Good soil? Bad soil? Are you sure? What you need to know about soil to grow native plants.

By Bill Schneider

First of a new series of articles designed to review and renew the basics of natural landscaping.

Soil. Even though it may not look like it, it’s “alive.” And it’s everywhere. And, as natural landscapers, soil is at the very heart of everything we do. But how much do we know about it? Soil can be various colors. Lots of different textures. Wet or dry. Heavy or light. What do all the variations mean? And the soil you’re working with – is it "good" or is it "bad"? Is there anything you can do to make it "better"? Just because you can change your soil, does that mean you should? If you’re new to natural landscaping, this article was written with you in mind. But even if you’ve been gardening for years, there’s a good chance you’ll learn a few new things here.

The horticulture of native plants sometimes gets tangled up in traditional horticulture or agriculture, especially as it relates to the understanding of soils and soil fertility. The gardening dogma has been to extol the wonders of rich, fertile soil, and the use of rich compost or commercial fertilizers that promise faster, bigger, and better. Although rich soil may be beneficial for vegetable garden, agricultural crops, and some perennials, this is not the case for growing most native plant species.

Well-meaning customers come to our nursery listing a variety of problems with their soils – “too dry and sandy” or “compacted clay” are the most frequent. Some of these folks wonder about having this “bad soil” hauled away, and “topsoil” brought in to replace it. Others say they have been composting and creating "good soil" for years, and now want to try native plants. Unlike the story of Goldilocks and Three Bears – none of these customers have it “just right.”

What is soil?

Soil is much more than the sum of its parts. It is made up of inorganic mineral parts (sand, silt, and clay), decaying organic matter (stuff that was once living), plus an abundance of living things including fungi, bacteria, insects, roots, and so on. If you think of the soil as a recycling factory – the mineral component would be the factory building, the organic matter (dead stuff) would be the product being recycled, and the microorganisms and other animals, the workers.

The soil organic matter provides space for air exchange and water retention, and helps meter the availability of nutrients in the soil – what we typically recite as NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium) – along with innumerable micronutrients. In order to make these nutrients available to plants, the organic matter needs to be reconstituted – the soil...
Where do you get your inspiration?

Last summer, my wife and I rented the Ken Burns series, “The National Parks – America’s Best Idea.” Within the first 10 minutes, I was hooked. As I watched every minute, including the extras on the DVDs, I was fully entranced. I was moved – sometimes to tears. I was given hope and joy, and most of all, I was inspired.

We would not have our national parks if it were not for individuals who were passionate about what they believed, and who were dedicated to preserving those precious places. Despite strong opposition from those who only saw the commercial value of those places, they did what they loved. These visionaries were inspired by the beauty and wonder of those national treasures. They showed the natural beauty to their friends, and explained why it was important – and their friends became inspired. Ultimately, their collective vision was recognized, and our national parks were established, one by one.

As I reflect on the series, I cannot help but think of what we are doing as Wild Ones members. Although none of us are creating natural habitats that will attract thousands of people from all over the world, we are providing sanctuaries, one by one, for thousands of other species. We don’t know for sure, but we could be preserving species that could otherwise vanish forever.

Sometimes we face opposition from the uninformed who expect us to conform to the “norm.” But we continue because we know that native landscaping is far better. Opposition is an opportunity to educate and inspire others. This idea of using native plants in our home landscapes has been debated and tested. Today we can say that our vision is inspiring more people to do the same thing.

I also think about where we get our inspiration. We have so many opportunities to be inspired. We attend chapter meetings to learn everything we can about native landscaping. We have excellent resources such as the Wild Ones Journal, the Wild Ones website, and a multitude of books, including Bringing Nature Home. We can tour other native-landscaped yards. We can take classes and attend conferences that are focused on native species and nature. We can become a Master Gardener, a Master Naturalist, or an Ecoscaper. And, with our inspiration and knowledge, we can then educate and inspire others.

So where do you get your inspiration? I’d enjoy hearing your story. Send me an e-mail.

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

By Geoffrey Mehl

One of my favorite flowers is liverwort (Hepatica nobilis) because it is the very first to bloom in my garden. It bravely holds court in sometimes really rotten weather, toward the end of March, here in northeast Pennsylvania. These are very tiny flowers, perhaps less than a half-inch in diameter, but cheerful. Hepatica does well in rich, woodland soil, part shade. Isn’t fluffy about moisture. The leaves look a bit bedraggled when the plant blooms, but green up during the spring and summer. It’s a nifty little plant to work into rocky settings, where it has sort of a little stage to show off on. They show up in lavender, white and blue.

Chapter Notes

We have begun receiving the annual State of the Chapter reports into the Wild Ones headquarters office. We share some of the highlights with you.

Anne Bowe, President of the Lexington (KY) Chapter wrote: Our membership increased from 34 member households to 55 member households. Our Membership Chair, Linda Porter, goes out of her way to make sure people renew their memberships. She sends lovely, personalized e-mails. She will phone people if necessary. This individual attention seems to have been very effective, since we had only one person who failed to renew this year.

Our membership also increased through word of mouth, and I think the key is that we strive to have excellent programs every month. After each program we have wonderful snacks and time to get to know each other. Our goal is that people will feel that they belong to a Wild Ones community. We had a table at a nature center’s plant sale. One of our members manned the table and offered a jar of her homegrown honey with a paid membership. She got us eight new members.

President Peter Sigmann of the Door County (WI) Chapter wrote: Our low-budget and sustainable approach to gardening appears to resonate with our cash-poor neighbors. We are reasonably stable, at a low level of intensity. Our classroom programs have been helpful in recruiting new members. “Specializing” in native vegetation provides an identity separate from the other environmental organizations on the peninsula.

For the last six years we have given an annual award to a business for exemplary use of native plantings. The award comes with a plaque and a press release. This year the award was given to Wild Ones business member Door Landscape in recognition of a remarkable educational installation at their place of business.

Chartered with 12 members, Jim Brueck, Charter president of North Oakland (MI) Chapter, wrote that they grew to 26 by the end of the year. The relationship they have developed with North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy has provided great support. Jim also wrote that the chapter received a grant award from the Wildflower Association of Michigan to purchase native plants for a riparian garden project in the city of Clarkston and the “Distinguished Service Award” from Keep Michigan Beautiful for their ongoing work on a raingarden in their local “Depot Park,” which is planted with plants of local genotype.

President Jackie Holdsworth of the Calhoun County (MI) Chapter wrote that one technique they use to develop membership is to announce their meetings in the media, and include the statement that the meetings are free of charge and all are welcome to attend.

Chapter plant sales

This is the time of the year that our chapters start planning for their annual plant sales. Plant sales are a great way to get native plants into the hands of non-Wild Ones members, and also an excellent time to educate them about the benefits to the environment. It’s also a great time to do some networking, and to invite people back for upcoming chapter educational events.

Chapter Plant Sale Committees are always looking for assistance with this huge project, so if you’ve got a little time, don’t hesitate to offer to help out. This is a great time to get plants you know are native, so even if you can’t volunteer some time, do plan to spread the word to your friends and family to order their plants from your chapter.

Wild Ones Web Site

Now that the Grow Wild Ones Marketing Plan has been approved, we are getting back on track with the upgrade to the Wild Ones web site. The Web Committee has met and compared the recommendations from the Marketing Committee with the original Functional Specifications, and has asked our contractor, Geostar Internet, to begin the upgrade. Now the committee can get busy on Phase II, which will cover new items to be included on the web site. If you have things you’d like to have added to the web site once it is upgraded, please feel free to contact the committee chair through the headquarters office at executordirector@for-wild.org. They’d love to hear from you.
Value for Birds

We all love holly for the holidays, and so do birds. We value native hollies for decorations and for landscaping, while birds appreciate their berries, abundant during the lean times of winter. The American holly, *Ilex opaca*, is the only native holly with evergreen spiny leaves and red berries – the classic characteristics of holly.

But there are a number of other native hollies, all found in the eastern half of North America, which are equally handsome and fruitful. The evergreen species, in addition to the American holly, include dahoon, *I. cassine*, inkberry (*I. glabra*), and yaupon (*I. vomitoria*). The deciduous species include, possum-haw (*I. decidua*), big-leaf holly (*I. montana*), mountain holly (*I. mucronatus*, formerly *Nemopanthus m*.), winterberry (*I. verticillata*), and the rare servis holly (*I. amelanchier*). There are several other native *Ilex* species, but they are not as well known, and are infrequently used in landscaping.

**Value for Birds**

Holly berries, although poisonous to humans, are nutritious fruits for birds. The berries are particularly valuable because they persist through December and into winter, even into spring in some holly species. The birds, for unknown reasons, seem to prefer them later in the season. Twenty-nine species of birds are known to eat holly berries, including eastern phoebes, the American crows, gray catbirds, brown thrashers, American robins, eastern bluebirds, cedar waxwings, white-eyed vireos, and northern cardinals, as well as many thrushes, woodpeckers, and other songbirds. In addition, wood ducks, wild turkeys, ruffed grouse, northern bobwhites, and ring-necked pheasants feed on the fruit.

Hollies also provide nesting and cover for birds. Known nesters include the northern mockingbird, American robin, veery, cedar waxwing and red-winged blackbird. The evergreen hollies are particularly valuable for winter cover.

**Other Wildlife Values**

Hollies are insect-pollinated and, although the honey-fragrant flowers are usually inconspicuous, horticulturist William Cullina writes that every bee and hoverfly in the neighborhood will visit hollies when in bloom. The flowers also attract butterflies and moths. The American holly and winterberry are host plants for Henry’s elfin butterfly. Yaupon hosts the elf butterfly. Mountain holly is a host plant for the Columbia silkmoth (very similar to the better-known cecropia moth).

Mammals which use holly berries as a food source include deer, bear, opossums, rabbits, raccoons, mice, and squirrels.

**Landscape Notes**

Hollies have long been popular in landscaping. The evergreen species have been used primarily for their foliage. Most deciduous species have abundant, long-lasting berries, which are especially showy after leaf fall – perfect for fall and winter gardens.

The various species have different native ranges in the Eastern U.S. and Canada, so you’re likely to find one native to your particular area. The big leaf holly is native to the Appalachians. Inkberry and American holly grow along the most of the Atlantic coast, and the latter is also found native inland to Texas and Florida. Winterberry ranges from southern Canada, south to Minnesota, Missouri, and Florida. Mountain holly is native from southern Canada, west to Minnesota, and south to the mountains, from West Virginia to North Carolina. All the others mentioned above are native to the southeastern coastal plain.

All our native hollies are shrubs to small trees, and prefer moister acidic soils. They fruit best in sunny locations, but can tolerate light shade. Most have red berries, but inkberry, as its names suggests, has black berries.

Hollies are dioecious, requiring both male and female plants for fruiting. The male plants, lacking the showy fruits, are generally relegated to a back corner of the garden, but Cullina suggests that it is best to have them within 50 feet of the female for good fruit set. Also, at least three or four plants should be planted to insure both sexes for fruiting. However, male and female cultivars are available – use one male for every five female plants.

Cultivars are often superior in fruit set and vigor, and for this reason, could be better for wildlife. Thus, holly cultivars may be an exception to the rule of avoiding cultivars in favor of genetic diversity. However, Douglas Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, warns that some cultivars of winterberry may produce berries too large for some birds to eat, so it would be best to check this out before purchasing a cultivar. Berries which are 3/5-of-an-inch in diameter are best for most birds.

Winterberry is the hardest and most showy of our native hollies. It is also the one I know best, having seen spectacular specimens of the shrub, when leafless and laden with beautiful red berries, in the snow. Much to my regret, my soil is too droughty for winterberry, which is most at home in bogs and wetlands. To research this article, I revisited Beulah Bog, one of the southernmost bogs in Wisconsin, wearing knee-high boots over a boardwalk mostly underwater, where the only wild winterberry near my home grows happily.

Nonetheless, some experts say that winterberry can tolerate moderately well-drained soils, as long as they are not too dry. Like other hollies, winterberry prefers acidic soils, but can tolerate alkaline soils to pH 8.0. These features, plus its gorgeous berries, which brighten the holidays and persist into late February, make it one of the most widely used and popular hollies.

For more information on the cultivation of winterberry and the other hollies, visit the web site of the USDA at http://plants.usda.gov/java/, or consult William Cullina’s *Native Trees, Shrubs, and Vines*. Also of Interest: Yaupon’s Latin epithet, *vomitoria*, refers to the use of its leaves and twigs in a tea consumed by American Indians as a purgative.
A study done at the University of Illinois (U of I) found that humble bumblebees under attack in early February, 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture gave unrestricted approval for genetically modified alfalfa. Monarch butterfly specialist, Dr. Lincoln Brower says, “My understanding is that alfalfa has been genetically altered to resist the powerful herbicide, glyphosate. Thus the seeds can be planted, and when the seedlings are established, the fields are sprayed and the herbicide kills all plants except the GMO (genetically modified organism) alfalfa. So-called Roundup-ready soybeans and corn are extensively planted, and the spraying of these two major crops with herbicides has eliminated milkweed from thousands of acres of land. This will now extend to the acreage planted in alfalfa—more milkweed will be exterminated. A question that needs to be addressed is whether the nectar of alfalfa will in any way be affected that could be toxic or detrimental to pollinating insects. Alfalfa flowers are an important nectar source for monarchs. So we shall witness yet another agro-industrial insult to biodiversity on our planet.”

Not only is alfalfa important to monarch butterflies, but milkweed is essential to monarchs. The understory of all “weeds,” not just milkweed, is wiped out in fields of Roundup-ready, genetically modified crops. Many of these weeds are in fact native plants and wildflowers, and represent food and habitat to the entire spectrum of wildlife.

Humble Bumblebees Under Attack

A study done at the University of Illinois (U of I) found that wild bumblebees have suffered major losses in several species, and declines in their range since record-keeping began in the late 1800s. The study found that in the last 20 years, the relative abundance of four of the analyzed eight species has declined by as much as 96 percent— and their surveyed geographic ranges have shrunk by 23 percent to 87 percent. Further, bees with declining populations show lower genetic diversity than species with healthy numbers, and are more likely to be infected with Nosema bombi. This parasite, (which has been likened to HIV in bees) was imported from Europe during the 1990s as part of efforts to increase populations of certain bumblebees in greenhouses. (You can read more about this in the March/April, 2007, issue of the Wild Ones Journal, for-wild.org/download/bumblebee.pdf). The study hastened to add that Nosema is likely not the entire cause.

“Climate change appears to play a role in the declines in some bumblebee species in Europe,” said U of I entomologist Sydney Cameron, the first author on the research paper. “Habitat loss may contribute to the loss of some specialist species, low genetic diversity, infection rates of the parasite must be considered suspects in the declines.

“Whether it’s one of these or all of the above, we need to be aware of these declines,” Cameron said. “It may be that the role that these four species play in pollinating plants could be taken up by other species of bumblebees. (We have 50 species of bumblebees in North America.) But if additional species begin to fall out due to things we’re not aware of, we could be in trouble.”

Honeybee Die-offs

Cousins of bumblebees, the honeybees, have also experienced catastrophic die-offs since 2006, in a phenomenon known as “colony collapse disorder.” Bees go off to forage, and simply fail to come home at the end of the day, leaving the queen and immature bees to tend the larvae.

Both European and U.S. studies have investigated possible involvement of various pesticides. None seemed to be firmly implicated until clothianidin, and some sister insecticides, came into use. These insecticides are absorbed by plants, and then released in pollen and nectar to kill pests. Clothianidin has been so firmly implicated in sudden honeybee death that a number of European countries have banned its use.

In 2003 clothianidin was given conditional registration by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the U.S. This was followed by unconditional registration in 2007, based on one study done by Bayer, the manufacturer of the insecticide. An internal memo from November, 2010, written by several internal EPA researchers, described scientific inadequacy in the Bayer study that had been used to justify clothianidin’s approval. “Clothianidin’s major risk concern is to non-target insects (that is, honeybees),” wrote those researchers. “Exposure through contaminated pollen and nectar and potential toxic effects therefore remain an uncertainty for pollinators.” (Search www.panna.org for documentation).

An EPA spokesman announced that clothianidin will not be reviewed until 2012, and will be available for use this spring of 2011.

What, Me Worry?

If you’re not an entomologist, should you be concerned about all this? Keep in mind that butterflies, bumblebees, and honeybees are major pollinators. Without pollination, many of our important food crops may fail, leaving the world at risk of food shortages and famine. If you like to eat, keep in mind that every third bite you take comes to you courtesy of a pollinator.
Congratulations! To all the winners of the 2010 Wild Ones Photo Contest. We had a well-participated contest this past year. The number of entries totaling 134 was a huge jump from previous years’ and was most likely a result of our decision to go digital. The quality of the images was also of high caliber.

The larger number of entries, however, did present some difficulties in sorting, and categorizing which caused a delay in getting the results out, but we learned from this experience and will make adjustments for next year.

Why a Photo Contest?
The primary goal of the photo contest is to promote awareness of the mission of the Wild Ones: Preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities through environmentally sound landscaping practices. Since the most common and widespread means of experiencing the landscaped environment is visual, photography presents us with a versatile tool for recording, interpreting and sharing our experiences with others.

Judging
Our aim is to get the contest judged by a reputed photographer with a demonstrated affinity for the natural environment. The 2010 contest was judged by the well-known garden photographer from California, Saxon Holt, www.saxonholt.com.

The Winners
Please go to wildcertification.org/photocontest2010 to view the winning photos online and in color.

People’s Choice
Hummingbird Acrobat – Female Ruby Throated Hummingbird on Trumpet Vine
Mike Matthews, Louisville (KY) Chapter

Child
1st Place: Erin the Photographer
Bonnie Vastag, Green Bay (WI) Chapter

Children’s Photos
1st Place: Three Purple Coneflowers
Jordan Vastag, (WI) PAL
2nd Place: Beautiful Butterfly
Erin Vastag, (WI) PAL
3rd Place: Coneflower
Erin Vastag, (WI) PAL

Floral
1st Place: What's Up?
Rhonda Hayes, Twin Cities (MN) Chapter
2nd Place: The Sunflower
Matt Frank, (WI) PAL
3rd Place: Senna in the Morning
Janet Allen, Habitat Gardening in Central New York Chapter

Non Residential Landscaping
1st Place: Blue Beech With Autumn Colors
Patricia Hill, Northern Kane County (IL) Chapter
2nd Place: Prairie Dropseed
Patricia Hill, Northern Kane County (IL) Chapter
3rd Place: Mosquito Hill Front Entrance Garden
Donna VanBuecken, Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter

Pollinators
1st Place: Humming Acrobat – Female Ruby Throated Hummingbird on Trumpet Vine
Mike Matthews, Louisville (KY) Chapter
2nd Place: Ironweed & Eastern Yellow Swallowtail
Janet Hinkfuss, Green Bay (WI) Chapter
3rd Place: Sharing With Friends
Debi Nitka, Green Bay (WI) Chapter

Residential Landscaping
1st Place: Backyard Compass
Harold Vastag, Green Bay (WI) Chapter
2nd Place: Waiting for the Scythe
John Kreutzfeldt, Flint River Chapter (MI) Chapter
3rd Place: Side Yard With Chairs
Patricia Hill, Northern Kane County (IL) Chapter

Scenery
1st Place: Reeds
Ron Johnson, Rock Valley (IL) Chapter
2nd Place: Ratibida pinnata at Sunset
Rhonda Hayes, Twin Cities (MN) Chapter
3rd Place: Bridge With Marsh Marigolds
Patricia Hill, Northern Kane County (IL) Chapter

The 2011 Photo Contest Coming Soon
Didn’t make it for the 2010 Photo Contest? Or your entry didn’t place as a winner? There’s always next year (or this year), so watch our web site, our e-mail blasts, and the Journal for announcements regarding the 2010 Wild Ones Photo Contest.

Wild Ones Activities
1st Place: A Lawn Makeover
Bonnie Vastag, Green Bay (WI) Chapter
2nd Place: A Plant of Their Own
Bonnie Vastag, Green Bay (WI) Chapter
3rd Place: Habitat Here Festival - 2009
Michael Nordin, Arrowhead (MN) Chapter
BOOK REVIEW

Review of Designing Gardens With Flora of the American East

Review by Janet Allen

This is the kind of gardening book I like. Carolyn Summers not only offers many practical ways we can create landscapes for a healthy planet, but just as important, she inspires us to do so.

This book is a fine companion to the Wild Ones favorite, Bringing Nature Home, by Douglas Tallamy. His research shows how important native plants are to preserving biodiversity, and now Summers offers many practical ideas on how to incorporate these plants in our landscapes.

Who is this book for?

This book opens with the usual list of reason to go with native wildflowers and shrubs in our landscapes, but she reminds us of, and spends time explaining, some points that are not made entirely clear, in many cases – like the concept of co-evolution between native plants and the other life forms in places where they have lived together for thousands of years. One very valuable point she makes consists of extrapolating and connecting known points, having to do with the inability of all non-native shrubs to host native bird-feeding insects, some research done on architecture of non-native shrubs that permits easy access to predators and the consequent loss of nestlings, and the need for parent birds to be away from their nests collecting insects and caterpillars on plants other than the plant in which their nest resides. Her conclusion is that the parent birds are not around their nestlings enough to protect them from predators. This is a conclusion I have not read before, and demonstrates much creative thinking on the part of the author. With this introduction, this book is not only suitable for laypeople, but also for landscaping professionals.

The “American East” in the title refers to most of the United States east of the Mississippi, though it’s somewhat less relevant for the Southeast. As a landscape architect and an adjunct professor at Westchester Community College, Summers provides design and ecological concepts that are applicable anywhere.

Native or indigenous?

We Wild Ones will notice that Summers uses the term “indigenous” rather than “native.” She explains that she prefers “indigenous” because it connotes regional or ecological boundaries, whereas the term “native” often connotes political or continental boundaries. This may be a valid distinction, but it may be difficult to change the term at this point in the native-plants, natural-landscapes movement. (In this review, I’ll be using “native” unless I’m specifically referring to her statements.)

Native plants and natural landscapes

Summers introduces the book by explaining that her interest in landscaping with native plants grew out of her lifelong passion for helping wildlife. Soon she grew to love our native plants not just for their usefulness for wildlife, but also for their intrinsic beauty.

Like Tallamy, Summers observes, “As suburbia moves inexorably outward, and more and more ‘vacant land’ becomes subdivided, the fate of our remaining wild nature (both plants and animals) will depend on the mainstream use of indigenous plants in human-dominated landscapes.”

For people who want to design natural landscapes using native plants, Summers offers guidelines and descriptions of natural plant communities and habitats. She suggests appropriate native plants for common plant communities such as woodlands, meadows, and grasslands, but she also describes and suggests plants for more specialized habitats, such as a fern glade or blueberry heath.

Many people want a more conventional landscape, so how do we achieve the important goal of having more native plants?

Native plants and conventional landscapes

At the same time, she recognizes that many people want a more conventional landscape. Given this reality, how do we achieve the important goal of having more native plants? Her answer is to make a distinction between “design and science, style and substance, horticulture and ecology.” As an extreme illustration of this concept, she points out that it would theoretically be possible to replant the formal gardens at Versailles entirely with North American natives, and no one would be the wiser.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

WILD ONES IN THE NEWS

Mike Matthews’ Natural Garden Appears in Kentucky Home and Gardens Magazine

The natural garden of Mike and Michelle Matthews of the Louisville Metro (KY) Chapter, was in the February, 2011, issue of Kentucky Home and Gardens magazine (http://virtual.angstromgraphics.com/publication/?i=57826). The habitat, which began its transformation 20 years ago, has been the recipient of numerous awards over the years. Mike said, “We wanted to effectively transplant the splendor of Kentucky’s natural wilderness into our own garden, and perennial, native plants are a key part of a low-maintenance design that also provides an ideal wildlife habitat.”

Mike’s photo “Humming Acrobat” was winner of the 2010 People’s Choice award in the annual Wild Ones Photo Contest. See previous page for more details.
Many years ago when I was a child, my front porch was a special place. It was where my brother, sister, and I would wind up the red plastic propellers on our balsa-wood airplanes and then, with a flick of the wrist, send them sailing across our front yard. On hot summer days, it provided refuge from the sweltering sun and a cool place to eat lunch after pulling weeds from the family garden. If we had watermelon, the porch was the place to eat it. Every slice delighted our mouths, not only because of the sweet taste, but also because of the abundant seeds.

**The King of Watermelon Seed Spitting**

Since we lived in the country, we didn’t have neighbors nearby to see us spitting watermelons seeds from our front porch. My father was the “King of Watermelon Seed Spitting,” and he strived to teach us the proper technique for sending the seeds rocketing from our mouths. My brother and I also discovered another use for the porch – it was a great place to “pop” the caps from cap guns. We laid the strip of caps on the cement porch ledge, and pounded on the strip with a hammer until the cap “popped” like a tiny gunshot. We thought we were quite clever, but my mom seemed to think otherwise.

**Butterflies, woodchucks, cats, and snakes**

One day last summer I wondered if there were still adventures to be found on a porch. I grabbed a chair and headed outside. The front of our porch is lined with yews, while the left side sports a native garden of sedges, blue-eyed grass, thimbleweed, and alumroot. Two flowerpots sit on the corner of my porch near the native garden. One contains ornamental cabbage – the other white petunias. As I sat there, I noticed a flash of white out of the corner of my eye. When I turned to look, there was a cabbage white butterfly flying around an ornamental cabbage plant.

After the butterfly flew away, I happened to look down and noticed a muddy paw print from our resident woodchuck. The woodchuck lives under our bushes, and evidently wiped his or her muddy paws on our porch. Next I noticed our cat walking on the lawn. He stopped and started excitedly batting with his paws at the grass. When I walked over to investigate, I found a large, rather irritated garter snake. I removed our cat and took him inside the house.

**Caterpillars eat the leaves**

Now let’s fast forward a few weeks later. The butterfly I saw earlier was a female, because now I have at least five 1-inch long green caterpillars crawling up and down my ornamental cabbage plant. I have read that these caterpillars have voracious appetites, and that is so true. They devoured almost all the leaves on the plant. As I walked outside I noticed that most of the caterpillars were missing, and only one was left.

**Death from above: the attack of the yellow jacket**

Then, suddenly, a yellow jacket buzzed down in front of my face, and landed on the one remaining caterpillar. It bit into the middle of the caterpillar’s body, causing the caterpillar to writhe in pain. Then the caterpillar was still. The yellow jacket chewed through the caterpillar’s plump body, causing green liquid to ooze out on the leaf.

Now here is the amazing part. The yellow jacket appeared to peel back the exoskeleton of the caterpillar just like we would peel the skin off a banana before eating it. Using its mandibles, it chewed up a small chunk of caterpillar flesh, and then used its front legs to help wash it up into a ball. This process only took the wasp about five minutes to finish. Then it flew away.

The wasp returned to do the same thing two more times. On its last visit, it ate a tiny bit of the caterpillar, and groomed its antennae and legs. All that remained of the caterpillar was the exoskeleton and a smudge of green.

The next day I sat on the porch again. Soon, another wasp flew in to check out the same cabbage plant. This one was a paper wasp, not a yellow jacket. This wasp first searched for caterpillars, and then it landed in the exact spot where the caterpillar died the previous day. The wasp walked on top of the caterpillar remains, which caused the remains to loosen up and fall below to the dirt in the flowerpot. The paper wasp gave up and flew away “empty handed.”

I later learned that the yellow jacket was carting away the caterpillar chunks to feed larvae back in the nest. The caterpillars of the small cabbage white butterflies are tasty to predators, which means they hide under the leaves of their host plants, which include cabbage and other members of the mustard family (Brassicaceae). Yellow jackets and other wasps are major predators of caterpillars including the cabbage white. Although cabbage whites are not native butterflies, they are very common and easy to observe – just buy an ornamental cabbage plant or other related plant, and put it on your porch or patio. Imagine the excitement you and your children will experience watching nature in action.

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*Up close view of the fearsome yellow jacket wasp (Vespula sp.). All females are capable of inflicting a painful sting, and these wasps are important predators of pest insects.*
She acknowledges that open-pollinated indigenous species are best, but to achieve the goal of having more native plants supporting biodiversity, she suggests the use of cultivars of some natives – for instance to provide a slow-growing, dwarf version of a native evergreen. I’ve found that cultivars do not always provide the habitat properties I want. For example, a serviceberry cultivar I planted many years ago (when no other serviceberries were offered locally), proved to be very ornamental, but has never produced many berries. Providing berries for birds was why I had planted it. The serviceberry (Amelanchier canadensis) species I later planted has produced abundant crops of berries. Another concern with cultivars is that regional landscapes full of the same few cultivars are genetically less diverse, which may be a problem as we face a changing climate.

For people wanting traditional landscapes, she offers templates for landscaping styles such as Tudor, foundation plantings, Japanese gardens, and a perennial border, which have placeholders for the plants. She then provides a list of the non-native plants typically used in that style, paired one-to-one with suggested native alternatives. When comprised of native plants, these traditional landscape designs can offer many of the environmental advantages of natural landscapes.

**“Safe sex” in the garden**

Summers acknowledges that we won’t be able to substitute native plants for non-natives overnight, and indeed that some non-native plants – both edible and ornamental – are here to stay. In a chapter on “safe sex” in the garden, she offers practical ways we can minimize some potential problems.

First, she emphasizes that non-native plants that are invasive have no place in our landscapes, and lists many showy native substitutes for common invasive plants. She offers an interesting suggestion for particularly noxious trees such as Norway maple (Acer platanoides): Girdle them so they can become “standing dead wood,” which is so valuable for wildlife.

Second, she appropriately treats trees as a special case. As she says, “Most of the trees we plant will outlive us – choose wisely – choose indigenous. As we know, it is impossible to ‘deadhead’ (remove seed from a plant before it travels from the mother plant) a tree; non-indigenous trees may produce seeds for a hundred years or more. Before choosing a new tree, consider how many life forms, in addition to humans, will be able to use it over the next hundred years.”

Third, she offers useful guidelines for choosing non-native plants. Among other suggestions, she cautions us to be wary of recent introductions or plants capable of very rapid reproduction.

**Gardening practices**

Not only does this book discuss landscaping styles and specific plants, but it also suggests gardening practices that support wildlife. I’ve read a lot of books on this topic, but Summers presents some thoughts in a way I particularly like. For example, she asks us to think whether our own yard has become a “source” or a “sink” for butterflies. Many of us have made the effort to grow the plants butterflies need – not just nectar plants – but also caterpillar food plants. But what happens in the fall? In an effort to keep our yards looking neat, if we rake leaves, stuff them into bags, and deposit them at the curb, we may also be discarding butterfly larvae that were lying in the leaf litter awaiting spring. In other words, instead of being a “source” of new generations of butterflies, our landscape becomes a “sink,” creating a net loss of butterflies.

**Tables and Appendices**

Throughout the book, Summers offers interesting and useful tables. For example, she includes lists of non-indigenous plants commonly mistaken for indigenous, plants that attract bees, nectar plants for moths, how various species of butterflies spend the winter, and many others.

In addition, for quick reference, the book includes more than two dozen appendices about plants with particular characteristics or uses. For example, some list plants with berries and plants with nectar, invasive plants to avoid, indigenous plants for formal gardens or for Japanese gardens, street trees, fragrant plants, and many others.

**Conclusion**

Summers concludes with sentiments we all share: “As gardeners, we are fortunately endowed with love for a hobby that has profound potential for positive change. By making the switch from nonindigenous to indigenous plants we can literally reconnect the landscape with its inhabitants. As we expand our gardening habits to include stewardship of our surrounding natural area through the thoughtful planting of indigenous plants in our own gardens, we may bask in the knowledge that it is possible to have loads of fun at the same time we are making a better world.”

---

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A Special Thank You

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Some of you chose to direct your annual donation to National’s General Operating Fund. From this fund come costs related to everyday operations of the Wild Ones headquarters, from telephone and staff wages to printing of publications and postage. No costs for maintaining the WILD Center come from these funds – not even heat and electricity, which of course is vital to the headquarters operation. All costs related to the operation of the WILD Center come from donations set aside in a restricted fund just for the WILD Center.

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Grow Wild Ones Marketing Plan
It’s official. Thanks to your generous financial support through the annual appeal and the small rebound we’ve had in membership numbers, the national board has agreed to hire a marketing assistant to get our Grow Wild Ones Marketing Plan off the ground. Our thanks goes out to the following people who have helped make this a reality:

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Journal Support – Root River Challenge
Although the Root River (WI) Chapter Challenge was to the chapters, several members have asked if they could donate toward the match as well. Root River Chapter has graciously agreed, and in fact have extended the challenge and added another $3,000 bringing the total to $9,000. To date funds received matching the Root River Chapter’s challenge to raise funds to offset the cost of printing the Wild Ones Journal and the upgrade of the Wild Ones web site totals: $5,680. So we have $320 to go to meet the original challenge and another $3,000 to go to match the extension. Come on Chapters! Thank you to our supporters:

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Seeds for Education Grant Program
By SFE Director Mark Charles

Wild Ones members and chapters have always made a lasting impact on the lives of children and youth by helping them create native-plant communities in schoolyards, nature centers, places of worship, and other public sites. One way we do this is through the **Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education grant program**. In the past 15 years, we have given small monetary grants to hundreds of projects across North America.

These efforts will blossom forth shortly when project grants are announced for 2011. The funded projects will emphasize involvement of students and volunteers in all phases. They will help the participants learn about the native plants of their local ecoregion. By choosing plants appropriate to their site conditions (soil, water, sunlight), funded projects have good prospects for establishment and growth.

Together we make a lasting impact on the lives of many children and youth. We honor the memory of Lorrie Otto and spread the appreciation of native plants and native habitats.

**Our Amazon-Associate Bookstore**

Recent two-month commissions from Amazon.com have amounted to $157.23. Remember that many of the items you purchase through Amazon.com (after entering through the Wild Ones Amazon-Associate Bookstore) result in a generous commission paid to Wild Ones. This contribution to Wild Ones has no effect on the price you pay for purchase. Just go to www.wildones.org/store/bookstore/, and either purchase something that’s shown on our Amazon-Associate Store page, or just click the “Go” button in the “search” box, and you will go to Amazon.com.

**Giving to Wild Ones. Get Wild. Stay Wild.**

There are many ways to help Wild Ones promote environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities.

**Acorn Circle:** Donors who provide dependable income for Wild Ones programs by making annual contributions. Payments are made by check, by convenient monthly deductions via credit card or direct debit from a designated financial account, or by their employer.

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**Oak Savanna Circle:** Members who have loyally supported Wild Ones for at least 15 years or more.

**Employee Matching Gift Program:** Many companies and organizations will match employee contributions.

**Special Gifts and Heritage:** The Wild Ones Legacy Program provides the opportunity to gift appreciated stock, real property, in-kind gifts, IRA-rollover gifts (option through December 2007 per the Pension Protection Act of 2006) and multi-year commitments. Bequests, charitable gift annuities, trusts and other planned giving vehicles provide significant support to Wild Ones while also benefiting the donors and their families.

**Volunteer:** More than 4,000 people annually volunteer their time and energy for land conservation, community garden plantings, and for the WILD Center.

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**Contact Us:** Wild Ones is a 501(c)(3) Environmental Education organization, which means all your donations, including membership dues, are wholly tax deductible to you. Contact us for more information about the Get Wild Stay Wild Program. Please contact Donna VanBuecken, Executive Director, Wild Ones, P.O. Box 1274, Appleton, Wisconsin 54912, 877-394-9453, eddirector@for-wild.org, or see our web site: www.for-wild.org/legacy/.
microorganisms need to “digest” the organic matter, to release the nutrients — and this happens slowly.

Under natural conditions, the rate of accumulation of organic matter in the soil is generally in equilibrium with its rate of breakdown. Having the right microbial agents working at the right speed, thereby maintaining this balance, is critically important.

**What happens when the balance is disturbed?**

Tilling the soil changes the balance of accumulation to breakdown of organic matter. Tilling loosens the soil, and provides extra aeration (supplying oxygen to the microbes). This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it does alter the community of soil microorganisms, which in turn may accelerate the degradation of the organic matter. It also brings to the surface any weed seeds that have been lying dormant, out of reach of the sunlight.

Furthermore, adding amendments rich in NPK to the soil also stimulates microbial growth — in effect you have added a third shift at the recycling factory, and given all the workers strong coffee. The more NPK, the faster the microorganisms work, and the faster nutrients are released until the organisms run out of food and die back.

Some people are eager to haul away the “bad soil,” and to replace it with something called “topsoil.” This is an option that likely will not produce the desired results and is damaging on several counts:

- Commercial topsoil has traditionally been muck soil, mined from drained wetlands — not sustainable and obviously not good for the wetlands.
- If the topsoil has simply been scraped off of another site it will introduce a Pandora’s box-full of undesired weeds in the forms of seeds and parts from which entire plants may sprout.
- Laying one soil type on top of another without mixing the layers can result in drainage problems.
- Today topsoil is commonly made up of sand with a lot of organic matter added to it to create a dark and rich (manufactured) soil. When sand is added to clay soils the combination can form soil that dries to something resembling concrete.

**When amending is advised**

There are certainly instances when tilling and adding organic matter to the soil is beneficial. When organic matter is needed in your garden, to provide water-holding capacity on sandy soils, or for soil aeration on clay soils, you should use organic amendments that are high in carbon and low in nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus. These are products like wood chips, rice hulls, or straw, which have little nutritive value, and therefore decompose more slowly. This will provide the most sustained, though temporary, improvement in soil water-holding capacity, soil aeration, and drainage — nutrients are generally not what is lacking.

Adding high carbon, low-nutrient organic matter, like well-composted woodchips, will slow decomposition, and support a different complement of microorganisms like bacteria, some mycorrhizal fungi, and Rhizobium and Frankia spp. — all soil symbiotes.

Symbiotic microorganisms coexist with plants in a manner that benefits both plant and microbe. Mycorrhizal fungi, for example, enhance uptake of soil nutrients and water, and are found associated with most terrestrial plants. In exchange the plant provides photosynthates (mostly sugar and starches) to the fungi.

Rhizobium spp. and Frankia spp. are two types of soil microbes that can fix (convert it to a chemical form that is accessible to plants) atmospheric nitrogen when living symbiotically with certain species. These species tend to grow naturally on the most infertile sites. These organisms work essentially for free, and deliver the nitrogen directly to the plant. When the nitrogen-fixing plants die, their nitrogen is slowly released into the soil, making it available to nearby plants that cannot fix their own nitrogen.

Native species have co-evolved with these soil microorganisms, which allow them to grow on soils of moderate to low fertility. While native plants, like most other plants, respond to greater soil fertility, weedy non-native species in general can take better advantage of increased nutrients. Low soil fertility will generally give native species a competitive advantage over the high-feeding, non-native weeds. Many beloved native plants, often called wildflowers, such as lupine, bush clovers, and harebell, among others, are only able to survive when plant competition is minimized by low soil fertility.

**Don’t obsess over soil fertility if you are growing native plants.**

**Soil testing and pH**

I know I am in the minority, but I find traditional soil testing for native wildflower plantings completely unhelpful. These tests provide valuable information for agriculture and some types of horticulture, but not for natives. A great deal, too, is made of soil pH, and indeed it is an important soil parameter. But the fact is there is very little you can do long term (for more than a growing season) to alter soil pH.

Going out and digging a hole, or turning a couple of shovelfuls of soil over will help you determine if the soil leans to the sandy or clay side of the continuum. The degree and depth of soil compaction will also be obvious. Take a look also at the surrounding vegetation. This will reveal useful information about the soils and which natives are best suited to the site.

**So what can a homeowner do?**

My advice is, don’t obsess over soil fertility — after all you are growing native wildflowers not annual vegetables or field corn. Embrace the soil you have, and work with it by choosing plants that will grow under those conditions. There is a time and a place for soil amendments, but it is important to be mindful that all amendments are temporary. They should be used as an interim step toward establishing vegetation that is not dependent upon the usual soil amendments. The good news is that in most cases all you need to do is get some natives established, and time will take care of your soil problems.

In those instances when amendments are needed, adding some low nutrient/high carbon organic matter (like well-composted woodchips), initially, when you’re planting the very first plugs of plants, may help get things going. This may prove to be the simplest, lowest cost, and more environmentally sensitive solution. 🌱
Shades of Brown
Michelle Serreyn

Growing up, I was one of those kids who had to color with every crayon in the box – all 64. I was enchanted not only with the varying hues, but their evocative names – burnt sienna, raw umber, bittersweet, mahogany. Imagine my surprise, then, when I walked outside this March 3rd evening, and found my crayon box – all in shades of brown:

• The russet of the fallen sugar maple leaves contrasted against the dark chocolate of the pear.
• The spindly mole-skin twigs of the Chinese elm I use to hold my mulching leaves down. intertwined with the antler-bone of the staghorn sumac.
• The crisp parchment of Indian grass as a backdrop for the warm horse chestnut of penstemon seed capsules.
• The rust of the river birch bark peeling back to reveal flesh tones beneath.
• The bristly stiffness of the yellow hyssop in rich coffee set before the delicacy of virgin’s bower in shades of latte with caramel.
• The dull, bumpy ash-brown of a milkweed pod that opens to reveal the smooth, pearly ecru luster within.

The colors and textures, overlapping, shadowing – a curl of leaf here catching a drop of liquid gold from the setting sun – all intermingled with that “spring is almost here” scent of decomposition and renewal, against a canvas of lingering greens on the ground and azure above – all played out before my senses – in my yard, as I’d never seen it before.

Taking a moment just to look, with my eyes and my heart and my imagination, brought back to me why we do what we do with such dedication, love, and enthusiasm – because we want everyone to be able to experience and enjoy the palette of this landscape as much as we do, in any and all seasons, even in the “dead” of winter.

P.S. Maybe we should persuade whoever names the crayons in the box (and paint chips) to start using native plants as a reference – can’t you just imagine “lupine blue”?

Apology to Prairie Nursery
Wild Ones sincerely regrets erroneously running last year’s ad from Prairie Nursery in the January/February, 2011, issue of the Wild Ones Journal. Prairie Nursery has been a staunch supporter of Wild Ones for over 20 years, and we truly value them as one of our most generous and longest-running sustaining partners.

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Ah, April by Geoffrey Mehl

*Anemonella thalictroides*, bursts into April with carefree stands of small flowers, white to pink, on thread-like stems, bravely holding forth in the raw winds of early spring, soon after the last snow departs. It has a long bloom period, and hangs out to see everyone else stir from winter slumber. I like to create pockets in mounds of fist-sized riverstone, giving them each a stage to collect all the attention that’s lavished on the first plant to really reward us for getting through the winter.

They distribute seed in a stingy way, with new ones turning up unexpectedly some distance from the parent plant. *Anemonella* will go dormant if it gets hot and dry, but will linger to fall if it’s in a deciduously shaded cool and moist spot, rich humus-y soil. I’ve always thought it a good neighbor to maidenhair fern or perhaps *Jeffersonia diphylla*, both plants with delicate structure. And when you see it bloom, you know spring is on the way.

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Milwaukee North Chapter #18
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For information about starting a chapter in your area: www.for-wild.org/chapters.html.

CHAPTER ANNIVERSARIES
March through April is another great time to charter Wild Ones chapters. This is the time everyone starts getting tired of all the unseasonably cold weather, and starts longing to get outside to work on their yards. Celebrating anniversaries are:

Oak Openings (OH) 4 years
Habitat Resource Network of Southeast Pennsylvania 5 years
Mid-Mitten (MI) 5 years
Wolf River (WI) 7 years
Red Cedar (MI) 9 years
Twin Cities (MN) 10 years
Louisville Metro (KY) 13 years
Otter Tail (MN) 13 years
Greater DuPage (IL) 19 years

Milwaukee-Southwest/Wehr (WI) 19 years

Thanks to you and all your members Wild Ones continues to grow 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

Bluestem Farm
5920 Lehman Rd.
Baraboo, WI 53913
608-356-0179

Great Stuff at the Wild Ones Store

Wild Ones Polo Shirts You don’t have to play polo or even own a horse to wear one of these cool polo shirts. All you need is the desire to look like a Wild Ones member – and that’s just what you’ll do when you wear one of these shirts. Available in Blueberry, Dark Green, Seafoam, and Stone, with professionally embroidered Wild Ones logo on front. 100% cotton in Pima and Pique. Mens and Womens styles. Sizes S-M-L-XL. $35 and $34

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

Embroidered Denim Shirts Suitable for just about any weather, these stylish and eye-catching shirts are professionally embroidered with the Wild Ones logo $44. With the famous “Yesterday’s Lawn, Tomorrow’s Habitat” $55. Why not get one of 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.
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Get a Gift

As part of our Grow Wild Ones campaign, we have 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.

New Members: Join at any membership level, and get the DVD at no extra cost.

Existing Members: Get a free copy of our 25 Years of Wild Ones book free when you renew at the Wild level or Wildest level; renew at the Wilder or Wildest level, and get the DVD at no extra cost.

Name
Address
City
State/Zip
Phone
E-Mail

Annual Dues

- Wild
- Wilder
- Wildest

- Household
- Business
- Professional/Educator
- Not-for-Profit
- Affiliate NPO Organization
- Limited income/full-time student household
- Lifetime

- $30
- $200
- $75
- $75
- $1200 (or payable in three annual $400 installments)

- $50
- $500
- $100
- $100
- $20/year

- $100+
- $1000+
- $125+
- $125
- $20/year

I am joining at the [ ] $50 or higher level.
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I also enclose $ for The WILD Center
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Please check: [ ] New [ ] Renewal
[ ] New contact information

Amount enclosed $ for _______ years.

Chapter preference (See chapter listing on page 16.)

Do you want the free Wild About Wildflowers DVD?
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If you are renewing at the Wild or Wildest level, you qualify for a free copy of our 25 Years of Wild Ones book. Please check here if you want the free book.

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1:1 Abbott Lab’s matching donation
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Lisa Pearson Madison (WI) Chapter
Becky Erickson Mid-Missouri Chapter
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Allen Gauthier Mountain Laurel (CT) Chapter
Linda Rose Oak Openings Region (OH) Chapter
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Twin Cities (MN) Chapter

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Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter
Tom Small Kalamazoo Area (MI) Chapter
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Becky Erickson Mid-Missouri Chapter
Michael & Cynthia Sevilla Oakland (MI) Chapter
Cheryl Corney Partner-at-Large (OH)
Janet Giesen Rock River Valley (IL) Chapter
John Maciejny Twin Cities (MN) Chapter
In-Kind
Rock River Valley (IL) Chapter
Various trees and shrubs and wire fencing material
Jim & Carol Bray, Hickory Road Gardens
Central Wisconsin Chapter
Wild ginger and various other bare root shade plants
George W. Curtis, Curtis Law Office
Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter
Production of “It’s Your Environment” film featuring the WILD Center
Neil Diboll, Prairie Nursery
Central Wisconsin Chapter
Various prairie and wet mesic plant species

WILD ONES HEADQUARTERS
In-Kind
Oakland (MI) Chapter Purchase of domain name wildones.net
Tom Small Kalamazoo Area (MI) Chapter
“Gardening for Life” DVD for WILD Center Library
Maryann Whitman Oakland (MI) Chapter
wildones.net domain name registration
Christian Nelson Twin Cities (MN) Chapter
Two Plantronics Audio 665 USB Multimedia Headsets

The Storm
Surely, I thought, the storm would not last. The sun would come out and it would disappear swiftly, but instead the cold grew more intense, a wind came up and the snow came down as heavy as before. By the end of the week there was a foot of it, and the singing (of the spring birds) became less and less noticeable…I picked up many that had died. – Sigurd F. Olson, from “The Storm”

Is your membership OK? How about your address?
If the imprint above is dated 5/1/11 or 6/1/11 or before, your membership is about to expire.

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 $.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!