If you’re like most Wild Ones, your yard looks a bit different from most landscapes in your area. People may be curious about that, and that makes your yard (and you) a good subject for newspaper and magazine articles, and a good topic of conversation with other people.

Talking with the media

My yard is decidedly different from most yards in my area, so reporters have interviewed me a number of times – frequently enough for me to have discovered some of the pitfalls. Although readers probably found the resulting stories interesting, the stories didn’t always successfully convey my ideas and our Wild Ones mission. Here are three things I’ve learned.

First, writers and reporters are experts on writing and reporting stories, but usually not experts on native plants or natural landscaping. They may not even know much about gardening in general, so clearly describe the plants or landscaping practices you’re talking about, and provide examples.

Second, for articles not specifically profiling your garden, reporters usually interview other people as well – sometimes people with a very different perspective on landscaping. Be aware of this possibility, think about the possible points they might make, and provide some supporting information from our Wild Ones perspective on those issues.
It’s an exciting time to be Wild Ones national president

I am honored to be the president of Wild Ones. We are moving into a new era that predicts more people will be embracing native plants for home and business landscapes. I am excited about what the board of directors, committees, and headquarters staff are planning for this year. You’ll hear more about these efforts throughout the year. I am gratified to be working with such an enthusiastic board. If the e-mail discussions we’ve had in the past are an indication, I think we are going to be an interactive group with great ideas and insightful thinking.

In November, at our annual meeting, we learned that our organization is doing pretty well all around, given the current economic recession. Prudently, the previous board took steps to trim the budget and put some projects on hold, so we continue to operate in the black.

At the annual meeting, the Grow Wild Ones Marketing Plan was presented, revealing some key strategies to make Wild Ones grow. By following the plan, and with your continued support, there is no doubt in my mind that we will grow. Wild Ones has an opportunity to catch the growing “green movement” wave, enter into a new era, and establish ourselves as the most trusted name in landscaping with native plants, for homes, and for businesses. Please be sure to read the article in this issue about the Growing Wild Ones Marketing Plan.

Last September, Carol Phelps resigned from the board for personal reasons; I thank her for her two years as a director. When she resigned, the board of directors appointed Katrina Hayes, a Partner at Large (PAL) member who resides in Tennessee. It is great once again to have a director who represents the PALs.

I thank Carol Andrews who has served as our president for the past three years, and before that, vice president and board member. Carol will continue to serve on the national board as the immediate past president, and will continue as the Marketing Committee co-chairperson with Roger Miller of the St. Croix (MN) Chapter.

I wish I could thank each member separately and personally for your support of the Wild Ones organization, but since that is not possible, I thank you here. You may reach me through my e-mail address, president@wildones.org. I look forward to hearing from you. *

Tim Lewis, Wild Ones National President (president@for-wild.org)

Join One of Our Wild Ones National Committees
The Wild Ones national committees have been very busy, and are working hard to improve our organization as we continue with our mission. Check the listing of national committee chairs on page 15.

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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Wild Ones Annual Appeal
We need your help to make Wild Ones grow

Thanks to ongoing support from our members, Wild Ones has come far in the three decades since nine enthusiasts met at the Schlitz Audubon Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to champion native plants. Since then, we have grown beyond the prairie to nearly 50 chapters, and just fewer than 3,000 members spread across much of the United States and into Canada and Australia.

Our next big step is to grow our membership — and the Marketing Committee and a marketing consultant have been working diligently to help. They’ve developed a Grow Wild Ones Marketing Plan that includes bold marketing strategies to help us increase to 4,000 members, and beyond.

If we are take advantage of the “green” movement, we need to ensure we are part of it. To implement this plan, we will need an additional part-time person who will focus on these points and other marketing efforts. It will be impossible to implement the plan with present staff and volunteers.

If you can help fund the additional person through your Annual Appeal Donation, we will grow the organization. Through your donation, you can be part of this exciting new growth, so more people will improve the environment by learning about and using native plants in their landscapes.

Chapter Notes

This is the time of year when chapters are thinking about annual meetings, elections of new officers, and future programs. We’ve heard from many chapters, such as Habitat Resource Network of Southeast Pennsylvania, Brainerd (MN), Louisville (KY), Central Wisconsin and Lexington (KY). Here are some highlights of the fun chapters are having.

Northern Kane County (IL) Chapter held a potluck and Hack-ma-tack coordinated by Shirley Pfleiderer. They celebrated their first year as a Wild Ones chapter with a full evening of food, “fotos,” and fellowship. Nancy Williamson of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources introduced Hack-ma-tack, a new National Wildlife Refuge proposed for the McHenry County, Illinois, and Walworth County, Wisconsin. Photos from the photo contest were then sold through a silent auction to benefit the chapter.

North Park (IL) Wild Ones ended their year with a Potluck/Seed Exchange. President Wilma McCallister wrote, "Everyone brought their own slides/images of native landscapes, good stories, native-plant seeds to trade, and a dish to share.

The Farm House at the Red Orchard Park in Shelbyville was the location for the Louisville (KY) Chapter’s annual “Thankfulness” meeting with a potluck and a program – “Exploring Aldo Leopold,” with Dick Dennis – a wonderful interactive educational program that included Leopold’s “Land Ethic,” which states, “We are part of a natural community worthy of our love, respect, understanding, and faith. Our ecological conscience calls upon us to value the land community and work to improve its health.” They also saw the native shrubs that were planted around the nature center with the 2010 Wild Ones Seeds for Education (SFE) grant – the Clear Creek Trailblazers have done a “tree-mendous” job.

An interesting meeting hosted by the Ann Arbor (MI) Chapter involved a panel discussion on vegetation ordinances and enforcement. Chapter President Mary James wrote, “Our work with native plants affects our neighbors, and their actions affect us. The City of Ann Arbor has an ordinance that specifies the height and setback of plants around streets, sidewalks and driveways. Is the ordinance good enough as is, or can we find ways to improve it?” Members held a discussion with John Seto and Mike Rankin from Police & Community Standards, Jerry Hancock from Systems Planning (storm water retention and rain gardens), and Dave Borneman from Natural Area Preservation.

And finally, many chapters participated in seed gathering this past fall, including the Flint River (MI) Chapter, Ann Arbor (MI) Chapter, Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter, St. Croix Oak Savanna (MN) Chapter, Milwaukee-Southwest/Wehr (WI) Chapter, Mountain Laurel (CT) Chapter, Central Wisconsin, and Green Bay (WI) Chapter.
Diane Powelka

At the fourth quarterly board meeting in New London, Connecticut, last fall, there was someone missing for the first time in 10 years, and I could feel the difference. My wife, Diane, who has been to every board meeting with me since January of 2000, did not attend. I did not feel her quiet presence, and I missed her.

Diane has been actively involved in Wild Ones since 1994, when she and I helped form the Madison (WI) Chapter, for which she later served, successively, as secretary, vice-president, and president. She served on the national Wild Ones board from 2000 to 2010. In 2003, she served as the catalyst for the first Wild Ones photography contest at the annual meeting in St. Louis.

While working with the young Madison Chapter we visited the Byron Nature Preserve in northern Illinois, and were inspired by the native-plant walk there, which incorporated numerous educational labels. We thought that something similar would be a great addition to our township, and started formulating plans to create a local native-plant park. The township board approved of the idea, and offered a 7-acre, wooded, former quarry that had, in the past, served as the town dump. We titled the effort Project 2000 (with the crazy idea that we would be fully functional by the year 2000). Simultaneously Diane was heavily involved in our local garden club, serving in various leadership positions. She moved from the local level to the district level, and finally was tapped by the State Garden Club Federation to serve as the recording secretary. During all this time she has been a strong advocate of introducing native plants into our gardens, and continues to serve as the State’s Operation Wildflower Chair. She is currently serving a second term as District Director for the Wisconsin Garden Federation.

Over the years, Diane has, at every opportunity, advocated for native plants, and promoted an environmentally sound approach to gardening. She has worked hard to include youth in her native plant activities. For Project 2000, she obtained several thousand dollars in grants to fund the installation of native plants in the park, and coordinated five Eagle Scout projects. She has involved alternative-education students and youth needing community service credit, creating paths, planting native plants, and cleaning up the park. As a Master Gardener, she has obtained the assistance of other Master Gardeners in working at the park.

I will miss Diane accompanying me to the board meetings in the future, but her dedication to Wild Ones’ mission is unwavering. She has been by my side in my national Wild Ones efforts, supporting and advising. While serving as a national director of Wild Ones, she was not shy about adding her voice to a discussion when she felt strongly about an issue, even when it went against the consensus of the rest of the board.

Her simultaneous involvement with the National Garden Federation and Wild Ones makes her a highly qualified representative of Wild Ones’ ideals to the Federation. With our new marketing plan we are considering broadening our appeal to gardeners and landscapers to educate, integrate, and communicate the importance of native plants in our landscapes. I believe that Diane has more shooting to do as she follows her personal star – native plants.
Wild Ones Meets SALT

Message from the Mountain Laurel (CT) Chapter of Wild Ones who hosted the Wild Ones Annual Meeting at the SALT Conference: We here in Connecticut are so happy to have met Wild Ones from many states. It was such a positive experience for all of us. We think our chapter better understands all that goes on to make this whole thing work – the trials, the tribulations, the joys, and the sense of accomplishment when things go well. We would love to have you all back in Connecticut again. It was, without question, the highlight of our year. We send our sincere regards and wishes to all our newly found friends.

Photos, clockwise from top left:
1. Fourth Quarter board meeting held in the Haines Room of the Connecticut College Library. Later the board was treated to dinner at the Harris dining hall.
2. Glenn Dryer of the Connecticut College Arboretum takes Wild Ones members on a tour of their native-plant collection. The highlight was the evergreen mountain laurel.
3. Carol Andrews, immediate past national Wild Ones President and co-chair of the Marketing Committee. Also, President of Arrowhead (MN) Chapter.
5. Past National President Joe Powelka, Madison (WI) Chapter and John Allen of the Habitat Gardening of Central New York Chapter.
6. Michelle Vanstrom, President of Niagara Falls and River Region (NY) Chapter, and Julia Vanatta, Twin Cities (MN) Chapter.
American Electric Power clears above-ground wires
By Toni Stahl

Oh no! There are strangers on my property harming my certified backyard habitat. Why? I feel helpless. This is happening in Ohio, and it could happen in other states too.

To create a more native environment, I left the native canopy trees, and had invasive amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) and garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) removed from my backyard and the three adjacent backyards. I replaced the damaged area with a native forest edge.

I had it filled with carefully selected, native sub-canopy trees, bushes, shrubs, perennials, and groundcover, which brought native wildlife of all sizes and shapes. I proudly displayed my Wild Ones and National Wildlife Federation “Certified Wildlife Habitat” signs.

What is the Electric Company Doing on My Property?
All utility companies have a front and back easement on your property, over which they have complete control. In many subdivisions, trees are left standing in the back easement when the developer bulldozes to make lots for houses. This area often contains the original, native trees. It’s not unlikely that the utility companies will come through and have their way.

Three years ago, winter winds in Ohio caused many tree limbs to break and fall onto electrical wires, causing residents to lose their electricity. As a result, AEP (my local electric company) received calls from a lot of angry people in addition to bad publicity.

How Are They Solving This Problem?
Solving the problem has been a two-part process:
1. Last year, AEP hired subcontractors to remove branches from all trees well below the electrical lines. This practice is called “topping,” because the entire top of the tree is removed.
2. This year, AEP subcontractors painted Garlon 4 on all understory plants (*Garlon* 4 contains petroleum distillates and an acid equivalent of triclopyr – 44.3 percent – 4 pounds/gallon), to kill the woody vegetation.

Like other AEP customers, I received a postcard last year explaining the work that would be done starting last year and continuing this year. Many people throw away these notices, but last year I called AEP for more information. An AEP representative visited, and I got his name and direct phone number.

Read Notifications, Closely
This year, the AEP subcontractor placed a door hanger that looked like an advertisement on my front door. After reading it, I called the number listed on the hanger. The head subcontractor that would do the work visited, and I got his name and direct phone number.

The door hanger showed green trees on the front side, with the heading “Caring for Your Trees.” On the back side were the AEP logo and two checkboxes: “Herbicide Work” and “Tree Growth Regulation Work.” My hanger had “Herbicide Work” checked, indicating that they would apply herbicides to incompatible woody vegetation. I called, and found that the herbicide, *Garlon* 4, kills the plant and a small area around it. The subcontractors are not forestry experts, so their instructions were to paint all woody plants except the topped canopy trees beneath the wires.

Unfortunately, a lot of these plants were native. Many people don’t pay attention to notices, or think it is required and that nothing can be done to change the work order.

Am I helpless?
Whether or not you can do anything to prevent unwanted cutting or treatment depends on the situation. Main sets of electrical wires come through my backyard making the utility company’s job critical. A fellow National Wildlife Federation volunteer lives on an outside electrical loop with very few houses on her wire. She called AEP and informed them that she hires an arborist to care for her trees, and they left her area totally untouched.

It also depends on who you talk to. With a bit of polite persistence you can make a few phone calls and talk to the actual subcontractors who will be doing the work. Find out when they will come to your property. Keep a record of names and phone numbers of representatives with whom you speak.

Last year, I asked the AEP representative to leave the native sub-canopy trees and bushes alone. He asked me to mark them all, because the crews would be bringing in big equipment called a Giraffe that could run over everything and kill it. When the subcontractor arrived, it looked like they were not going to follow my wishes. Luckily, I was able to talk to them – they were cooperative, and hand-removed many of the limbs, keeping the heavy equipment out of the native-plant area created around the easement.

This year, the subcontractor came out, and marked off the entire area (my yard plus the adjacent properties I had converted) with orange tape. Later, I watched as a truckload of workmen moved to the area outside of the tape and left untouched the native area I had created. I gave a sigh of relief. Ah, safe another year.

What Impact Will This Have on Diversity?
Where I live in central Ohio, there is a lot of invasive amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) below the canopy trees, so that is some of what is being killed. This seems like a good idea, except that most of the other plants consist of Kentucky bluegrass.

AEP is not re-planting the damaged area. The invasive amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) has been there so long that it appears to have completely killed all the native seeds that might have grown below. I’ll sadly wait to see what invasive plants will take over these newly created edges.

As a side note, the government is also clearing around power lines in natural areas for national security. When Douglas Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, was asked about this at a seminar I attended, he said that succession native plants are a good thing. However, I have seen studies where cuts through a native forest have given invasive plants a place to enter. You can read the study at www.oipc.info. Select “Resources,” then “Ohio and OIPC material,” and go to “Ohio Research Conference Proceedings.” Click on “2007 – Continuing Partnerships for Invasive Plant Management.” Scroll down to page 7, “Are roadsides a red carpet for invasive species?” (Matlock, 2007).

Even native creatures whose habitat is on the forest edge can throw the native ecosystem off balance, such as the parasitic brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). According to the 2009 Columbus Christmas Bird Count, at www.columbusaudubon.org, the cowbird had an unusually strong year with large roosts – probably due to all the artificially created edges. They have increased in numbers, offsetting the diversity of a number of native birds. (Cowbirds kick out one egg from a bird’s nest, and lay their own egg. The parent birds raise the cowbird as their own.)

The utility companies may have jurisdiction over parts of your property, but you can make a positive impact for biodiversity by taking the time to call and talk politely to vendors and contractors, and then following through to save any native plants.
What happened to California? By Louise Lacey

When Europeans first came to California they thought they had found paradise. The vegetation was so lush and splendid that both horse and man had trouble wading through it.

In diaries and letters home they mentioned again and again the impression that the entire territory was like a park – endless vistas of bunchgrass, wildflowers, and enormous, stately trees. Vast herds of elk and antelope surged through, grazing lightly and moving on. The coast ranges and the Great Valley contained almost no scrub underbrush or cover as we know it today.

The catastrophic transformation of California’s ecology was caused by many factors – over-grazing, the introduction of annual grasses, erosion, herbicides/pesticides/fertilizers, irrigation, mass killing off of indigenous fauna, monoculture, logging, road building, residential development, the “control” of fire and natural drainage. But of all of these, over-grazing holds the greatest responsibility.

The California Spanish used cattle hides and tallow for money. In any given year in the late 1700s and early 1800s, as many as 100,000 hides passed out through each port. For every hide shipped, many stayed on to graze as reproductive stock, too young, too hard to round up. (The Spanish didn’t build fences.)

It is no exaggeration to say that millions of cattle – and sheep – ate the heart of California’s native ecology almost to the point of disappearance in a few generations, just a geological instant.

The bunchgrasses

The entire process can be illustrated in a microcosm by the story of the bunchgrasses. California’s native grasses, which covered thousands of square miles, virtually all the entire coastal ranges and Great Valley, were perennial. They had deep roots, and stayed green for much of the year (many all year), and served admirably to prevent erosion. Many types lived, it has recently been learned, as long as 200 years. With that kind of longevity they didn’t have to have much reproductive power.

The bunchgrass growth pattern has interesting character. Each plant (some species as small as 9 inches across, others as broad as 6 inches or more) prefers space between itself and its neighbors, so what you see is a cluster of distinct individuals in a large company of associates. When the blades relax in the summer, each one looks from a distance like a small wave on a spreading pond, with the upright panicles (seed stem and head) swaying or drooping (depending on its form), in the wind.

But this give-me-some-space distinctiveness was both the bunchgrass’s blessing and its downfall. Before the European intrusion, the spaces between individual plants were filled with wildflowers and bulbs, which grew, bloomed, and fell dormant on their own schedules, creating an ever-changing oriental carpet of extraordinary beauty. Then came the cattle and sheep.

These domestics had grazing habits different from the native grazers, which clipped the top and moved on. Domestics – especially sheep, but also cattle – tend to eat grass down to the ground, even wrenching it up from its roots. The perennial grasses were much more nutritious and tasty, too, than the rye and oats the ranchers imported. So the cattle and sheep killed one long-lived, not-very-fertile plant after another, by the millions – and left behind in their excretions the seeds of their annual competitors, which found fertile ground in those very spaces in between.

An annual grass, by definition, has to work fast. It must sprout, bloom, set seed, and die – all within a few months. It doesn’t have much in the way of roots, because it gets its water from precipitation and whatever is readily available near the surface. It has no power to keep the topsoil on the hillside. But it definitely knows how to reproduce.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9
Making Backyard Habitats Better

When I read the article, “Insects in Winter,” by Douglas Tallamy, in the September-December 2010 issue of the Wild Ones Journal, I was moved by his comment about how most people inadvertently “pulverize” the next generation of insects when they mow down the dead stems in their gardens. Reading the article brought to mind an event that happened to me several years ago.

**Snacks in the yucca**

It was Thanksgiving morning, and I was gazing out the window toward my garden filled with the dried stems of various native grasses and flowers. Closer to the house, an old planting of yucca and other cultivars captured my attention because I had forgotten to cut down the ugly brown yucca stems. As I was contemplating my oversight, I noticed one of the stems bobbing back and forth. It wasn’t the wind moving the old stem; it was a downy woodpecker vigorously attacking the plant. For almost 45 minutes I watched this bird peck up and down the length of this dead plant stem. It ripped gaping holes into it, and pulled out one tasty morsel after another.

Later, when the woodpecker flew away, I went outside, pocketknife in hand, to examine an untouched yucca stem. Cutting into the stem, I found a small yellowish-white larva. I wasn’t able to identify it, but clearly the woodpecker knew they were there, and loved them. At least three woodpeckers visited my yucca stand that fall and extricated all the larvae they could find. Ever since that day, I have left my ugly yucca stems standing all winter long for the downy woodpeckers to feast upon.

**Ant lions in the dust bowl**

Leaving dried plant stems standing in the garden is not the only way to help feed or shelter animals in your yard. A few years ago I discovered ant lions living in the bone-dry sand under a large white pine in my backyard. Ant lions build conical-shaped pits to trap ants and other unsuspecting insects. Sometimes my daughter and I would trick them into showing themselves by tickling the sand at the bottom of the pit with the tip of a pine needle, which the ant lions would reach up and try to grab. This summer I noticed that my “ant lion area” had no pits. What happened? It was growing in with weeds, and the sand was harder to find. I decided that I wanted the ant lions to live here, so I cleared out the weeds in an area about 4-5 feet long by 3-feet wide. My deliberate habitat enhancement worked. I saw ant lion pits about a month later. It also brought about an unintended use: A flicker used it to take a “dust bath,” and perhaps snacked on a few nearby ants too.

**Nettle nurseries**

What do you call a dead tree and a patch of noxious stinging nettles? Many people would call them nuisances, but I call them opportunities. I requested that the dead tree be cut about 3 feet above the ground so that ant lions could create a “stump tower” for bees. With my power drill in hand, I excavated a series of 1/4-inch holes on the side of the stump. I have to admit that I thought my residents would move in immediately, but it took six years for them to find it acceptable.

This year I saw the first leaf cutter bee placing round leaf fragments in my tree-stump holes. Leaf cutter bees nest in soft, rotted wood which is why they didn’t move in when our tree was first chopped down. The stinging nettles, on the other hand, were ready to go from our tree to our house. My first encounter with them was painful since I wasn’t aware that they grew in the back corner of our yard. I thought about killing the stinging weeds with a plant herbicide, but I never quite got around to doing it. Now it will never happen.

Two years ago I discovered that my supposedly horrible stinging nettles were actually a nursery for red admiral butterflies. I never even suspected that the red admiral butterflies I had seen year after year in my yard were there because of the nettles. It’s amazing what a little knowledge will teach us.

I thought about killing the stinging weeds with a herbicide, but I never quite got around to doing it. Now it will never happen. It’s amazing what a little knowledge can teach us.

I think Dr. Tallamy said it best, in his article: “The easiest way to preserve over-wintering insect populations is to relax our neatnik standards whenever possible.” I am trying to work hard at “messing up” my gardens to provide cover for creatures big and small. I hope that our suburban landscapes will someday be filled with dried plant stems for insects, dusty sandy spaces for ant lions and flickers, and maybe for a brave few – a patch of stinging nettles. *
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All the important books on climate change and global warming are available through Amazon at significant discounts – and shopping through our online bookstore means you won’t burn up gasoline driving to every bookstore in town, while pumping more CO₂ into the atmosphere.

Just one more reason we think shopping for books, computers, software, cameras, (and a whole lot more) through our Amazon-affiliate store makes a lot of sense. The store is open 24 hours a day, the prices are competitive, and the selection is amazing – plus Amazon pays Wild Ones a nice commission for almost every purchase. www.for-wild.org/store/bookstore.

WHAT HAPPENED TO CALIFORNIA?
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

You can see the difference yourself between the way an annual and a perennial go about the business of living when you plant their flower seeds in flats at the same time. Some annual flowers will be blooming before your perennial seedlings are even ready to be transplanted out.

So the annual grasses, and the weeds that accompanied the settlers from the Old World, found a reluctantly generous hospitality in the New. We see the result.

Today, the ecological consciousness of Californians is germinating, taking root, and in some people and places, beginning to bloom. An expanding awareness of the value of native plants is just one manifestation.

Each native-plant patch in the garden of each aware person is a blossom in the cracks of ignorance and indifference. If Californians up to now have neither known any better nor cared, the planet has finally forced our hands. We don’t have the water, the time, or the money to continue the horticultural pretense that we live in Northern Europe.

What a wonder: We woke up before it was too late, before the plants that have always lived here, and could put their beauty and adaptive capacity at our disposal, had vanished.

We are embarked upon a great adventure, just beginning to learn how to live with the natives. Like the bunchgrasses, we each want a little space around us, to leave room for the flowers.

And like the bunchgrasses, when we grow together we are each a small wave on a spreading pond.
Growing Wild Ones: How we’re doing it

Growing and Demonstration Gardens
Most people don’t know that, for 10 years or so, the Wild Ones organization operated out of Donna VanBuecken’s dining room, basement, and garage – and we had an anonymous post-office box as our mailing address. This setup, while very generous on Donna’s part, did not represent us very well to potential members and granting agencies.

Consider that the New England Wildflower Society has the Garden in the Woods in Framingham, Massachusetts; the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center has extensive grounds in Austin, Texas; and the National Garden Clubs and the American Horticultural Society both have demonstration gardens at their headquarters.

And now the Wild Ones has the WILD Center – a place to grow, because such a “bricks and mortar” arrangement lends substance and credibility to an organization. It demonstrates to a donor that we are not going to fold up our tents and disappear into the night. It allows us to compete for attention and grants on a more even field, and gives Wild Ones space to educate and to create demonstration gardens that reflect our mission.

It tells the donor or the granting agency that our message is so important that we have committed a significant amount of effort and money to create a place to showcase our mission. This is the basis on which we shall grow.

Grow Wild Ones Marketing Plan
In order to reach a significant number of people, and thereby significantly increase its membership, an organization must put itself into the public eye. Call it “advertising,” or “promotion,” or “marketing” – the goal is the same: To present an idea, a product, or a service to a broad audience, in a manner that makes it desirable.

A Marketing Committee was formed in 2008, and among their first actions was to present a vision-and-values statement. Using that lead, they went about formulating a set of objectives that include:

- Raising awareness of Wild Ones and our web site, improving member retention rates, increasing the average dues level at which members join, increasing total membership levels, and continuing our efforts to influence the public perception of native plants and how the general public approaches landscaping.

This plan is not a random list of strategies. Throughout the process of developing a marketing plan, a professional consultant and the committee spent significant time evaluating factors that inform selection of strategies as well as key messages to be delivered through those strategies. This included a survey of 268 current, and 69 lapsed Wild Ones members, to determine what attracted them to Wild Ones, what they dislike, and why they have or have not renewed their membership. Here are some of the key survey findings:

The raingardens at the front door of the WILD Center welcome visitors, and are a ready demonstration of what the Center is all about. Visitors are welcome to explore the habitat surrounding the Center.
To the tune of “Home on the Range”

Oh give me a home
Where the goldfinches roam
Where the wrens and the woodpeckers play
Where often is heard
The bold chickadee’s chirp
And the monarchs their eggs they do lay

“Home, home,” they all say
Where the birds have a great place to stay
Where migrants come back
For a rest and a snack
And the butterflies don’t fly away

By Michelle Serrey

The most critical recommendation from the Marketing Committee calls for the addition of a marketing assistant to existing national headquarters staff, to provide the time and expertise needed for effective implementation of a marketing plan. We anticipate funding assistance for this new position will come from grants and foundations, as well as member donations.

Please consider joining one or all of these efforts with your time or ideas: Send an e-mail to marketingplan@wildones.org, or call and leave a message for committee co-chair Carol Andrews, at 218-529-8204.

Denise Gehring Achieves Ecoscaper I Status

Denise Gehring of the Oak Openings Region (OH) Chapter is our newest Ecoscaper I. Denise, true to her goal of achieving all three levels is already working on Level II. She writes, “Last Monday (November 22), I was asked by the Toledo Metroparks to do a plant rescue of 50 downy rattlesnake plantain orchid (Goodyera pubescens) and 12 spotted wintergreen (Chimaphila maculata). There was a devastating tornado earlier this year that ripped through part of Oak Openings Metropark. The rescue plants were in a pine stand that needed extensive cleanup, and would be destroyed by the logging contractor. I moved the plants about 3/4 of a mile to a safe location adjacent to known populations – so that the soil was correct, and mycorrhizae would be present for the orchids.”

Backyard Habitat Song

To the tune of “Home on the Range”

Oh give me a home
Where the goldfinches roam
Where the wrens and the woodpeckers play
Where often is heard
The bold chickadee’s chirp
And the monarchs their eggs they do lay

“Home, home,” they all say
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By Michelle Serrey

With the objectives in mind, and informed by the survey results, the Membership Committee has been asked to set out a plan to attract and deal with new categories of potential members (such as landscaping professionals, and educators), and the Web Committee to work on moving ahead with upgrading the Wild Ones web site.
Third, the reporter’s goal isn’t the same as yours. They’re looking for an interesting story featuring anything quirky or out of the ordinary – not to advocate for our Wild Ones mission. Not everything you discuss in the interview will end up in the article, so skip the extraneous details, and emphasize your important points. Provide interesting anecdotes and examples that illustrate those points.

For example, in one of the first stories about my habitat garden in the local paper, I mentioned that I provided moist sand for butterflies. This was really just an experiment, and certainly not the most important way I provided habitat for butterflies in my garden. But this was the kind of unusual thing they were looking for – and it was featured prominently in the article, including a “how to” section so readers could make their own sand area.

Describing the larval host plants I provide would have more accurately represented how my garden helped butterflies, and I would have preferred seeing a list of such plants to guide readers. This was my fault, not the reporter’s. I should have provided some compelling anecdotes about those host plants, perhaps describing how exciting it is to see monarchs arrive each year and lay their eggs on my milkweeds – the only plants their caterpillars can eat. And that ultimately, providing milkweed is the only way we will continue to have monarchs.

Jargon alert

Avoid using jargon. I probably use more jargon than I realize when describing our landscaping practices. I’m so comfortable with these terms I forget that other people may not be familiar with them. One example is “larval host plant,” mentioned above. Perhaps if I had instead called them “caterpillar food plants,” the reporter would have understood their importance and included the idea in the article. And choose colorful language. I try to create a different perspective on pollinators by mentioning the joy of having the “busy-ness and buzziness” of bees in my yard.

Spell out the names of plants, emphasizing their botanical names, noting that common names can be misleading. For example, in one article, the writer listed plants in my garden without using the botanical names, so the article simply said I grew “verbena.” I expect that the typical gardener probably thought of the ornamental, non-native “verbena” that is typically sold. What I had planted, of course, was the native Verbena hastata.

Speak slowly. After all, if you’re talking at top speed – which can happen when you’re talking about a subject you’re passionate about – how can reporters record your ideas accurately? Even if they’re taping the conversation (and they’ll let you know if they are), it’s easier to transcribe a tape of someone speaking clearly and slowly. (I’m still working on this.)

Finally, it’s a good idea to think about the important points you want to make about your yard and landscaping philosophy, and write them down. Highlight the big ideas, illustrated by interesting anecdotes or snazzy phrases, and put them in a document on your desktop, real or virtual. When you talk to reporters, try to stick to your “script.”

Talking with others

Having a summary of your ideas in your head also comes in handy when talking to other people who are interested in your yard. It’s especially useful if you have a yard tour. I’ve printed my summary sheet to hand out at the end of a tour. It helps people remember those key ideas about our goals and mission.

The message

Whether in an interview, letter to the editor, yard tour, or just talking to others, I strive to remember the mantra: Educate and inspire. Try not to criticize current landscaping practices, but rather build a compelling case for the many benefits of our eco-friendly practices for ourselves, for our pets, and for wildlife. Especially important are the benefits to our children and for all future generations. And most important, share the joy your landscape brings to you, your family, and others.

For a good example of a yard tour flyer go to www.wildones.org/download/touryard.pdf. See the species list on page 4 of the flyer.
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Email us at: cs@prairienursery.com
The Wild Ones national committees have gotten off to a great start this year, and are looking forward to helping Wild Ones grow. If you have some time to spare or just some ideas to share don’t hesitate to contact any of the Committee Chairs listed below.

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Seeds For Education Director
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(734) 973-0684

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The Meeting Place

Chapters, please send your chapter contact information to: Meeting Place Coordinator Mary Paquette
N2026 Cedar Road • Adell, Wisconsin 53001 • 920-994-2505 • meeting@for-wild.org

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Milwaukee Southwest-Wehr Chapter #23
Message Center: 414-299-9888 x2

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native.plant.calvert@gmail.com

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For information about starting a chapter in your area: www.for-wild.org/chapters.html.

CHAPTER ANNIVERSARIES
November through February seems to be a great time to Charter Wild Ones chapters. Celebrating anniversaries during this time are:

North Oakland (MI) and Northern Kane County (IL) 1 year

St. Croix Oak Savanna (MN) 7 years

Greater Cincinnati (OH) 9 years

Root River (WI) and Mid-Missouri 10 years

Kalamazoo (MI) and St. Louis (MO) 11 years

North Park Village Nature Center (IL) 13 years

Lake-To-Prairie (IL) 14 years

Fox Valley Area (WI) 16 years

Green Bay (WI) 19 years

Thanks to you and all your members Wild Ones continues to grow and to spread the word about the benefits of using native plants in natural landscaping.
Love Orchids?

We have been growing orchids from seed in our laboratory since 1989 from local genetic stock.

Come see these and other fine native plants at the Dane County Farmers’ Market or at the farm (call ahead for hours). Complete list on our web site, www.bluestemfarm.com

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Wild Ones Sweatshirts
When the weather is cool, you can’t beat a Wild Ones sweatshirt. Available in several colors and styles, with the Wild Ones logo. Some have the “Roots” drawing, and some have “Yesterday’s Lawn, Tomorrow’s Habitat.”
Pricing varies.

Long-Sleeve Roots T-Shirts
The roots of native plants grow deep, and here’s a great way to show off that important fact. Display your “wildness” with “Roots” on front, and the Wild Ones logo on the back. Cool and unique. Several colors available. $22

The Inside Story
Janice Stiefel was an important part of Wild Ones’ history, and this 80-page book includes all 66 of her original articles that appeared in the Wild Ones Journal and The Outside Story. Now in full color, with photos of the plants and related insects, anyone who appreciates native plants will love this book. $25

Wild Ones Patch
If people don’t already know you’re a Wild Ones member, this woven, colorful, iron-on patch (shown above) will let them know for sure. Sold in quantities of two for $4 each. For quantities of 10 or more, the price is $3.50 each.

Online Shopping Is Easy With PayPal. Just use your credit card with or without a PayPal account. For more information, contact the National Office at 877-394-9453. Checks payable to Wild Ones at: Wild Ones Merchandise, P.O. Box 1274, Appleton, Wisconsin 54912. Prices include shipping and handling. For maximum convenience, order online at www.for-wild.org/store.

Great Stuff at the Wild Ones Store
It’s not always the end
of the world
Sometimes human activities actually help
the native plants along, just by accident.
This was made clear to me this past week-
end, when I revisited a small woodland
population of violet bush clover (Lespedeza
violacea). Though the site was largely de-
stroyed by work on a nearby sewer line last
fall (which required a temporary road to be
bulldozed through the area), I thought
maybe one or two individuals might have
survived out of the original dozen.
Instead, I found something on the order of
400 to 600 seedlings growing in the bare
soil. That was all the more amazing consid-
ering that the plants didn’t produce nearly
that many flowers prior to the disruption.
Instead of destroying the site, the construc-
tion equipment actually stirred up a sizable
seed bank, while removing a lot of the
shade trees in the area. Thus it looks like
the disturbance may have breathed new life
into this population. Aaron Devries, Iowa.

How you can help us
spread Wild Ones
using Facebook

Become a Fan of our Wild Ones Facebook page.
Stop in at our Wild Ones Facebook page to see what we’re saying about natural land-
scaping. It’s easy to become a “fan” of Wild Ones, and then whenever we add something
new, you will be among the first to know about it. Go to the Wild Ones web site
(wildones.org) and click the “Find Us On Facebook” button, or visit us directly at:
www.facebook.com/pages/Wild-Ones/220999458625

Become a Facebook Friend of Donna VanBuecken.
Our Executive Director, Donna VanBuecken wants you to become her Facebook friend.
This is important, because in the near future she’ll be using her Facebook page to make
special announcements, and to let you know about other important Wild Ones news.
Don’t be left out. Please go to her page, and “friend” her today:
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Like the roots of a prairie plant, Facebook “Like” and “Share” really spread.
If you’re not already on Facebook, now is the time to get onboard. There’s no charge,
and it’s easy – and if you pay even the slightest bit of attention to your privacy settings, it’s
unlikely that you’ll have to worry about people seeing anything you’d like to keep private.
Once you sign up, be sure to become a “fan” of our Facebook page and a “friend” of Donna
VanBuecken (see above). Then, you can really help spread awareness of Wild Ones by clicking
the “Like” link and/or the “Share” link whenever you see a new “status message” come
through from one of our pages (if you like it). Clicking these links can really help. Let’s say
you have 40 Facebook friends. Every time you click the “Share” link for a Wild Ones “status
message” that message will show up on the “news feeds” of all 40 of your friends (depending
on how you and your friends have your pages set up). Try it out – it’s easy, and it’s fun.
**Banned in Connecticut**

The Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association, acting on six years of research conducted by the University of Connecticut College of Agriculture, has agreed to phase out the propagation and sale of 25 varieties of barberry (*Berberis* sp.), over the next three years. Further, the association will launch a campaign to educate the public about the risks to the environment created by these invasive exotic plants. Connecticut is the first state to do this, setting a real template for the rest of the nation.

The state’s $1.1 billion nursery industry claims this voluntary phase-out and propagation ban will cost the industry about “$7 million.”

Knowledgeable conservationists and DNR agents from other states are heartened by this accomplishment. This invasive plant, readily spread by birds and small animals, is present in the wild areas of all the eastern seaboard states, except Florida, and west as far as Wyoming. They point out that the “$7 million” loss is a gross exaggeration. If property owners are persuaded not to buy barberry, they will likely buy and plant something else. If property owners choose to be ecologically responsible, they will remove the existing barberry, and likely buy new plants to replace it. Sound like a monetary wash to me.

Let’s do what we can in our individual areas to initiate re-thinking on the propagation and sales of barberry, buckthorn, and honeysuckle. Wouldn’t that be a great start? *

**Mark Your Calendars**

**January 15.** First Quarterly National Board Meeting, Part A on non-budget items: Via web conference. All members are invited to participate. Contact the headquarters office for log-in details.

**January 29.** First Quarterly National Board Meeting, Part B on budget items: Via web conference. All members are invited to participate. Contact the headquarters office for log-in details.

**January 29.** 15th Annual Toward Harmony With Nature Conference Day-long seminar on native landscaping, hosted by Wild Ones Fox Valley Area at the Oshkosh Convention Center, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Mariette Nowak naturalist and author of *Birdscaping in the Midwest*, will be keynote speaker. For information please call 920-730-3986 or go to www.towardharmonywithnature.info/index.html.

**March 6,7.** 24th Annual Michigan Wildflower Conference at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing, Michigan. Title: Growing Arks – Learning the skills for saving native species. Keynote speakers: Scott Russell Sanders, author of *A Conservationist Manifesto*; and Janet Marinelli, author of *Stalking the Wild Amaranth*. For more information please visit the Conference link at www.flowersmich.org.

**Join Wild Ones**

As part of our Grow Wild Ones campaign, we have recently updated, revamped, and reproduced the popular *Wild About Wildflowers* video in DVD format. And now you can get your own copy at no extra charge when you join Wild Ones or upgrade your existing membership level.

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**Annual Dues**  

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<tr>
<th>Household</th>
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**Chapter preference** (See chapter listing on page 16.)

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Money Going Down the Drain! If you are moving, either temporarily or permanently, please let the National Office know as soon as your new address is official. Returned and forwarded mail costs Wild Ones anywhere from $0.77 to $3.77 per piece. Each issue this adds up to a lot of money that could be used to support our mission.

How You Can Help. When planning a long vacation, or a move, please 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. Thanks!

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C. Diane Macaulay Ann Arbor (MI) Chapter
Martha & Ray Bright and Stephen Windsor. Gift certificate for Olive Garden for Annual Meeting door prize. Greater DuPage (IL) Chapter
Joseph McMullen Habitat Gardening in Central New York Chapter
Patrick Hudson & Gina Frasson-Hudson and Ruth Caputo Toward Grow Wild Ones Campaign, Kalamazoo Area (MI) Chapter
Dorothy Danak Louisville MetroWild (KY) Chapter
Mrs. M. R Vrtilek Milwaukee-North (WI) Chapter
Donated a membership in memory of Lorrie Otto.
Jean E. & Donald W. Knoedler and Missie Wiltse M ilwaukee-Southwest/Wehr (WI) Chapter
In memory of her Nanny. M ilwaukee-North (WI) Chapter
Clifford Ostred of Door Landscape Door County (WI) Chapter
Diane S. O’Connell Gibson Woods (IN) Chapter
Rhoden Sterrett Louisville MetroWild (KY) Chapter
Mary P. & John D. Paquette M enomonee River Area (WI) Chapter
M ary Junttonen Red Cedar (MI) Chapter
Jen B. Calabretta Passes to Mystic Seaport for Annual Wild Ones door prizes. Mountain Laurel (CT) Chapter
Robert A. Kinces (OH) Partner-at-Large
Carolyn K. (Kris) Johnson (OH) Partner-at-Large
M ary P. & John D. Paquette M enomonee River Area (WI) Chapter
Chant Mahanta St. Louis (MO) Chapter. Toward 2010 Photo Contest.

SEEDS FOR EDUCATION
Grant Program
Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter
M enomonee River Area (WI) Chapter
Clifford Ostred of Door Landscape Door County (WI) Chapter
Diane S. O’Connell Gibson Woods (IN) Chapter
Rhoden Sterrett Louisville MetroWild (KY) Chapter
Mary P. & John D. Paquette M enomonee River Area (WI) Chapter
Eileen Metress Oak Openings Region (OH) Chapter
Robert A. Kinces (OH) Partner-at-Large
Vicki Flier St. Louis (MO) Chapter

AMAZON COMMISSIONS
Recent two-month rebates from Amazon.Com have amounted to $151.54. Just as a reminder. Anything you purchase from Amazon by going through the Wild Ones Bookstore www.for-wild.org/store/bookstore/ gives Wild Ones a small commission.

Wild Ones Photo Contest 2010
Winners of the 2010 Photo Contest will be featured in the March/April, 2011 issue of the Wild Ones Journal. Photo shown here is the winner of the People’s Choice award, and first-place winner in the Pollinators, Insects, and Bugs category – by Mike Matthews, Louisville (KY) Chapter.