cypress-mulch industry. Promoting other effective gardening choices, like pine straw and eucalyptus mulch, will help stop destruction of irreplaceable cypress wetlands that provide important habitat for endangered species and valuable barriers to flooding and hurricanes.

Wal-Mart, Home Depot, and Lowe's have the ability to save endangered cypress forests. Leveraging their massive purchasing power, they can rein in the logging operations that are grinding the Gulf Coast's natural storm protection into mulch.

To have the maximum impact on the policies of Wal-Mart, Home Depot, and Lowe's, we need to speak with a loud, collective voice. Take action at www.healthygulf.org and learn more at www.saveourcypress.org.

It cuts both ways

In March, 2006, Belgium announced the opening of their first and only national park. It occupies more than 5,000 hectares – about 12,500 acres. One of their issues: management of two alien "pests" – *Prunus serotina* and *Quercus rubra* – our North American black cherry and red oak.

The word is Velcro

From the journal *Biological Conservation*: Velcro, whose name is an abbreviation of velours (the fuzzy part) and crochet (the part with hooks), has become ubiquitous in our culture. It is the fastener on kids' shoes, and is used by shuttle astronauts to anchor bits of gear in zero gravity. Some Australian botanists have discovered that its effectiveness is posing a threat to the planet's most pristine places. They inspected scientists and staff arriving at Macquarie Island, the jumping off point for the research stations of Antarctica. Using vacuum cleaners and forceps, they sucked and plucked every seed, spore, and plant fragment from clothing and equipment. On the 64 arrivals they found 981 seeds and fruits belonging to 90 species, some of them invasive and a serious threat to local flora. While lint in pockets and on woolly socks carried some of the seeds, the majority came attached to Velcro fastenings on clothing and gear.

This is something serious to think about as we hike around natural areas, picking up seeds with crochet hooks on our velours – and on our ever-present Velcro fasteners.

On this same subject, we should also think about mud in the cleats of our hiking shoes, and the seeds it carries.

The birds and the bees...

According to a study released this fall by the National Research Council (NRC), not only are population numbers of honeybees dramatically down, but the report also shows that, "*Long-term population trends for several wild bee species (notably bumblebees), and some butterflies, bats, and hummingbirds are demonstrably downward.*"

"Despite its apparent lack of marquee appeal, a decline in pollinator populations is one form of global change that actually has credible potential to alter the shape and structure of terrestrial ecosystems," says NRC panel chair May R. Berenbaum, of University of Illinois, Champaign.

Habitat degradation and habitat loss, pesticide use, deployment of crop plants genetically engineered to express insecticidal proteins in pollen, "pathogen spillover" through contact with diseased managed populations, success of invasive alien plants which interfere with native nectar and pollen-producing wild-flowers, are all indicated as causative factors.

Guides to Bee genera identification developed by USGS Native Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab are available for use and viewing at: www.discoverlife.org/nh/tx/Insecta/Hymenoptera/Apoidea/#Identification.

Consider going to www.seeds.ca/proj/poll/howto.php at the Pollination Canada web site and downloading information on counting and reporting native pollinators. The manuals were written by Jim Dyer who recently won a Pollinator Advocate Award for his role in developing a volunteer insect pollinator monitoring program. The award was provided by the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign. Also try: www.pollinator.org/ and www.xerces.org/.

November 29, 2006

The bullfrogs in my pond are out and about today, and I think I heard a tree frog! By being active this late in the year I worry they are depleting their bodily stores that will be necessary for them to survive the winter. I wonder what effect this unnaturally warm weather will have all around.



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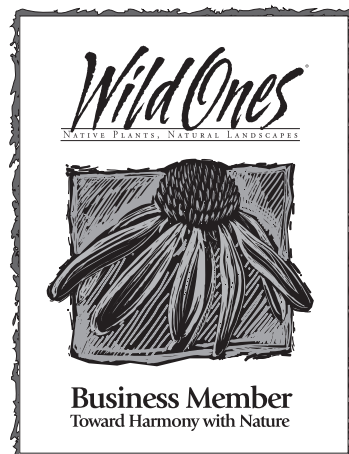
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Seeds for Education Grant Program

November 15 was the deadline for getting Seeds for Education grant applications to the Wild Ones National Office. To date we have received 29 applications. For more information about the grant-application process, go to www.for-wild.org/seedmony.html, or call the National Office for a copy of the grant application.



Wild Ones Amazon Associate Bookstore

We're pleased to let you know that Wild Ones has received a very nice check for \$186.16 from Amazon.com. Thank you to everyone who is going through the Wild Ones Bookstore to get to Amazon.com to make your purchases. Every little bit of extra funds helps us spread the word about the benefits of using native plants in natural landscaping – and dollars paid to Wild Ones is an advertising commission that adds nothing to the cost of your purchases. Books are there just to get you started, but Amazon has a fabulous selection of electronics, DVDs, music, toys and games, gourmet food, magazines, office supplies, computers, apparel, musical instruments, software, iPods, cameras, pet supplies, exercise equipment, and just about "everything else." www.for-wild.org/store/bookstore/

amazon.com

The phrase, "It takes a village to raise a child," has been popular over the past several years. This same idea applies to natural area conservation and stewardship. It also takes a village, town, city – a community – to conserve and steward our natural areas. "That's one of the interesting results from our program," says Heather Van Den Berg, of the Conservation Stewards Program. "By going through the program, residents come to understand

that they can have a role in conserving natural areas in their own community. Participants become interested in working with their elected officials and planning commissions to ensure special places are preserved." Larry Falardeau, Principal Planner of Oakland County's Environmental Stewardship Program, agrees. He goes on to say, "If you help people get connected to the resource, they are more likely to steward it."

Van Den Berg and Falardeau represent two programs that have partnered for stewardship. The county's program provides the local underpinnings and context for the State Steward's Program through maps and natural feature inventories, and a vision for individual community conservation. The Steward's Program, in turn, trains the volunteers who help realize the local conservation vision on the land.

Conserving Natural Areas

Connecting grass roots and governmental efforts for conservation and stewardship has always been the focus of Oakland County's Stewardship Program. The seeds of the program were planted in 1980, when the county published a manual called *Conserve Oakland County's Natural Resources – A Manual for Planning and Implementation*. While directed at public officials, it laid out an eight-step planning process that would identify and conserve the county's natural areas. With cooperation from such state entities as the Michigan DNR and botanists at the Michigan Natural Features Inventory the County went on to inventory its highest-quality natural areas, and distributed this information and the manual to local community leaders. Oakland County took this approach because Michi-



Oakland County Michigan's Environmental Stewardship Program and the Michigan Conservation Stewards Program

A Community-Based Partnership for Conservation and Stewardship

By Sally Elmiger,
Contributing Editor

gan is a "home-rule" state, which allows individual villages, cities, and townships to control land use planning and conservation initiatives within their boundaries. Most other states regulate land use via county-based planning programs. Therefore, the role of county staff in Michigan's land use decisions is education and guidance, rather than regulation.

A key realization made during the manual's development was the importance of links or wildlife corridors between natural resources. Over the years, this realization evolved into a "system-based" planning approach that many municipalities use today. Rather than fencing off a sensitive environmental feature, naming it a "preserve," and walking away, municipal land planning staff now consider the diverse web of interactions – or links – between plants, animals, water, and land features. They then conserve areas based on these interactions and connections with other conservation areas, creating a web of open spaces connected to each other. Oakland County calls this holistic approach to conservation an "ecosystem approach." Rather than protecting *just* the wetland in

a preserve, the ecosystem approach protects the plants in the wetland, the adjacent uplands, and the source of the water supplying the wetland. It takes the whole picture into consideration.

Interest has increased in Oakland County's program as communities have experienced greater development pressures. Through updated natural area inventories, the program helps residents understand the unique natural features within

their boundaries, which in turn, inspires preservation. Highland Township – a community within Oakland County – used the environmental inventories from a county study called the "Shiawassee and Huron Headwaters Resource Preservation Project" to improve their protection techniques. The Headwaters Project looked at six communities in northeast Oakland County, inventoried and ranked their natural features, and then provided an exhaustive list of planning tools that the communities could choose from to better protect these features. Beth Corwin, Planning and Development Director for Highland Township, describes her community's efforts: "The inventories in the Shiawassee project enabled us to develop a Rural Residential Overlay District, which requires developers to earn points toward higher densities in rural areas. If the design meets certain standards – such as preserving the site's natural features and



more than 50 percent of a site's open space, among other things – they can build three houses on 10 acres instead of just two."

Over the last decade, increased interest has allowed the county's program to expand into three main areas: greenways/natural habitat, water resources, and trails. It is a natural division of labor, and an individual county staff member has taken on each topic. Recently, another initiative has been created on the framework of the county's natural feature inventories and visions for conservation. This new program, called the Conservation Stewards Program, is described as the "conservation version" of the Master Gardener Program, and was piloted in 2006.

Stewarding Natural Areas

Master Gardner programs train local volunteer gardeners so that they can, in turn, teach the public about current knowledge in gardening practices. Michigan's



Conservation Stewards program is structured in much the same way. It prepares participants to be more knowledgeable in ecology and resource management techniques for volunteer activities. "Basically, it's an ecology class," says Van Den Berg, coordinator of the pilot program. "It teaches volunteers about natural systems, how to assess their status, and which management technique is best to use for the problem at hand. They also learn to evaluate how well the management technique achieves management goals."

Michigan's Steward's Program is offered by Michigan State University's (MSU) Extension and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. It is modeled after the Texas Master Naturalist™ program. Certification requires 20 hours of classroom training, 20 hours of in-field training, 40 hours of volunteer conservation service within one year, and compliance with the Conservation Stewards Program policies, procedures and code of conduct. Maintaining

certification requires an annual commitment of 40 hours of volunteer service and eight hours of advanced training. The nine-week program gives participants hands-on education about Michigan's conservation heritage, ecology, forests, grasslands, wetlands, lakes and streams, and conservation skills. During the training, stewards participate in field projects on local public lands. Instructors are MSU faculty, staff from Michigan Natural Features Inventory and biologists from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Oakland County staff also teaches segments on the history of the county and its green infrastructure.

"I learned a lot in a short time," says Carolyn Krygel Young (Wild Ones, Oakland (MI) Chapter member), one of 65 students who participated in the program during its first year. Some participants were experienced volunteers who have logged many hours of invasive species removal, environmental monitoring, and other projects. Others were new to conservation, and were interested in learning all they could about caring for Michigan's environment.

Carolyn says visiting local parks is now a totally different experience. "I went to a park in my community, and as I was looking at the lake, I realized that I recognized it as a kettle lake, and said to myself, 'Hey, I know what that is!' Now when I go to parks, I take along books to identify plants. The knowledge I gained through the Stewards Program has tweaked my interest in learning more."

As a Conservation Steward, Carolyn has volunteered for several new projects. She has signed on with the Oakland Land Conservancy and the Clinton River Watershed Council to be the steward at a new 55-acre acquisition close to her home. Here she'll inventory and monitor the property and water quality four times a year. She is also involved with her local park's department in Oakland Township, working to get a tax millage renewed for community acquisition of undeveloped land for protection.

Professional landscape designer, Celia Ryker, a former member of the Oakland (MI) Chapter of Wild Ones, participated in the program to learn more about Michigan's environment. She was working on a stream restoration project in northwest Oakland County and realized her interest in this area. "We were restoring stream bank vegetation along Kearsly Creek (a project funded by a grant from the Oakland (MI) Chapter of Wild Ones).



While I wanted to learn about conservation in general, this project and the Stewards Program helped spark my interest in native plants. We then decided to install a native planting in town, so people who might not visit the creek could still see what native plants are like." She is now writing a monthly column for the local newspaper about the plantings – what's in bloom, butterflies that visit the plants, animals using the plants for food or nesting sites, and other topics – all as part of her volunteer hours for certification.

All the stewards emphasize that the best part about the program is that it instills a desire to share what they know with others, and helps them to gain a greater appreciation about the natural world around them. The program gives the steward something to share.

These volunteers complete the circle that Oakland County's Environmental Stewardship Program began 25 years ago. Through a partnership among residents, local and county governments, and state entities, communities now know about their natural features, know what can be done to preserve these special places, and are now building a force of volunteers to do the necessary field work. A great example of a "village" conserving and stewarding our natural lands. ●

For more information about Oakland County's Environmental Stewardship Program, go to www.oakgov.com/peds/program_service/ess.html, or call Larry Falardeau at 248-858-5438 about community initiatives.

For more information about the Conservation Stewards Program, look at www.fw.msu.edu/labs/humandim/oaklandconservationstewards.pdf, or call: Carol Lenchek 248-858-0887 about Steward training in Oakland County. Or call Mike Gaden 517-546-3950 about Steward training in Livingston County.

NATIVE SUBURBIA THE THIRD YEAR

By Don and Benia Zouras

"The First Year" appeared in the September/October 2006 issue,
and "The Second Year" appeared in the November/December 2006 issue.

After another long winter here in the Chicagoland area, we were excited to see that the blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) and straight-styled wood sedge (*Carex radiata*), planted the previous October (2005), had survived the winter and were flourishing in the April sun. It may be unusual to put something in the ground and watch it go dormant, but the strategy worked, and we saved a few dollars.

This spring we decided to make better use of the rainwater in our yard by excavating a shallow depression (15 feet long x 4 feet wide) and routing the downspout and sump pump to empty into it. Instead of being carried away to the sewers in an underground pipe, as it was previously, the water now flows into the rain garden where it is available to plants and animals. The clay-bottomed depression retains rainwater for several days, especially with frequent refills from the sump pump.

A pool of water in suburbia is very attractive to animals. We see many birds as well as chipmunks, opossums, and raccoons. It was particularly interesting to see robins repeatedly visiting the shallow pool of water to gather mud for their nests. Where did they find this vital building material before we built this pool for them?

When choosing plants for the rain garden, we considered the amount of moisture and sunlight that would be available. We determined that our plants would need to tolerate flooding and drying cycles and the partial shade created by our house and a stand of quaking aspens (*Populus tremuloides*). We purchased 108 plugs representing species such as: cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*), turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*), silky wild rye (*Elymus villosus*), and sweet grass (*Hierochloa odorata*).

In only a few weeks the little plants had doubled in size! The newly planted spiderworts provided the first flowers, and we planned morning walks to see the brilliantly colored blooms before they closed in the afternoon. A couple of weeks later, when many of the plants in the rain garden were over 3 feet tall, we got an even better show. There was an explosion of red, white, and purple as the other plants bloomed together.

As we learned the identities of more plants around our yard, we realized that there were still some non-native plants to be removed. A variety of daffodils, hyacinths, and sedums fell to the shovel and ended up on the compost pile. Those were the easy ones. We were dismayed to find that many of the bushes in our yard were also non-native. Mainstream landscaping practices had populated our yard with amur maple (*Acer ginnala*), burning bush (*Euonymus alata*), Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*), mock orange (*Philadelphus virginialis*), star magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*), and European cranberry (*Viburnum opulus*).

Digging up bushes is hard work. A shovel that had been with us for the past six years was broken in the process. We all know that it is not the right tool for prying things up, but we just can't help ourselves. After the first few bushes, we developed an effective removal method. Leverage is the key. Cut away most of the branches, but

leave a strong length of trunk with which to pry the root ball out of the ground. Dig around the roots, clearing away as much soil as possible. Chop any spreading roots with the shovel or a hatchet. Then push and pull the trunk to break it free from the ground. If at first you don't succeed, keep digging, chopping, and pulling. We removed nine bushes this way. The European cranberry was 80 percent dead already, so we just pruned the live parts away and left the rest as a snag for the birds to perch on. Digging up bushes turned up even more landscaping cloth. That stuff must multiply when you bury it!

The buckthorns (*Rhamnus frangula*) that we cut down last year did not give up easily, as they continued to sprout from the stumps. Many people recommend glyphosate-based herbicides, but with our small scaled situation we like to avoid spreading chemicals in the environment. Some chopping with a hatchet every other week or so has effectively stopped much of the resprouting.

The world is a complex system and everyone should consider the alternatives to using herbicides. Smothering and chopping can effectively control unwanted plants by taking away their photosynthesis and reproductive capabilities. These techniques may be a little more work, but they also give us an excuse to have a closer relationship with our environment.

The phased approach that we took for the Native Suburbia project left us with a significant amount of lawn in the front yard. This summer was the time to rectify that. We once again used a smothering technique with layers of newspaper and mulch. Things would have gone a little faster if we hadn't felt compelled to read the newspaper as we spread it.

The parkway is the last bit of lawn remaining in Native Suburbia. It is technically owned by the village, but mowed by us. Unhappy with this situation, we experimented with that strip of lawn. It was crippled by a brutally short mowing and not provided with any supplemental watering. This allowed nature to step in and gradually cover the parkway with native annuals, such as spotted spurge (*Chamaesyce maculata*), Canadian horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*), and pilewort (*Erechtites hieracifolia*). These may not be the most prized of native plants, but we admired their ability to thrive in a hostile environment. We have learned to appreciate a variety of plants, even those without showy flowers. These pioneer plants were reclaiming land that was serving no purpose (other than requiring us to mow it).

Native Suburbia was initially started from seed. We had mixed results with this approach. In some areas, the plants burst forth and made our dreams come true. We identified many species such as wild bergamot *Monarda fistulosa*, white prairie clover (*Petalostemum candidum*), bottlebrush grass (*Elymus hystrix*) and lots of Canada wild rye (*Elymus canadensis*). Patience was important, as it had taken two growing seasons for some of these to grow big enough to be identified.



It's funny that this project started out as a way to avoid yard work, but has turned into a labor of love.

In other areas we were not so lucky, and the ground remained barren. We wanted to mix a few forbs into the grasses and fill in the open areas that required weeding. Our patience for seeds was waning, so we obtained a variety of actual plants from various sources.

In the shady areas in our yard we added: white trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum commutatum*), false Solomon's seal (*Smilacina racemosa*), Virginia waterleaf (*Hydrophyllum virginianum*), mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), and Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*).

The non-native shrubs we had removed were replaced with American plum (*Prunus americana*), American filbert/Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*), nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*), and New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*).

The sunny areas provided a new home for plants we rescued from a vegetable garden expansion: cup plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*), wild senna (*Cassia hebecarpa*), brown-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia triloba*), and grey headed coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*).

The bunnies in our neighborhood quickly discovered our newly planted natives. Every plant seemed to be sampled and some were eaten to the ground. A testament to the resilience of native plants is that even those plants that had been aggressively pruned eventually sprouted and thrived.

This was the first year that we experienced how tall the prairie grasses can look in a suburban yard, as they reached 4 feet by early June. It was very exciting, and we loved watching them wave in the wind. A few weeks later, our grasses seemed to get tired and lie down, giving a woven mat appearance, though our forbs stood proudly all summer long. We are hoping they will support each other more next year as they fill in.

This summer marked the first time that anyone from the neighborhood had expressed interest in our uniquely landscaped yard. We were working in the front yard when a guy walked up, nodded in the direction of the mulch-covered yard and asked, "What's going to happen with all this

mulch? Is the grass going to come back through it?" We explained that we were fostering the growth of native plants instead of lawn. We gave a quick tour of the yard and found he was actually interested in the concept of alternative landscaping, but not ready to do it himself. Maybe he will be jealous of Native Suburbia when it reaches its full potential.

It is funny to think that this project started out as a way to avoid yard work, but has turned into a labor of love. It may not be what we anticipated, but we don't regret converting our yard to a more natural state. We look forward to all the surprises that the plants and animals still have in store for us.

Having learned so much, we decided to start the Native Suburbia web site to document our progress. We have gathered information from a wide variety of sources and we wanted to create a central site to serve as a resource for other amateurs, like ourselves. We provide pictures and names of everything we identify in our yard. We also publish detailed accounts of various activities related to creating our new habitat. Be sure to continue the journey with us online at www.icode6.net/native_suburbia. •

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Helping the Downy Woodpecker

By Emma Bickham Pitcher



Photo by David Cappaert, www.forestryimages.org.

Do you have wild black cherry in your woods? If so, you know that the trees may grow very tall and are attractive in May, with drooping clusters of white flowers amid small shiny, dark-green leaves on reddish stems. But those same clusters produce ever so many seeds very attractive to birds, especially robins, and presto! you have the makings of a solid cherry forest that is probably not what you intended. Pulling up a dozen little starts under a big cherry is a common weeding task.

Our young woods is largely volunteer gray birch, which doesn't offer much to attract woodpeckers, my favorite bird family. Cherries and some black walnuts have spread from the original farm field hedgerow. When I kept hearing a downy woodpecker go "pick, pick, pick" quite some distance away I made him a present. I took a hatchet to the trunk of a tall 5- to 6-inch diameter cherry, and removed the bark and the first 1/2-inch of wood from a 15-inch vertical strip. It took a long time to die – months – but in the years since, the downy has made some 25 excavations, varying in size from pock marks to 1 x 2-inch cavities. Unfortunately, none is the 1-1/4 inch diameter perfect circle indicative of a downy nest. In season I keep suet available nearby, and frequently catch a glimpse of Downy's comings and goings.

Guess what. I'm about to take a hatchet to another surplus black cherry, a larger one this time, in hopes of a future nesting cavity. Downies are long-lived, year-round residents, therefore highly desirable friends to cultivate. •

Chapter Notes

This is the time of year when Wild Ones chapters are holding their annual meetings and planning their programs for the coming year. Here are some ideas of what other chapters are doing.

North Park Nature Center (IL) Chapter, President **Bob Porter** and **Green Bay (WI) Chapter's** outgoing president **Cindy Hermesen** report that at their annual meeting they viewed images of the year's activities, shared refreshments, and traded native plant seeds. This was a members' opportunity to show 'n tell.

Co-President **Mary Schommer** of the **Twin Cities (MN) Chapter** tells of their Native Plant Book of the Month discussion, and that guest Kevin Bigalke spoke about "Water Resource Improvement Efforts in the Nine Mile Creek Watershed."

Dave Marsolo, Secretary for the **Columbus (OH) Chapter** reported a lecture on "Elements and Plants for a Woodland or Shade Garden."

Diane Holmes, President of **Menomonee River Area (WI) Chapter**: Members at their social and workshops have their choice of constructing a plant shade or a grapevine wreath. There are plenty of extra materials, but they can bring vines if they have them, or they can just come to visit and network.

Oakland (MI) Chapter's President, **Barb Bray**: We have a plant exchange in the fall when the timing is right to transplant. Pot up your extras. Label them if possible.

Dan Dieterich, President of the **Central Wisconsin (WI) Chapter**: CWWO Book Chat. Members bring a favorite book, article, or information from a web site dealing with natural landscaping, growing plants from seed, identifying native plants, eradicating alien invasives, etc. This is their opportunity not only to share their favorite print materials, but also to learn what publications fellow Wild Ones find most helpful in managing their spring ephemeral gardens, establishing their prairies, constructing their rain gardens, etc. Some members bring some sort of nibbles to share. It's a great time to renew old friendships and start new ones.

From the **Milwaukee-North (WI) Chapter**, President **Dorothy Boyer**: Members brought the gardening tools they would like to have sharpened, and **Chuck Engler** gave tips on how to proceed on their own. Chuck sharpens tools for Schlitz Audubon Nature Center and some professional nurseries.

President **Maureen Carberry** of the **Habitat Resource Network of Southeast Pennsylvania (PA) Chapter** reports that **Giselle Cosentino**, Education Director of Brandywine Valley Association gave those involved with School Yard Habitats the perfect opportunity to gather to share ideas and discuss possibilities.

And one final note from **Roger Miller**, Program Committee Chair for the **St. Croix Oak Savanna (MN) Chapter** writes: "Thanks for providing 'The Meeting Place' page. I've gathered lots of great program ideas surfing other chapters' web pages."



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Chapter ID numbers are listed after names.

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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.

January 27, 2007: 1st Quarter 2007 Wild Ones National Board Meeting will be a teleconference meeting.

May 5th: 2nd Quarter 2007 National Board Meeting will be hosted by Ann Arbor (MI) Chapter at Sharon Mills County Park in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Following the meeting participants will explore The Nature Conservancy's Nan Weston Nature Preserve at Sharon Hollow, about 20 miles southwest of Ann Arbor. This is a spectacular site for spring ephemerals, and blooms will be at their peak. It's a botanical hot spot with incredible abundance of wildflowers and native shrubs. A combination of dry and floodplain habitats (on the Raisin River) make for diversity and excitement. New boardwalks make for drier footing than in previous years.

August 17-19th: 3rd quarter 2007 and annual meeting will be hosted by the Greater Cincinnati (OH) Chapter at Bergamo Center in Dayton, Ohio. This is a great place, with much to do both at the center and the in the surrounding area. For more information please go to www.cincinnatiwildones.com/ Follow the link in red.

September 28th: 4th Quarter 2007 National Board Meeting will be hosted by Rock River Valley (IL) Chapter at the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District Headquarters. Following the meeting we will tour Nygren Wetland.

OTHER CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Jan 20 2007: The Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter holds an annual all-day natural landscaping conference, "Toward Harmony with Nature." Expert guest speakers on a variety of natural landscaping topics are featured in concurrent sessions, along with a keynote speaker, buffet lunch, and exhibits by native plant nurseries, nature centers, booksellers, nature artists, and environmental organizations. Karen Syverson 920-987-5587 ksyve@core.com or go to www.for-wild.org/chapters/foxvalley/.

Feb. 24, 2007 Through the Eyes of Nature: Aesthetics of Natural Landscapes is the theme of this Native Plant Seminar, jointly sponsored by two Minnesota Wild Ones Chapters: Twin Cities Wild Ones and the St. Croix Oak Savanna Wild Ones. Contact Evelyn Hadden at seminar2007@mac.com with questions, or go to www.for-wild.org/chapters/twincities/expo.htm.

March 4 & 5 2007: The Wildflower Association of Michigan presents its annual two-day conference at the Kellogg Center in Lansing Michigan. For program information and registration please go to www.wildflowersmich.org/conf/conf.htm or contact Jean Wierich, phone 517-627-7927 or e-mail jean@gaiagrass.com.

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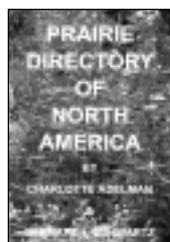


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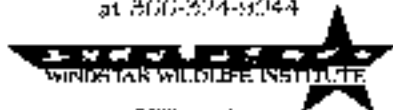


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Michael & Jean Maloney, **Anne D. Meyer**, and **Pamela L. Mott**
of Rock River Valley (IL) Chapter

Carla M. Beyerl, Root River Area (WI) Chapter

Lynn Schoenecker & Dean P. Klingbeil, Milwaukee-North
(WI) Chapter

Mary P. & John D. Paquette, Menomonee River Area (WI)
Chapter

Angela Eichelberger, Susquehanna Valley (PA) Chapter

We had one additional donation come in for Seeds for Education in remembrance of Lorrie Otto's 87th Birthday bringing the totaling \$1,270. Thank you **Western Reserve (OH) Chapter**.

General Operating Fund

MaryEllen Fitts, Milwaukee-Southwest/Wehr (WI) Chapter

Laura A. Towner, North Park Village Nature Center (IL) Chapter

We have received our **first donation toward matching funds** for the purchase of the new Wild Ones Headquarters Site. Thanks so much to **Mandy Ploch** for her generous \$1,000 donation.

Special Thanks

Tim & Janaan Lewis, Rock River Valley (IL) Chapter for office miscellaneous supplies.

Dave & Sue Peck, Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter, **Sybilla Taft**, Columbus (OH) Chapter and **Kathy Coleman**, Gibson Woods (IN) Chapter for miscellaneous resource materials for the Wild Ones Library.

Feeling Charitable?

Consider the New IRA regulations.

If you're at the point where you must make withdrawals from your Individual Retirement Account, and you're charitably inclined, here's something to consider.

The Pension Protection Act signed in August, 2006, allows IRA owners of age 70-1/2 and older to transfer directly to Wild Ones up to \$100,000 each year in 2006 and 2007. **The provision is in effect only for this year and next.** The transferred amount is excluded from the IRA owner's taxable income and can count toward the minimum required distribution in each year. The transfer must be made directly from the IRA account to Wild Ones and must be for an outright gift. Trusts and other planned gifts do not qualify. There is not an income-tax deduction for the transfer – the amount is simply not included in the IRA owner's income. Transfers to private foundations, donor-advised funds and supporting organizations do count.

You can learn more about the new IRA provision by reading a document published last month by Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation: www.house.gov/jct.

Find the document by its number, JCX-38-06.

An explanation of the provision – including examples – starts on page 266 of the document, under the heading "Qualified charitable distributions from IRAs."

All we need is five donations of \$100,000, and we have the matching funds for the new Wild Ones Ecology Center wrapped up!

