

a voice
for the natural
landscaping
movement



JOURNAL

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Thank You. Back cover.



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

PART 1 OF A NEW AND CONTINUING SERIES REGARDING INVASIVE SPECIES

Some are saying that we're too hard on invasives. They say we should be kinder and gentler. That we should be 'friends to aliens.' What do you think of that?

First of a new series of articles exploring the concept that invasive alien species aren't really as bad as we think they are. Rather than wasting precious resources on eradicating invasives, we should try to understand them. We should realize that invasives really can be just one more part of our ecosystems.

Wild Ones Journal editor, **Maryann Whitman**, describes the concept of being "friends of invasive aliens," and then gives us her opinion – starting here on this page.

And don't miss Professor and Chair of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, **Douglas Tallamy**, who weighs in on page 5.

A Friend to Aliens: We Can't Turn Back the Clock, So Let's Accept Them

By Maryann Whitman

The February, 2011, issue of *Scientific American* ran an interview with Mark Davis, a biology professor at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. In the article, "A Friend to Aliens," Dr. Davis is quoted as saying, "Buckthorn, garlic mustard and many other invasive species do not pose as big a threat as some scientists think." He goes on to say, "The problem I have is when species are not health threats, and are not causing any significant economic cost, yet people claim they have undesirable ecological effects...the fact that certain native species may become less abundant, is that really harm, or is it just change?"

Once a proponent of eradicating "invaders," and planting Minnesota-native plants on campus, he experienced an epiphany on reading a 1994 essay by Michael Pollan, in which Pollan stated that turning the "ecological clock to 1492 is a fool's errand, futile and pointless to boot."

And in a *Washington Post* interview, Peter DelTredici, writer of the recently published *Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast: A Field Guide*, said that, "Urbanization, globalization and climate change have worked together to produce this ecology."

In some situations, he said, tree-choking vines like bittersweet "are doing terrible harm, but it's a plant that's adapted to the mess we have made of the planet." He goes on to say that bittersweet, tree of heaven, and dandelion are fundamentally

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Opinion from the *Wild Ones Journal*: We Respectfully Disagree

By Maryann Whitman

The opinions expressed by detractors like Davis and DelTredici present the approach of conservationists, restorationists, and proponents of the use on native plants in our landscapes for the sake of biodiversity, under a single broad umbrella: The logic of the native-plant group is somehow flawed. It is simplistic, naive, idealistic, unrealistic, and tied to an historic date. It is out of step with the new world.

Perhaps it is time to reframe our definition of what is a native plant. Somewhere in our definition, we have always referred to native plants as those that grew here "prior to European settlement." This was done almost as a form of shorthand that we hoped the listener would understand meant more than what was actually said. Perhaps it is time to add the part "that was not said."

A plant that is considered historically native to a given geographical area is one that has a supporting role in the ecosystem it occupies – a function in sustaining the web of life that provides ecosystem services that, in the end, make this planet habitable by humans. It is a plant that has co-evolved over great periods of time with a diversity of surrounding organisms, both in the soil and above ground, so the plants and organisms have become mutually supportive.

When we plant native plants, we recognize that conditions have changed, and may not be exactly reproducible, but

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Membership: Breaking the glass ceiling



Someone commented to me that our push to increase our membership numbers seemed like it was just about money. I replied that increasing membership is about two things: Making more people aware of the benefits of native landscaping, and having the financial means to support the services and resources we want to provide. Introducing natives to

people, and teaching them about natives, is the more important reason we want to increase our membership numbers. Today I want to focus on the money part.

The fact is, it costs money to support the services we provide to our members, chapters, and the public. Chapters can raise money through plant sales, book sales, conferences, and other locally supported events. At the national level, in sharp contrast, we have very few means of raising money. Most of our funding comes from your membership dues, supplemented by generous donations and the occasional grant. We have had to put on hold several important projects and services because we could not afford them. Here are just a few.

- Ecoscaper Certification program
- New merchandise
- Create and print new brochures
- Provide direct support to chapters

- Photography Contest awards
- WILD Center landscaping

Our membership is just below 3,000, a number that has been acting like a glass ceiling – we cannot seem to get beyond it. The board and staff are working very hard to break through this year, and reach 3,200 members. The cost of gaining new members is five to seven times greater than that of retaining members, so it is important that we provide benefits that encourage existing members to renew. We also must gain new members. Both actions are easier with a strong operational fund.

How can you help? Two ways easily come to mind: If you are a member, please remember to renew. You can find your membership expiration date on the mailing label of your *Wild Ones Journal* – check it periodically.

The second is introducing others to Wild Ones. There are so many ways to do that.

Always remember that your membership in Wild Ones goes far beyond your own education and enjoyment. When you join, you become part of a larger action body, one that works to promote an ecologically sound environment. You support the sustainable activities of a growing group of individuals.

Wild Ones is the only national organization that concentrates on the relevance of native plants for productive ecosystems. We are the group that is turning things around – one yard at a time. ☀

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

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

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Plant Rescues and Wild Ones Code of Ethics

One of the benefits of Wild Ones membership involves participating in plant rescues of remnant or restored natural landscaping in danger of being destroyed by commercial or residential development or road work. Be on the alert for any such potential destruction. Watch for news of road closings and development in newspapers, and notices from zoning commissions. And pay attention on social-media web sites.

If you become aware of areas where native landscaping might be endangered, tell your chapter plant-rescue chair so he or she can follow up with the owners of those areas. If your chapter doesn't have a plant-rescue chair, do the follow up yourself, and report back to the chapter president.

Spring is when most chapters engage in plant rescues. This is a good time to review our code of ethics – things you *should* and *should not* do on a rescue.

See plant-rescue guidelines at wildones.org/download/plantrescue/guidelines.pdf, and our code of plant-rescue ethics at wildones.org/download/plantrescue/ethics.pdf.

Meet Your Headquarters Staff



Along with the approval of the **Grow Wild Ones Marketing Plan**, the national board approved an additional staff person devoted to marketing tasks. **Jamie Fuerst**, (left) who has been serving as our Administrative Assistant, has moved over into this marketing position. Jamie has a Bachelor of Business Administration from Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and an extensive background in marketing from her previous employment.

We are also fortunate that the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh/CCDET AmeriCorps Connects Program granted us two half-time positions. **Lindsey Lefeber** (center) is a junior at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, studying English and Philosophy, and she's doing a great job of taking over the Administrative Assistant position. **Zaiga Freivalds** (right) has a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and is tackling the job of WILD Center Site Coordinator. Lindsey and Zaiga will be with us through August. ☀

WILD Center Update: What we've learned so far

- Too much water can damage a raingarden. This past year we were inundated with huge amounts of sump-pump water from early rains, so much so that it broke the wall of one of our raingardens and shoved over the stone fence adjacent to the eastern edge. Thanks to the Wolf River (WI) Chapter volunteers, we were able to fix that during the late summer, but in the meantime our wet mesic plants suffered through a dry spell. We'll see how they come back this year.
- Hail damage doesn't destroy native plants. We were pleasantly amazed to see that the plants that were so badly beaten by this past summer's hail storm, bounced back. We had cut the stems back to below the damaged areas, and new growth sprouted from the remaining stems – even the blazing star surprised us with this new regrowth.
- Fence a transplanted tree immediately – don't wait until the following day. Whether it's deer or rabbits, or some other species of wildlife, they apparently watch until you walk away, and then they're there to taste that inviting stem immediately.
- Mulch decomposes whether in an unused pile or spread in a garden.
- Black-eyed Susans. We scattered black-eyed Susan seed into our newly planted raingardens with the idea that we would have some blossoms for the public to see the following growing season. Well, every seed must have germinated because the black-eyed Susans were definitely the predominant species showing in one of our raingardens. Later we learned from the *Tallgrass Restoration Handbook for Prairies Savannas and Woodlands*, that, "If planted too heavily, some early-successional species such as wild bergamot, common and whorled milkweed, and black-eyed Susan can stunt the emergence of slower-germinating species." We'll see what the future brings. Will the black-eyed Susans continue to dominate? ☀



Chapter Notes

This is the time of year when Wild Ones chapters are arranging native-plant sales: A fine fund-raising activity that also gives members an opportunity to talk to members of the public about landscaping with native plants and the butterflies they will attract. ☀

Continuation and more regarding 'A Friend to Aliens'

A FRIEND TO ALIENS: WE CAN'T TURN BACK THE CLOCK, SO LET'S JUST ACCEPT THEM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"symptoms of degradation, not the causes of it."

DelTredici accepts that some invasives are brutes, but says that to see them generally as ecologically harmful and invasive aliens is a view driven by philosophy, not biology.

In *Landscape Architecture* (2006), DelTredici wrote, "Much popular writing on the subject of ecological restoration assumes that the plant and animal communities that existed in North America prior to European settlement can be returned to some semblance of original composition. The fact that the environmental conditions that led to the development of these pre-Columbian habitats are long gone – and can never be re-created – does not seem to matter to strict restorationists.

As I see it, the critical question faced by the professionals who design, build, and maintain our urban landscapes is not what plants grew there in the past, but which ones will grow there in the future?...The real ecology of the city is all about the dominance of invasive species, while the cultivation of the native species that once grew there seems as artificial as a French-knot garden." ☼

OPINION FROM THE WILD ONES JOURNAL: WE RESPECTFULLY DISAGREE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

we try nonetheless – understanding that, in effect, we are slowing down time that has been sped up and truncated in this world of our creation. We are creating areas to sustain a diversity of life, hoping to give it time to adapt to a changing world.

It is not what grew here in presettlement times, in and of itself that is relevant, but rather the role these plants played – their function in the larger scheme. A native plant is one that supports a diversity of life. That is why it is important. That is why a native plant is valuable. Moreover, that is why, when one is displaced by an invasive alien, it is more than mere "change," as Dr. Davis would suggest. ☼



OPINIONS FROM WILD ONES MEMBERS LISTED HERE

CONTINUED SOON (NEXT ISSUE AND BEYOND)

Bonnie Harper-Lore, has a long history of representing native plants, while confronting invasive species on the national scene, submitted a history of legislation that has dealt with invasive alien species.

Chris Helzer, the Eastern Nebraska Program Director for The Nature Conservancy, who manages 5,000 acres, factors in ecological resiliency of a system in his decisions about invasives. He is the author of *The Ecology and Management of Prairies in the Central United States*.

Mariette Nowak, author of *Birdscaping in the Midwest*, founds her approach in asking and answering questions: Can't exotic plants play the same roles as native plants? Can't plants that have been in the country for several hundred years be considered native? Her thinking keeps coming back to function and ecosystem service.

Opinion pieces by these Wild Ones members will appear in future issues of the *Journal*. Our goal is to arm our readers with facts and language to deal with detractors such as Davis and DelTredici. These articles and a reading list will be posted at www.wildones.org/landscap.html. ☼

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Another opinion regarding 'A Friend to Aliens'

By Douglas Tallamy

In response to the substantial cost of controlling invasive plants, there is a growing outcry questioning whether such expenditures are worth it. Scientists are scolded for using terms with negative connotations when discussing invasive species – the term “invasion” being a frequently cited example of such bias – when perhaps the negative impacts of such plant “invasions” are few or do not exist at all.

The primary argument being advanced is that there are no records of a non-native plant forcing a native plant species to extinction. Therefore, invaded ecosystems are neither better nor worse than they were before being invaded; they are merely different. This argument assumes that the *local* (rather than global) extinction of native plants following the invasion by an exotic has no effect on local ecosystems.

Further, it assumes that the shift in dominance that so often occurs following invasion, with many native species moving from major to minor players in invaded ecosystems, has no effect on local ecosystems. This oversight is curious, since there is abundant evidence that both local extinction and a shift in species dominance is the rule rather than the exception in invaded habitats.

Does it depend on the meaning of 'different'?

Although critics have not elaborated on what they mean when they admit that ecosystems are different following alien plant invasions, I see “different” in two forms: Ecosystems in which native plant communities have been replaced by one or more non-native plants can *look* different; and/or, these ecosystems can *function* differently following the change in plant composition. The authors of dissent ignore the

latter possibility, as if ecosystem function is not changed when non-native plants replace natives, or, even less likely, as if functioning ecosystems are no longer something humans need to be concerned about.

If invaded ecosystems are different in ways that they impact other species, including humans, we can say without making emotional value judgments that they are either better or worse for those impacts, depending on the direction of the difference.

For example, if an ecosystem with non-native plants is less diverse, has reduced productivity, or supports simplified and less-stable food webs than an ecosystem in which its native-plant communities remain intact, we can say that it is *worse* at supporting a diversity of life forms, it is *worse* at producing ecosystem services, and it is more prone to food-web collapse and the loss of key trophic interactions.

In contrast, if ecosystems in which natives have been replaced by exotics simply look different, but actually perform the same ecosystem services, then I agree that it is not worth the fight to keep things as they were. However, there is ample evidence that it is the loss of function, rather than the change in appearance, that is the primary negative aspect of non-native plant invasions. The only way invaded ecosystems could perform the same ecological functions as un-invaded ecosystems would be if the non-natives species that have moved into these ecosystems were the ecological equivalents of the native plants they have replaced, or are preventing from returning. There is strong evidence that, in terms of the most important contribution plants make to the diversity of life on Earth, non-native plants are not the ecological equivalents of native species. I am speaking of the role plants play as the first trophic level.

Or is it all about food?

Plants, of course, are the basis of all major food webs on Earth, because they harness energy from the sun during photosynthesis, and lock it in the carbon bonds of simple sugars and carbohydrates. This energy benefits all consumers in higher trophic levels of the food web (herbivores and the animals that eat them), only if it is removed from the plant

that fixed it in the first place. This happens whenever something eats a plant part. If the plant is unpalatable or toxic to herbivores, the energy remains locked in plant tissues until the plant dies and is broken down in the soil by detritivores.

Because insect herbivores convert more plant energy to protein and fats than any other type of plant-eater in most ecosystems, the degree to which plants are palatable to insects becomes a critical measure of the degree to which energy is passed from plants to higher trophic levels. Couple this with the fact that insects, or the arthropods that eat insects, are the primary components of the diets of spiders, amphibians, many reptiles, birds, rodents, and other mammals, and you can begin to appreciate how important it is to food-web complexity, and thus stability, that local insects be able to eat the plants where they live.

If insects could eat all the plants they encountered, regardless of whether they shared an evolutionary history with those plants, we could move plants around the world with impunity and not disrupt the ecological integrity of local food webs. Unfortunately, this is far from the case. Approximately 90 percent of the insect herbivore species in any given ecosystem are specialists that can only eat the few plant lineages that share the particular chemical defense to which they have adapted.

If a non-native plant brings a novel chemical defense to an ecosystem, 90 percent of the insect herbivores in that ecosystem will not be able to use it for growth and reproduction. The degree to which that inability reduces the amount of insect food available for insectivores will depend on the degree to which non-native plants replace the native-plant community that supports those insects. Unfortunately, we all can cite many cases in which alien plants have replaced nearly all the native plants in a given area.

Give an alien a hug, or slap it down?

Thus, the suggestion that we should embrace, rather than fight, the wide-scale replacement of native-plant communities by plant species from other lands ignores the impact of non-native plants on local food webs. In view of the role that insects play in running the ecosystems that support humans and other biodiversity, we allow food web collapse at our own peril. ☼



The larva of the monarch butterfly is adapted to the defensive secondary metabolites produced by the milkweed (*Asclepias* sp.) chemicals. This larva will starve to death if fed any other plant.

2011 Seeds for Education Help Young People Connect to Plants and Learning

By Mark Charles, Seeds for Education Coordinator

Many Wild Ones members and chapters appreciate the urgent need for helping young people connect to native plant communities in schoolyards, nature centers, places of worship, and other public sites. Since 1996, the Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education grant program has given small monetary grants to projects from coast to coast for purchase of native plants and seeds.

For 2011, the award-winning projects range from the nation's capitol to the islands of Hawaii, and ecosystems that range from semi-arid high country to lakeside wetlands. The projects engage students from early childhood to high school in studying science, math, history, and the arts.

This year's projects include prairies, savannahs, woodland understories, wildflower pathway and a garden shaped like a peace symbol.

The Seeds for Education grant program is entirely supported by the donations and energy of Wild Ones members, staff, and volunteers. What better way to honor the memory of the late Lorrie Otto and spread the appreciation of native plants and native habitats. Together we make a lasting impact on the lives of children and youth. Thank you. ☼

For a listing of previous SFE grant recipients go to www.for-wild.org/seedmony.html.



SFE Nursery Partners

Each year, nursery partners supply seeds, plants, discounts, and advice to grant recipients in their areas. We thank them for their support.

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Redbud Native Plant Nursery

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Habitat Resource Network of Southeast Pennsylvania Chapter

Saint George Village Botanical Garden

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Central Wisconsin Chapter

Marshland Transplant Aquatic Nursery

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(800) 208-2842
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marshlandtransplant.com
Fox Valley Area Chapter

Taylor Creek Nurseries Applied Ecological Services

17921 Smith Rd Brodhead WI
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marcus.chang@appliedeco.com
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Rock River Valley Chapter

Sunshine Farm & Garden

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Enchanter's Garden

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2011 Seeds for Education Grant Recipients

Watkins Montessori School, Washington, DC As part of our move to a new location near Union Station, parents and children will install a native plant garden with wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs. They will learn about protecting the Chesapeake Bay watershed. *Partner-At-Large*

Halau Ku Mana Public Charter School, Honolulu, HI Students in grades 11-12 are reforesting sections of their campus with native plants as part of their botany curriculum. They will address state science benchmarks while honoring the Hawaiian principle of caring for the land, aloha aina. *Partner-At-Large*

Conyers Learning Academy, Rolling Meadows, IL Third year of ongoing creation of a school habitat and garden by early-childhood special education and at-risk preschoolers. The garden is created to draw species of butterflies, such as the monarch and the black swallowtail, as well as the bumblebee. The underground habitat of worms and insects continues to be of interest. *Greater DuPage Chapter*

Irons Oaks Environmental Learning Center, Olympia Fields, IL High-school students developed plans to redevelop park land into an outdoor classroom featuring native prairie plants. *Partner-At-Large*

Lake Forest Open Lands Association, Lake Forest, IL Groups of students in a 4th-grade program called Earth Stewards will help diversify the native-plant population. *Lake-To-Prairie Chapter*

O'Neill Middle School, Downers Grove, IL Twenty 7th- and 8th-grade members in the garden club will rejuvenate a Courtyard Classroom with native plants. The school already has a certified wildlife habitat. *Greater DuPage Chapter*

Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum and Gardens, Rockford, IL Restoration of a low-growing prairie meadow as an outdoor classroom for visitors, neighborhood school groups, Scouts, and families. *Rock River Valley Chapter*

Pinewood Middle School GR, Kentwood, MI Seventh-grade students are creating a rain garden in the shape of a peace symbol on school property. They have already installed native plants in one section, and prepared the rest of the site. *River City - Grand Rapids Area Chapter*

Royal Oak Nature Society, Royal Oak, MI Restoring the ground layer of an Oak Savanna remnant adjacent to a high school and a senior center. *Southeast Michigan Chapter*

Woldumar Nature Center, Lansing, MI Remaking a fence row area into a native prairie planting for environmental-education curriculum. Children in our "Web of Life" curriculum focus on learning about the food chain for native species: Microorganisms, insects, birds, etc. *Red Cedar Chapter*

Dowling Urban Environmental Elementary School, Minneapolis, MN Students will expand the garden by germinating seeds in the school greenhouse. Students will compare the native-plant garden species to two areas within walking distance of the school: An oak savannah remnant and an area dominated by invasive species. They will update a log of sighted plants and animals, using a tethered, rainproof notebook. *Twin Cities Chapter*

New City School, Minneapolis, MN Project will expand the Monarch Meadow, a small native-prairie garden, to provide more space for groups, increase the diversity of plant species, and add more native shrubs. *Twin Cities Chapter*

Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls, NY Create community gardens as an outdoor classroom with a nearby elementary school. *Niagara Falls & River Region Chapter*

Maria Early Learning Center, Toledo, OH We are transforming a lawn into a sensory garden for young children. The heart of the garden will be native plants, an exciting place to develop stewardship of the natural world. *Oak Openings Region Chapter*

St. George Village Botanical Garden, Frederiksted, VI Planned, developed, and implemented by local students, the Children's Garden will serve as a natural space to study native and endangered species. *Partner-At-Large*

Timber-Lee Christian Center, East Troy, WI Teach kids about endangered communities, and restore Oak Openings near a small lake for environmental-education programs. *Milwaukee-Southwest/Wehr Chapter*

How To Help the Seeds for Education Program

You Can Help These Projects Succeed Chapters and Partners-At-Large can help these projects in many ways. Project leaders welcome assistance with planning, logistics, and site preparation. Help with summer maintenance is often required to help plants get established. Your efforts can make a difference in the lives of young people. To see a list of all SFE applicants over the years, go to www.for-wild.org/seedpast.html.

Volunteer Judges Our thanks to the volunteer judges for time and care reviewing the applications. This year 34 botanists and educators rated the applications and wrote detailed comments. These comments help every project.

I love this plant. And it feeds the birds. Why do you say it's a weed?

Sorry, birders: I must now hit this nerve. The fact that a plant feeds birds does not vindicate its use. It is true that without the northward spread of multiflora roses, we Yankees would not enjoy the song of mockingbirds on moonlit nights. But if those rose hips enable one bird to make it through our northern winters, the meadows that might otherwise flourish where multifloras have invaded would support many more bird species

on the myriad insects they provide in spring and summer, the variety of the grains and flower seeds they offer in the winter, and the rodent diet they serve up throughout the year. One slaps the label "weed" on a species, not because it is without virtue, but because whatever virtues that plant may have cannot outweigh the countless virtues of the entire habitat it displaces.

Sara Stein, Planting Noah's Garden

The Old Man in My Garden

By Barb Bray



This picture of seed heads shows quite clearly why the prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*) is also called "old man's whiskers."

I like common names. Yes, scientific names are important for accurate plant identification, but the common names of plants sure are fun. For instance, in one of my gardens grows a patch of *Geum triflorum*. Most Wild Ones members probably know exactly which flower I am talking about. The Latin name tells genus and species, which helps us to classify the plant and its relationship to other plants. The word indicating the species *triflorum*, describes the common occurrence of finding three flowers blooming on a stem. The nodding pink flowers bloom in mid spring and are visited by small bees. After pollination, the flowers give rise to reddish-purple feathery seed heads that wave in the breeze. The sight of these soft plumes waving on prairies long ago led to the common name "prairie smoke." These unusual seed heads also resulted in the name, "old man's whiskers."

When I discovered that my prairie smoke was also known as old man's whiskers, I began to wonder if other "old men" were in my gardens too. I was happy to find two more old men. The first one is "old man's beard," which is more commonly known as virgin's bower (*Clematis virginiana*). This flowering vine in the buttercup family twines itself around anything nearby. It blooms with many pretty white flowers, which go to seed in the late summer. It's the fuzzy seed heads that give this plant its "old man" name.

Surprisingly, the best time to see old man's beard is in the winter, after the leaves

have fallen. The puffy seed heads show up really well especially if they're climbing over small trees and shrubs. The second "old man" isn't officially named. When I saw this plant in flower, it reminded me of my grandfather's white, wiry eyebrows.

Take a look at the flowering head of Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*) when it is blooming. Each flowering stalk has purplish-brown spikes. The spikes on the top have the male flower parts, or stamens, while beneath them are the female flower parts, or pistils. The pistils are white and thread-like. See if you think they resemble an old man's eyebrows.

People often dismiss the common names of plants because it is an inaccurate way to identify them. No one knows for sure exactly which plant you are talking about when one only mentions the common name. So for instance, is "old man" the same as "old man's whiskers"? (No, it's not: "Old man" is the name for prairie crocus, which is also known as pasque-flower, prairie smoke, lion's beard, and so on. Scientifically, it is known as *Pulsatilla patens* (old name: *Anemone patens*)).

Wow, that was really confusing as you could see. So, for accuracy use the scientific name of plants to avoid miscommunication, but for a little fun, use a common name sometimes. The common names might send you on a search through your garden, looking for an old man or maybe something else. Have fun and enjoy the search. ☀



Wild Ones Web Site

WildOnes.Org is now our domain name.

Thanks to the Oakland (MI) Chapter, we now also own the WildOnes.Net domain name. We do *not* own WildOnes.Com, so please be careful in printing or giving out the Wild Ones web address.

And, just to reassure you, we will continue to own the For-Wild.Org domain name for some time, so don't worry about changing all your shortcuts and links just yet. As we finalize the reconstruction of the Wild Ones web site, we will eventually transfer all the e-mails and all the linked URL addresses to wildones.org.

A reminder: To access the members-only pages (secure pages of the web site) you have to register. To register, just go to the upper right-hand corner of the Wild Ones web site home page and click on the Members Login button. In the next window, go to the third line which says "member email not registered? Register password for member here." The window which appears next gives you the opportunity to register your e-mail address. You'll need to make up a password. The Internet will search the Wild Ones database to see if your e-mail address matches what we have, and if you're active, and if it's satisfied, it will allow you to go to the next step. Here you will need to answer a couple of pretty simple questions. Once answered, you will be sent back to the log-in page from where you should be able to successfully access your membership data and the current issues of the *Wild Ones Journal* and more. ☀

Grapevine

By Maryann Whitman

The onslaught does not abate

The April 2, 2011, issue of *The New York Times* ran an op-ed piece by an anthropologist, likening the “native species movement...led by environmentalists, conservationists and gardeners,” to “the anti-immigrant sentiment sweeping the country,” from the recent anti-immigration laws passed in Arizona to the “anti-immigrant crusade” furthered by “the Minutemen and the Tea Party.” He says that “despite cultural and political differences, both are motivated...by the fear of being swamped by aliens.”

On the other hand, the April issue of *BioScience* has a paper by Ricciardi titled “Should Biological Invasions Be Managed as Natural Disasters?”

In a way, these two separate publishing events typify the state of affairs between the naysayers and the scientific researchers. They function side by side. Problems arise when public media, often looking for a controversial news bite, picks up an insulting comment about invasion biology, usually an emotional appeal masquerading as argument. Parallels have even, in the past, been drawn between ecological nativism and the nativism invoked in political genocides. There is no parallel, but the ideas have been commingled in the minds of the public. The same public whose acceptance we work so hard to garner.

Periodically, ecologists and invasion biologists rally to respond, but the terrorist’s bomb has been dropped. Further, scientists are constrained by the very nature of their profession to couch rebuttals in careful terms, terms that cannot be absolute, but rather involve probabilities and likelihoods. The public does not care for “probabilities and likelihoods,” nor does our culture foster this reasoning.

For those who might wish to explore further this recurring debate please consult these papers and their respective bibliographies: (A diligent web search of the first author’s (on most papers) personal web site will usually produce a copy of the entire paper.)

- **Gould, Stephen Jay**, 1997. *An evolutionary perspective on strengths, fallacies, and confusions in the concept of native plants*. In Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Nature and Ideology*, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, no. 18, pp. 11-19.
- **Sagoff, M.**, “Do Non-native Species Threaten the Natural Environment?” *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 18 (2005), 215–236.
- **Simberloff, D.**, “Non-native Species DO Threaten the Natural Environment!” *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 18 (2005) 597-607.

But life goes on

Garlic mustard season is upon us, and Don Geiger, a Wild Ones member from Dayton, Ohio, uses a novel method to deal with dense stands.

He writes, “Garlic mustard establishes and thrives on disturbed soil. If the plants are growing densely, pulling creates a lot of disturbed soil. We wait to the first week in May, and use a string weed-cutter method. A severed or pulled stalk with flowers on it contains enough nutrients from the stem cells and taproot to force seed formation by the flowers on the stalk.

“We wait until the last flowers on the stalk are ready to bloom, and on the first pass with the string cutter, cut off 6 to 12 inches, then a second pass cuts at the bottom of the flowers growing on the stem, and a final pass cuts the plant off at the ground.

“Cutting the flower stalk into sections severely limits available nutrients for producing viable seed. By the time flowering is nearly complete, the plant has already consumed much of the nutrient supply from the taproot and stem. Cutting the stalk at ground level lessens re-sprouting and flower production after the cutting. You don’t even need to gather the pieces and bag them. Further, you’re dealing with an area, and not one plant at a time.

“As the density of the stand lessens over time, you may want to revert to pulling with minimal soil disturbance.”

To refresh your familiarity with garlic mustard look up the June/July, 2006, issue of the *Wild Ones Journal*, at wildones.org/download.

Build a Nest for Mason Bees

A friend recently showed me a habitat for native bees she had created of short lengths of bamboo (each about 6-inches long), with hollow openings about 3/8ths inch in diameter, open at one end, and plugged a natural node at the other. With a couple strands of wire, she had neatly tied together a cluster of about 15 or 20 of these short lengths, and hung the bundle at chest height on the east wall of her garage, where it will get some warming by the sun, and be sheltered from rain. She had wrapped the bundle in a loose shroud of chicken wire, which will not stop the bees, but will keep some woodpecker from making a feast.

In late November she plans to move the habitat into her unheated tool shed where it will remain, sheltered until next spring, when daytime temperatures are consistently in the 50s. By that time, the young bees will be ready to fight their way out of their mud nesting chambers. The previous summer they had hatched as larvae, fed on nectar and pollen that had been stored by their mother, and had undergone metamorphosis while cocooned during the winter. They will be ready to mate and repeat the cycle.

A similar mason bee nest may be purchased from Gardener’s Supply for \$16.95 plus shipping.

Getting control over another invader

Just as we gained control of the invasive pink flamingo, another noxious invasive looms on the horizon – the garden gnome. The University of Utah Extension Service has produced this informative video: youtube.com/watch?v=D0foMKAxCww. ☼



PHASE ONE: ESTABLISHING YOUR FIRST NATIVE-PLANT FLOWER BED

This new series of “how to” articles is provided to help gardeners establish attractive native-plant beds while avoiding common problems – working under the writer’s “S-5 Rule” – Start Small, Short, Sunny, and Showy. We’ll cover it all in detail, in three phases: Planning and Design, Plant Selection and Installation, and Maintenance During Establishment and Beyond.

By Inger Lamb

planning

introducing the S-5 Rule

Planning

As with many things, careful planning helps lead to a more successful outcome. In the case of a native-plant bed, it has its own set of potential pitfalls that might require forethought, even if you are already a gardener. Putting in some time “living in the design” before implementing it may well pay off.

Conferring with someone who has a good working knowledge of native plants and their growth behavior in small-scale plantings is essential to success. Consider engaging someone who specializes in native plants to visit your yard, and to talk with you about possible designs and concrete actions. If there is no one for you to consult with, there are many books available, and seemingly endless information on the Internet.

I cannot emphasize that enough: Familiarize yourself with the plant selection. Many species work well in a large area, but misbehave or grow too large for a small site. Use the ecology of the site to drive plant selection, so that you end up with plants that work for the site, rather than plants that might appeal for non-ecological reasons, such as shape, color, or plant-love. This will help you avoid the need for winter coverings, irrigation, and fertilizers.

Think about everyone who will encounter the new flowerbed, and work to educate and engage them in the process. (Note: This may include your spouse.)

Finally, don’t forget that the bed will need “hands-on” attention for the first couple of years – until the natives fill in and become competitive – keeping the

weeds at bay. This is the reason for the “small” in the 5-S rule; you want a manageable and enjoyable new flowerbed, not a chore that ruins all the fun.

Things that can go wrong at this stage: It’s unfortunate that many native landscaping installations have had bad outcomes due to poor design, installation, and/or management. Working with skeptics before the project begins is a great way to head off some complaints, and often a way to gain supporters. Carefully explaining the attention being paid to creating an attractive bed, combined with the benefits of native landscaping – habitat creation, low inputs, soil improvement, storm-water purification, reduced cost relative to standard landscaping, novel and beautiful plants – often wins the heart of a skeptic, or at least provides some reassurance that you are not jumping in willy-nilly without careful planning.

It is equally important to point out that these plants do not establish as quickly as the traditional perennials we are accustomed to. The native plants you can purchase are generally not available in large sizes. Compound this with the fact that during the first year, the plants work to establish their root systems rather than above-ground biomass – and you have what is lovingly called the “ugly duckling” phase. Another useful phrase is, “With deep-rooted native species, the first year they sleep, the second year they creep, and the third year they leap.”

Be sure to mention that you are including flowering, short-lived plants to cover the spaces, and to be attractive while the longer-living plants mature.

Go to “Recommended Plant Lists” on Inger Lamb’s web site, www.prairielandscapes.com, to find the “S-5” list of plants.



The large-flowered beardtongue (*Penstemon grandiflorus*) of the snapdragon family (*Scrophulariaceae*) is one of the Midwest’s showier Penstemons.



This native flowerbed grows next to a dry, highly compacted gravel driveway. The plants constantly self-seed themselves in the driveway. They need no soil improvements to grow quite happily here.

Make sure that your consultants genuinely are experts at using native species in urban-landscaping settings by requiring photos of their mature past projects – no drawings. There are numerous examples of poor design and plant selection done by well-meaning but inexperienced people who nevertheless create unattractive flowerbeds, and often are not involved with the project by the time the site degrades.

Location

Often a proposed site drives the project. For instance, maybe you have a newly exposed area following a remodeling project, an old flowerbed becomes available, or a play area is no longer being used. Opportunities like these are absolutely worth pursuing but still need to be approached carefully.

Think about various views of the garden: Is it in front of the house, or in the private area of your yard? If in front of the house, you may need to pay more attention to the drive-by and walk-past perspectives.

Think about visitors: While some people enjoy walking in an un-landscaped wild area, many do not, and if plants are hanging over the edge of the sidewalk or road, some may find it uncomfortable. Remember that, in an area that is viewed by the public, you are creating a bed that is an ambassador for native landscaping. This

is an opportunity to create a carefully located, lively, but not overgrown-looking bed. In your private area, the bed can take on a less formal role.

Will you see the bed easily from your house? There are few activities as quietly enjoyable as watching a perennial bed (especially one that creates habitat) pass through the seasons (including birds flitting into it in the winter), so make sure its “watchability” factor is high – from such places as the kitchen window, the patio, or the window where you brush your teeth.

Outline the proposed location with a hose, a rope, or with spray paint – and watch the space for a few days. It often becomes obvious that a small relocation will make a big difference in the end.

Think about maintenance: During the first years there will be some weeding and watering needed. The first month or so after planting, and if there is a severe drought the first year, water will be very important. In most yards, a water supply is not an issue, but it is worth a few minutes to contemplate a dry spell during the planting month. As for weeding, plan to do some. You might line up some students or friends to help during the establishment year. Maintenance will drop significantly once the natives fill in the bare areas.

Think about light: I garden with plants native to Iowa – mostly tallgrass-prairie species that historically experienced little shade. Many of these species will grow spindly and flop over if given even a few hours a day of shade, so I strongly recommend a sunny spot for budding native gardeners (that 5-S rule again). If you can’t avoid shade be sure to have this in mind during the plant selection process, and choose appropriate species.

Think about lawn mowing: If you can mow close to the bed without resorting to a string-trimmer, it makes life easier.

Think about usage: if you do not want kids and dogs running through your landscaping, don’t position it in a tempting location. If the site is to have a picnic table or bench, create a path to the seating that does not compromise your flowers. Make it welcome visitors, whether fellow humans or other animals.

Think about the establishment-phase maintenance: You don’t want a huge amount of labor that will take away the fun and enjoyment of your new back-yard habitat. Staying small and easily manageable is a great way to start. The bed can always be expanded in later years. Further, having a newer planting adjacent to an established area helps in many ways. It provides a picture of the “future” for design and species selections, CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

and it provides plant material for the expansion. (Your native plants will seed themselves, and give you many grandbaby-plants.)

Things that can go wrong at this stage: This includes all the things mentioned above, but also watch out for over-enthusiasm (the 5-S rule again – Small).

Shape

Next up, what shape do you want? Creating a curved edge is often more aesthetically enjoyable than straight lines, but be sure lawnmowers can easily navigate the shape you create. This is another time for a rope or spray paint to help you think about the best outline so that your bed fits and flows with the surroundings.

Think about how to outline the final shape with a hard edge (bricks, pavers, or rocks). This helps enormously with maintenance – both lawnmowers and lawn grass know where your flowerbed edge is, and stay out.

Soil

If you are fortunate enough to have soil that has not been engineered or “improved” in any way, the best thing to do is to leave it that way. For many gardeners it is a new way of thinking; but in the world of native landscaping, soil amendments are bad things that should be avoided. Native plants are adapted to the soils of their historic locale, and enrichments only encourage weeds to prosper and native species to grow larger than desired. I often have clients explain their “need” for soil enrichments (usually with commentary about how much clay is at the site in question), and I respond with the image of my driveway (see photo on page 11). It’s a decades-old, well-used, highly compacted gravel driveway adjacent to a native-plant bed; the plants constantly self-seed into the driveway. They do not need soil improvements. Using fewer amendments is also a good “green” way to garden.

If there is existing grass or ground cover it must be completely killed before planting. When using herbicides, at least two treatments, a few weeks apart is advised – even three if time allows. You can plant or seed right into the dead vegetation. No rototilling, which just kills earthworms, and stirs up existing weed seeds.

If you have time, and/or prefer not to use herbicide, a nice way to kill grass is to cover the area with a layer (seven to 10 pages thick) of newspaper, under a

couple inches of wood mulch or shredded leaves, and wait at least a couple of months. I often do this in the fall, and have a bed that is well settled and ready to plant in the spring. The newspapers block out the sunlight, keep moisture in, and create a good environment for earthworms and other decomposers.

Technical note learned the hard way from the windy state of Iowa: Do not try to put down newspapers on a windy day. Wet down the sheets thoroughly as you lay them, and be sure to have enough mulch to secure them against wind. Mowing the grass short before doing this also helps them settle in.

Black plastic can be used to kill grass in the same manner as newspapers and mulch, but can heat the soil to temperatures that damage the soil microflora. Clear plastic does not do so much heat damage, and may work faster, as the plants continue to try to grow in response to light. Whichever you choose to use, remove the covering before planting.

Think about the slope and aspect of your proposed bed. One that ponds just a little (or a lot, in the case of a wet swale or ditch area), will create a very different environment than one that is steeply sloped and sheds rain as it falls – promoting far less absorption than occurs with level ground. A bed near a house or other structure may be sheltered from wind, but subject to concentrated reflected heat.

Think about the overall microenvironment you are creating. This will be important when you get to the next phase, selecting and planting plants.

Things that can go wrong at this stage: Allowing soil modifications, and not attending to the ecology of the site should be avoided. Given the chance to perform, the right plants in the right place will impress you with their self-sufficiency; you just need to match the plants to the existing conditions.

If you find you are considering plants that need the site to be altered to suit them, consider different plants. Think “low input” – the only amendments you should add to the system are the plants themselves. In time, they will modify the soil for themselves.

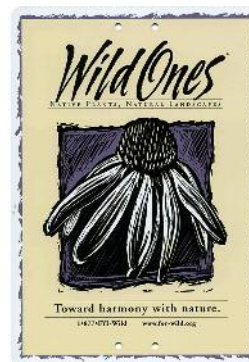
Beds that are converted from non-native to native species often have a high level of residual fertilizers that can cause the native plants to exceed their typical

growth potential. After a year or two, they will settle down as the soil fertility decreases and competition increases.

Cues to Care

Your new flowerbed will have plants in it that many – maybe most – people will not recognize. This can lead to suspicions that you are letting weeds grow, or that you are trying something wild and crazy.

Think about leaving hints that will speak to neighbors and other viewers when you are not present to explain. A border (mowed or structural) will convey that the planting is intentional. The skeptical viewer may not understand what is going on, but will realize something is being done on purpose.



An additional cue that the site is not something accidental is educational signage. It doesn’t have to be large or elaborate, but if you include an informational sign telling viewers about the bed, perhaps naming a few plants, and describing some benefits, you may win friends, and the skeptics will at least know what’s going on.

While many aspects covered in this section of the series are common to all new flowerbeds, some are not. I often use the phrase “paradigm shift” when talking about native landscaping. Not only are choices and practices different, but so is the very concept of how to enjoy this flowerbed.

Your new native-plant bed will be educational for everyone, probably most of all for you. You will learn to scoff at amended soils and plants that need life support. The habitat it creates will have you marveling at the diversity of life it supports. You will create a vibrant area of discovery to walk into and enjoy, turning over leaves to look for interesting insects, marveling at butterflies, and wondering what birds are using the new habitat. ☼

Next article: plant selection and installation.



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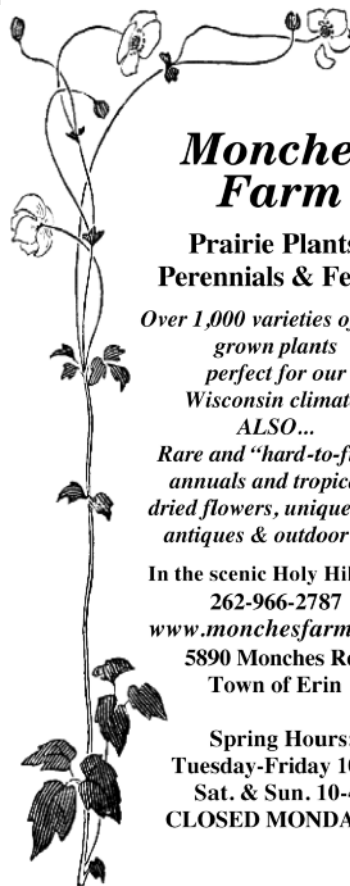
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Susan@TheHabitatGardener.com

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ktdame@comcast.net

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Roger Miller st.croix.wild.ones@mac.com

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Habitat Gardening in Central New York #76

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Niagara Falls & River Region Chapter #87

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Oak Openings Region Chapter #77

Stephanie Saba 419-261-7000
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Western Reserve Chapter #73

Barb Holtz 440-247-7075
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PENNSYLVANIA

Habitat Resource Network of Southeast

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Maureen Carbery 484-678-6200
www.habitatresourcenetwork.org

WISCONSIN

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Carolyn Larkin 414-881-4017
plantlarkin@gmail.com

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Message Center: 414-299-9888 x1

Milwaukee Southwest-Wehr Chapter #23

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Root River Area Chapter #43

Nan Calvert 262-681-4899
native.plant.calvert@gmail.com

Wolf River Chapter #74

Mary Kuester 715-526-3401
Sue.Templeman@frontiernet.net

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

CHAPTER ANNIVERSARIES

Mountain Laurel (CT) Chapter 5 years

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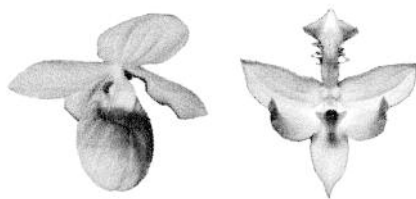
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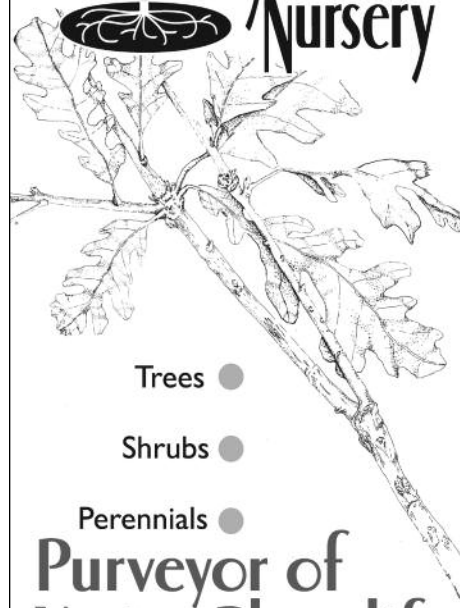


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August 20, 2011: Third Wild Ones National Quarterly Board Meeting, Wild Ones Annual Meeting, and Annual Photo Contest
At the WILD Center in Neenah, Wisconsin. The subject of the meeting will be general operations. There will also be a follow-up to the 2008 Strategy Planning Meeting, and some workshops especially for chapters on growing Wild Ones. Contact headquarters office for more details. execdirector@for-wild.org.

November 12, 2011: Fourth Wild Ones National Quarterly Board Meeting Held via webconference at 9 a.m. The subject of the meeting will be general operations. Contact the headquarters office execdirector@for-wild.org for more details. ☀

New Wild Ones membership level

Wild Ones has added a new level of membership. The Professional/Educator Membership is intended to recognize the professionals who work in businesses and educational fields related to Wild Ones' mission. Along with the benefits of a baseline household membership, the Professional/Educator Membership will be mentioned in the *Wild Ones Journal*, informing Wild Ones members of your support. Upon your request, this membership may also be listed in our annual Yellow Pages, along with nurseries and other businesses that support Wild Ones' mission. ☀

Benefits of Wild Ones membership

First and foremost, you become part of the growing movement to restore health to our planet's ecosystems. Each native-plant community that is planted or rid of invasives, each yard that loses some lawn, each native shrub that is planted to feed migrating birds, each native flower that entertains a bumblebee or hummingbird, they all are emblematic of the fact that we are making a difference. And when you join you acknowledge that you are a part of this, and that you support the effort.

Your own education can follow any means you choose: Chapter meetings, Wild Ones-sponsored conferences, a subscription to the *Wild Ones Journal*, or the Ecoscaper Certification Program.

The WILD Center is home to Wild Ones national headquarters, and to demonstration gardens that showcase Wild Ones' mission, and feed the local wildlife. Plan to visit us any time at: 2285 Butte des Morts Beach Road, Neenah, Wisconsin 54956. Phone 1-877-394-9453 (toll-free).

For more information about membership levels go to www.wildones.org/info.html. ☀

Join Wild Ones 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.

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Chapter preference (See chapter listing on page 16.)

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CHAPTER CHALLENGE

The **Root River (WI) Chapter** Challenge toward *Journal* and web site support has been extended into 2011 with a \$3,000 increase, for a total of \$9,000. With the addition of **Western Reserve (OH) Chapter**, that makes seven chapters meeting the challenge, for a total to \$6,020, along with a number of individual member donations. Let's not disappoint Root River Chapter by not meeting their challenge.

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David & Karen Edwards and **Donna & John VanBuecken** Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter

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