

a voice
for the natural
landscaping
movement



JOURNAL

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Notes from the President:
We are not purists. 2

Adopt an Oak. 3

Are You Coming to the
Wild Ones Annual
Meeting? 3

Wild Ones Photo Contest. 3

Chapter Notes. 3

Growing Native Plants in
Containers. 5

Next Generation:

Historical tidbits: Malaria,
sassafras, and tea parties. 6

Grapevine: I have non-native plants on my
land. 7

Wild Ones Web Site. 7

This is Seeds for
Education 8

Welcome Our Newest
Chapters. 8

What We've Learned So Far at the WILD
Center. 8

A Mystery Explored:
The life of Jack-in-the-
pulpit. 9

Movie Review: A
Chemical Reaction. 10

Business and Affiliate Members. 12

The Meeting Place: Chapter contact
information. 16

The Wild Ones Store. 17
Nothing stays the same.
19

Mark Your Calendar:
Upcoming board meetings, conferences,
etc. 19

Thank You. Back cover.



PART 2 OF OUR CONTINUING SERIES REGARDING INVASIVE SPECIES

Do you think we are being too hard on invasives? Stop worrying, and just 'embrace the change'? A program director for The Nature Conservancy gives us his take on the issue.

This is a continuation of the series that began in the May/June issue of the *Journal*, in response to a call from some biologists that we "embrace the change" that invasive, non-native plants represent. Chris Helzer brings to the discussion the perspective of someone who manages 5,000 acres of reconstructed prairie land in Nebraska, for The Nature Conservancy.



While managing extensive acreages of reconstructed prairies is different from managing small acreages or plots in populated areas, the same basic principles obtain: Minimizing the number of non-native plants is the goal.

The world of plants is changing. We need to decide what's worth fighting for.

Article and photo by Chris Helzer, Eastern Nebraska Program Director – The Nature Conservancy

We live in a changing and confusing world. Non-native species are becoming increasingly abundant members of North American ecological communities, and it doesn't look like the influx is going to slow down. What are conscientious ecologists to do? Do we give up our conception of what "native" communities are, and let in all comers? The answer is clearly...it depends. I do think we need to relax our purist stance toward ecological communities a little, and accept that many, possibly all communities, will include significant numbers of non-native species. On the other hand, I certainly don't think it's smart to tear down our figurative fences, and allow every conceivable species entry. Since it's not possible to prevent all non-native species from invading our natural communities, we have to develop criteria for determining which species are worth fighting.

In order that a species be designated as invasive, most definitions include some requirement that the species cause "harm" to ecological or agricultural systems, or to human health. The problem is that we have trouble defining what "harm" means, and which species inflict it. It's tempting to say that any non-native species is causing harm to an ecological system just

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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

We are not purists



If you are like me, you invested a lot of time and money to landscape your yard with non-natives before you were introduced to natives. I am willing to bet most of you have non-native plants in your yard. I do. However, I do find myself looking forward to the demise of the non-natives in my yard. Sometimes I even speed this process along, because that is an opportunity for me to plant more natives.

Our survey of members last year showed us that some people think Wild Ones has a very narrow focus; this has gained us a "purist" reputation. That is unfortunate as it often makes newcomers or potential members feel less welcome than we would like. We have identified this as a critical barrier to our growth. This needs to change.

Let me state this plainly: Wild Ones is not a purist native-plant group. We can't get people interested in growing natives if they feel that they have to get rid of the plants they have invested time and money in. Nor can we be critical of them if they choose to keep non-native plants in their gardens.

Of course we are not going to have articles in this publication about growing those non-natives, and we do not want chapters to have programs about non-natives, or promote growing non-natives. We are still going to follow our mission to promote the idea of native plants as an environmentally sound practice.

Flowers... put up no resistance to attack, suffer evil rather than inflicting it, imitate carnal love, multiply without fighting, and die without complaining... They have realized the dream of Buddha: To desire nothing, to tolerate everything, to be absorbed in oneself to the depths of the unconscious will.

J. Rambosson

The first time I read *Bringing Nature Home*, by Douglas W. Tallamy, I was absolutely thrilled when I got to the chapter about "getting started." Tallamy writes, "Let me first dispel some fears you may have about converting your garden to natives. You need not adopt a slash and burn policy towards the aliens that are now in your garden." He wisely gives us permission to incorporate natives into our existing landscape. This is the message all of us should be telling others while we are trying to encourage them to put native plants into their yards.

To most people, the idea of native plants is not a familiar one. They need to find out first how various species of natives behave – and then – as they learn more about the benefits of natives, they will add them to their landscapes.

Will you join me in my crusade to dispel the perception that Wild Ones is a purist group? Let's all work on this together. ♣

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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ADOPT AN OAK

This year we will be developing our upland area into an oak savanna. As part of our promotion of the project, we are offering members the opportunity to donate toward the installation of the bur oaks that will eventually form the canopy for the savanna. Although any donation will be appreciated, for a donation of \$200 or more, we will add your name to our Bur Oak Plaque denoting benefactors of the Oak Savanna. To participate in this project, send your donation made out to Wild Ones Oak Savanna to PO Box 1274, Appleton, WI 54912. To see the oak savanna design prepared by Neil Diboll of Prairie Nursery, go to for-wild.org/eco/center/wolandscapes/uplandplan/upland.html.

ARE YOU COMING TO THE WILD ONES ANNUAL MEETING?

This year's Annual Wild Ones Membership Meeting will be held at the Wild Ones Institute of Learning and Development (WILD Center) in Neenah, Wisconsin, August 19-21.

Be there!

WORKSHOPS

Implementing the "Grow Wild Ones" marketing plan. Tactics and ideas.

Getting volunteers and keeping them energized.

Ideas on keeping current membership active.



WORKSHOPS

Public relations, publicity, and how to get noticed. Partnering with like-minded organizations.

Plant sales, conferences, and other ways to get the public interested.

This is the one time of the year when members and chapter boards come together to learn about what we've done this year, and see what's planned for next year. Since 1995, we've held these annual membership meetings all around the country, from Wisconsin and Michigan, to Kentucky and Ohio, to Illinois and Missouri, to Minnesota, and last year, Connecticut.

But this year we want to show off our gardens at the WILD Center, and introduce you to the landscape and restoration plans for the Center – so this year's destination is Neenah.

There's lots to do in the area – bring your family. Lambeau Field (Green Bay Packers), EAA AirVenture Museum, Horicon Wildlife Refuge, and other attractions are not far away.

To register, call the WILD Center at 877-394-9453, send e-mail to wildcenter@wildones.org, or check our web site at wildones.org.

WILD ONES PHOTO CONTEST



by entering it, but that's no longer a sufficient argument. The approach most useful to me is to evaluate the impact of a new species on the ecological resilience of an ecosystem or natural community.

C. S. Holling, one of the conceptual founders of the Society of Ecological Economics, in 1973, defined ecological resilience as the amount of disturbance that an ecosystem can withstand without experiencing changes in self-organizing processes and structures. In other words, how far can you push an ecosystem before it becomes something else? The more resilient an ecosystem, is the more stress it can withstand without losing its integrity. Once it's pushed past a threshold, however, the ecosystem leaves one stability domain (stable state) and transitions into a new one – and it's tremendously hard, or even impossible – to go back. An ecosystem's ability to withstand stress and to resist slipping into a new stable state is largely determined by its diversity and complexity. For instance, a forest with a large number of insect-eating bird species may have a greater ability to counter an outbreak of a pest insect than a forest with fewer species because of the higher total number of birds available to feed on the pests. A prairie with a high diversity of wildflowers is more likely to sustain steady pollination services across the prairie than one with fewer species, because, at any one time, pollinating insects have multiple species and abundant flowers to feed from.

Since ecological resilience relies on complexity, diversity, and redundancy, it seems to me that the designation of a species as invasive or not can often hinge upon the answer to a single question: "Does the new species simplify the ecological community/ecosystem or add to its diversity?" For example, a species that enters a plant community without displacing existing community members is likely adding to the diversity – and thus the ecological resilience – of that plant community. While we might define it as "non-native," it seems foolish to try to stave it off unless we have the spare time and resources to do so. In fact, the species may help bolster scarce resources for pollinators, or provide an additional source of seeds for over-wintering small mammals, and thus increase the chances of survival for other species in the ecosystem.

An example of a species that fits this definition for me is the common dandelion

(*Taraxacum officinale*). I don't include common dandelion in the seed mixtures I use for prairie restoration projects, but I fully expect to see it in both restored and remnant prairies – and I can live with that. It doesn't appear to reduce the overall plant diversity of the prairie around it, and it's one of the most heavily used flowers by native bees in the early part of the growing season.

On the other hand, there are plenty of species that I work hard to suppress and eradicate from my prairies. I know from experience and from others' research that they displace native species and reduce the diversity of the plant community. In other words, they simplify the ecological system as they invade. Species such as crown vetch (*Securigaria varia*, formerly *Coronaria varia*) and smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) are easily identified as true invasive species in most areas. Crown vetch forms dense monocultural patches, within which few, if any, other plant species can survive – and is very difficult to eradicate once it's established.

Smooth brome can also form monocultural patches, but more often, it infiltrates prairie communities, and squeezes out other species as its own density increases. We work diligently to prevent new patches of crown vetch from establishing, and are vigilant about repeating herbicide treatments on existing patches until we're sure they're gone for good. With smooth brome, we take a suppression approach, and do our best to reduce its vigor frequently enough that other plant species have a fighting chance for survival.

It's not always easy to determine what the long-term impacts will be of an introduced species on the surrounding ecological community. Often, by the time we discover that the new plant or animal is becoming dominant at the expense of other species, it's too late to reel it back in. To further complicate matters, a species may be invasive in some places and elsewhere a relatively benign member of an ecosystem. For example, common mullein (*Verbascum thapsis*) acts exactly like a large dandelion in my prairies. It increases in abundance during drought years or under intensive grazing, but quickly gives way to native perennial grasses and forbs when moisture returns or livestock grazes elsewhere. However, colleagues to the west

of my area of eastern Nebraska, see mullein act very differently. Its abundance increases when the surrounding plant community is stressed, but its presence does not appear to diminish markedly when the stress is relieved. The result is a simplified plant community that is likely to be increasingly dominated by mullein. My colleagues are justified in designating it an invasive species and taking appropriate action to control it.

Unfortunately, the difficulty in determining which species are invasive and which are simply new does not release us from our obligation to do our best to make those determinations early, and respond accordingly. Yes, the world is changing, and that creates confusion, but that process of change makes it even more important for us to build and maintain ecological resilience in natural areas. It's inevitable that new species will continue to be purposely and accidentally introduced to our natural areas. Our responsibility is to make sure those new species do not simplify ecosystems that need complexity to survive.

To find out more about the pros and cons about non-native invasive plant species go to www.wildones.org/download/invasive.html. ▲

Letters to the editor about the "Friends of Aliens" article in the May/June issue of Wild Ones Journal

This note from **Joe Di Frances**, of the Milwaukee-North (WI) Chapter, is one that any editor would copy and put on her résumé (if she had one):

"I want to thank you for presenting more than one side of this topic. I found this to be the most interesting issue of the *Journal* in my recollection (15+ years). It also helped me to understand better why precisely I plant natives; the opposing views, as is always the case, help us see our own values more clearly. A great service, and I expect/hope this discussion will continue."

Ney Collier, also of the Milwaukee North (WI) Chapter suggests we "...avoid overtones of xenophobia. Banner headlines about 'Aliens' should include the word 'plants.'" *Thanks Ney. You are right, of course. –m*

Growing native plants in containers – does it work?

By Bonnie Vastag

Native plants are tough. Don't we invoke that phrase repeatedly as we promote the advantages of natural landscaping? The Green Bay Chapter had a unique opportunity to test that phrase during the summer of 2010, when we filled 11 large containers with natives.

Each Wednesday, from early June until mid October, several blocks of North Broadway, in Green Bay, are transformed into a vibrant farmers' market featuring produce, crafts, music, and food. I'd noticed that there were large terra cotta bowls filled with annuals in front of many businesses, and wondered if we could get permission to plant natives in a few of them. I also wondered if the plants could thrive in those small spaces.

In mid-May, 2010, I phoned the director of the On Broadway program, and asked if we could put native plants in some of the containers. I emphasized the planters would be lush, and that we would keep them neat and attractive. It helped when a horticulture student, assigned to On Broadway for an internship, enthusiastically described the beauty and benefits of native plants to the organization.

I dreamed of getting two or three containers, and was ecstatic when we were assigned an entire group of 11 containers. We agreed that the chapter would provide the plants for two of the large planters and one small one, and that On Broadway would purchase enough native plants to fill the remaining eight. In addition, a few plants were donated by our members.

Before planting, I searched print and online sources for information on species that

would do well confined to a terra cotta bowl. I found very little, but we proceeded anyway, reassuring ourselves repeatedly, "These plants are tough."

The location, on the southeast side of the street, provided many hours of sun each day, but the planters themselves posed challenges. Shallow, with room for about 18 inches of soil, they held a soilless mix, and varied in diameter, with some 40 inches and others 60 inches.

It was time to get advice from Ceci Kiefer, co-owner of Stone Silo Prairie Gardens, our major local source of native plants, and an active Wild Ones business member. She put together a list of suitable plants at a very good price, and as a bonus, included a number of plants at no charge. Molly Tomasallo, landscape architect from the Green Bay Parks Department, designed the layout.

Planting day was May 27, and we finished by placing a Wild Ones sign in the center of the group. Over the summer, we checked often so we could deadhead, trim unsightly stems, remove dead leaves, and provide stakes for support. Watering was provided once a week by a landscaping business. After the first month, we stressed that these plants needed just a little water, and asked that no fertilizer be used.

How exciting it was to watch our tough plants. They grew, they bloomed, they adapted to their location. Not all species performed equally well, but most will be invited back for the summer of 2011, when we once again plant the same containers.

The following group of forbs earned A's and B's, and will definitely be invited back for another year

The short, early bloomers that kept providing color were dwarf penstemon (*Penstemon hirsutus*), harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), and big fruit primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*). Harebell needed constant trimming, but it kept blooming. Purple poppy mallow (*Callirhoe triangulata*), with its brilliant color and delicate stems, looked very good twining up and in between other plants, and it never stopped blooming. Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) was another good early bloomer, and it rebloomed after it was cut back.

Two standouts among the taller, prolific bloomers were anise hyssop, (*Agastache foeniculum*) and oxeye sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*). Both needed staking by late summer, and required trimming, especially the oxeye sunflower, but they seemed very happy in their containers and put on a great show.

Good, solid performers that we'll use again

Beardtongue (*Penstemon grandiflorus*). Ohio spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*) good for early color. Rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) required staking, but its unusual shape added so much interest. Tennessee coneflower (*Echinacea tennesseensis*). Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*). Pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*). Sky blue aster (*Aster azureus*) provided late-season color, but the rest of the plants near it had spent all their energy, and it looked lonesome.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Historical Tidbits: Malaria, sassafras, and tea parties

By Barb Bray

Imagine swallowing three large “pills” of wadded up spider webs as a medical treatment. Two hundred or so years ago, that was one of the “cures” for a disease much dreaded by pioneers settling southeastern Michigan. A chant from the 1830s reveals what many people thought of Michigan in those days: “Don’t go, to Michigan, that land of ills; the word means ague, fever and chills.”¹ Although they didn’t understand that it was the mosquito’s bite that transmitted the disease we now know as malaria, those early settlers often used plants around them to treat their symptoms.

Folk remedies to help those stricken with ague included drinking slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*) bark tea or a tea made from sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) roots. In fact, one of the common names for the sassafras tree is ague tree.

Sassafras is a great example of how plants can teach us interesting things about American history. Sassafras is in the same family, *Lauraceae*, as cinnamon and spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). The wonderful spicy smell of the plant comes from an essential oil containing safrole and several other compounds found in familiar cooking spices such as nutmeg and cloves. Some legends say it was the spicy smell of sassafras that alerted Columbus to nearby land.² Spaniards learned of the medicinal properties of sassafras in the 16th century from Native Americans who used it to treat dysentery, syphilis, and fevers.

Word spread about this wonder plant, and it soon became a hot commodity in the 1600s. One of the first exports from the Jamestown Colony was sassafras. As a trade product, sassafras was just as important as beaver and cod to the early colonists. Although sassafras had many medicinal uses throughout history, recent studies have shown safrole oil to be carcinogenic.

Do you ever enjoy drinking a hot cup of tea? Tea has an interesting history associated with several garden plants. Black tea first appeared in the colonies in 1650, brought by Dutch traders. By the end of the

18th century, tea was a very popular drink enjoyed by everyone, at least until 1773 when the British imposed a tax on tea.

The colonists rebelled by destroying three ships filled with tea (the Boston tea party), and boycotting black tea. Colonists were urged to drink “Liberty Teas” – that is, teas made from native plants or garden plants. A number of plants were used for liberty teas: Raspberry, sweet fern, wintergreen, sassafras, rose hips, fennel, dill, catnip, red clover, linden, sage, rosemary, lemon balm, lavender, bee balm, and marjoram.³

A couple of familiar native plants were named to reflect their use as teas – New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*) and Oswego tea (*Monarda didyma*). New Jersey tea was said by some to be one of the best-tasting liberty teas. Colonists quickly adopted Oswego tea, long used by the Oswego Nation in what is now upper New York state.

In late summer, the beautiful purplish blossoms of Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*) adorn wetlands and moist gardens. The name of this plant dates back to the time of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, an English settlement in the early 1600s. One story says that Joe Pye was a Native American herbalist, possibly of the Maine Nation, and he used the plant to treat an outbreak of typhoid fever in the colony.⁴

Another *Eupatorium* species also has a part in history – *Eupatorium rugosum* or white snakeroot. White snakeroot is native to open woods and grows 3- to 4-feet tall, with white flowers. This pretty plant was the culprit in one of the most dreaded diseases among pioneering families – milk sickness. All parts of this plant are poison-

ous, and when cows graze on the plant, it poisons their milk. One person who died from milk sickness was Nancy Hanks Lincoln, the mother of our 16th President.

History is full of interesting tidbits about native plants, not only from hundreds of years ago, but even in times that are more recent. Have you ever wondered

what Henry Ford used to stuff the seats of his first Model T cars? Hint: Its common name is “old man’s beard,” and it was full of chiggers that bit people in their behinds. What plant did Thomas Edison grow 12-feet tall to extract sap to make rubber? Hint: It blooms in late summer with yellow blossoms, and people always think it causes allergies. When you discover fun facts like these about native (or even non-native) plants, it makes history come alive. Try it for yourself. ▲

1. Massie, Larry B. 1989. “The Shakes” in *Voyages into Michigan’s Past*. See Nawaygo County Historical Archives online at ncha.ncats.net for this excerpt.
2. Harris, Marjorie. 2003. *Botanica North America: The Illustrated Guide to our Native Plants, Their Botany, History, and the Way They have Shaped Our World*. Harper Resource: New York.
3. Sumner, Judith. 2004. *American Household Botany: A History of Useful Plants 1620-1900*. Timber Press: Portland, Oregon.
4. Harris, Marjorie. 2003. *Ibid*.



Three different-shaped leaves found on the same sassafras tree.



The Inside Story

By Janice Stiefel



The Inside Story, by Janice Stiefel

Originally all 66 of Janice’s articles appeared in our *The Outside Story* and the *Wild Ones Journal* in black and white and without photos. But this 80-page book is printed in total color, and includes photos of the plants and related insects. Janice was an important part of Wild Ones’ early history. A wealth of information for anyone who appreciates native plants.

\$25 at the Wild Ones Store.

www.for-wild.org/store

Grapevine

By Maryann Whitman

What a thousand acres of Silphiums looked like when they tickled the bellies of buffalo is a question never again to be answered, and perhaps not even asked. Aldo Leopold, 1949.

As you read in the Wild Ones President's Message: We are not native plant "purists."

Yes, I too have non-native ornamental plants in my garden. I have peonies (the ants love them) that are very old stock, planted more than 50 years ago. I've tried giving them away to the local historical society, for their re-creation of a 1930s home garden, but I've discovered that the tuberous roots of each plant occupy at least several cubic feet, testifying to their age. Every time, there has been enough rootstock remaining that the plants came back the following spring.

I have lilacs scattered in the hedgerows that have trunks several inches in diameter, a size that attests to their age. Their perfume fills the air when they bloom, reminding me of my childhood and the century-old lilacs that once grew around our house.

To the north and west of the house, grow 80-foot Norway spruces that shield the house from the prevailing winter winds. To the south grows a broad Siberian elm that is taller than the spruces, with a trunk that is 31 inches in diameter. In summer, it provides significant shade, keeping the house cool.

I have star of Bethlehem alongside the garage, and moneywort and creeping Charlie in patches here and there. I take a whack at them periodically, but only resort to drastic measures when I find them creeping too close to the woods and the oak hilltop.

I am not suggesting that everything else on our acreage is native; not by any means. My point is that there are non-native plants that I will make no effort to remove. Some serve a purpose, like all the old trees that would take a lifetime to replace. Others have been on this particular plot of land longer than I have, and it would not feel right to displace them – they have squatter's rights—I live and let live. A third variety I simply do not think are important enough to tackle, as long as they stay close to the house, where I can keep track of them. In this "semi-decision" I keep my fingers crossed.

I also have my share of the usual invasives, like garlic mustard and crown vetch, and keep discovering new arrivals, like colt's foot (*Tussilago farfara*). To these I give no quarter. I pick my battles.

Oh, and I almost forgot: I have hostas – at least one of which, many years ago, I paid \$40 for. Fortunately, most of them, without special tending, are sparse or have been shaded out and overcome by the native plants surrounding them.

The irony is that I have just spent a good part of a sunny Saturday afternoon, standing pretty much on my head, pulling by its running roots, a native that is considered "threatened" in Virginia and of "special concern" in Rhode Island: *Physostegia virginiana*, or obedient plant. A friend gave it to me a number of years ago. I should have been suspicious when he said, "Here, let me give you another shovel-full." I have been pulling it for several years now. I finally feel like I am making headway. I might move a "shovel-full" to a dryer, less friendly area – perhaps let it duke it out with the crown vetch. I expect the hummingbirds are fond of its tubular flowers.

I have started mowing and chopping at my cup plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*) seedlings. I love my cup plants. When they're in bloom it sounds like the insects are about to lift off with the entire patch,

and during droughty summers I always know where I can find some tree frogs to charm a visiting youngster – in the cupped leaves. However, I'm finding its seedlings proliferating around the sheltered corners of other prairie plants. Once they establish, their deep taproots can survive anything short of a direct lightning strike.

I am also keeping a careful eye on the *Rudbeckia laciniata*, and on the prairie dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*), mowing paths around the patch where it lives with Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), and a variety of sedges. I am beginning to understand that some native plants belong where "the buffalo roam." ▲



Wild Ones Web Site

Wild Ones members in the news. We've had many Wild Ones members in the news recently, so our What's New section on the web site has been busy. Check it out and see if you recognize any of the names. www.for-wild.org/whatsnew.html.



Members-only web pages. 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 that appears next gives you the opportunity to register your e-mail address. You'll need to make up a password as well. The Internet will search the Wild Ones database to see if your e-mail address matches what we have on record, and if you're active. If it's satisfied, it will allow you to go to the next step. Here you will need to answer a couple of simple questions. Once answered, you will be sent back to the log-in page. From there you should be able to successfully access your membership data and the current issues of the *Wild Ones Journal*.

Best-kept secret on the Internet. While prepping for the re-design of our web site, we were once again reminded of how much great stuff there is at wildones.org. Even though the site is somewhat disorganized, it's still not too hard to find enough valuable material and interesting reading to keep you busy for weeks. Want to catch up on *Journal* articles you missed? Need information on how to fight city hall when it comes to weed laws? Just want to stimulate your mind with great reading on your favorite topic (native plants)? It's all there on our web site. Just start clicking and exploring. You will be pleasantly surprised. ▲

This Is Seeds for Education



Photo by Kim Zajac

Started in 1996, the Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program is intended to give schools, libraries, houses of worship, and other not-for-profit organizations small monetary grants to develop outdoor-learning centers using native plants in a natural landscape. This year we have gotten thank you notes from nearly every 2011 grant recipient. That's a great feeling. So let's start reminding new potential grantees that it's time to be thinking about the 2012 grant period. The 2012 grant application due date is October 15, 2011.

And please keep your donations coming to the SFE Grant Program. During past years, we have asked for your donations to honor Lorrie Otto on her birthday which was September 9th. Now we ask that you donate in her memory to show our appreciation for her dedication to the job of teaching us about using native plants and natural landscaping to heal the Earth. The SFE Grant Program is a member-funded grant program, so only through your donations are we able to continue to get these learning center projects off to a good start. 🌱



Photo by Kim Zajac

What we've learned so far at the WILD Center.

By Donna VanBuecken

Transplant a native plant almost anywhere and it'll grow. Last year we (Wild Ones staff and volunteers) tried something new with our fourth raingarden, also known as Nancy's Garden, named for Nancy Small of the Kalamazoo Area (MI) Chapter. Because all the plants were huge transplants from a nearby plant rescue, we dug the entire raingarden deeper than we would have ordinarily, thinking that instead of digging holes to place the plants into, we would replace the excavated soil around them. Well, the rain started before we even finished placing the plants, and it didn't stop. When finally it did, the piles of excavated soil were too wet to move. When they dried, they were too hard to dig into. We had managed, between the raindrops to throw enough soil around the plants, so at least the roots were covered, but little else was accomplished before the fall rains started. Those plants are doing just beautifully. We couldn't be more amazed at their resilience. They made it through the winter, and in fact, have come back stronger than the gardens planted the previous year.

Cutting dame's rocket does not eliminate the final seeding stage. Last year, as we removed the buckthorn, dame's rocket seeds sprouted, and caused a new headache. Not wanting to disturb the tree and wild ginger seedlings we had transplanted to the understory, we cut the dame's rocket stems, only to find that they sprouted new growth, necessitating the pulling of the plants. This spring we found that our wild ginger is coming up, as well as most of the tree seedlings, so it appears pulling the dame's rocket out didn't disturb them. There was still dame's rocket growing, but most appeared to be new plants, so we'll continue to pull.

Controlling invasives on site is not enough. As we have eliminated the invasives on our site, we've come to realize that is not enough. We must also remove the invasive weed species adjacent to our site. Wild parsnip, garlic mustard, teasel, dame's rocket, honeysuckle, and buckthorn are our main concerns on the upland, with canary reed grass being a big concern at the marsh. So far our neighbors have been more than willing to allow us to do so. And, luckily, we have the Fox Valley Technical College's Natural Resources Program available to us as a resource as we try to bring the canary reed under control.

Prairie smoke is tenacious. The deer have continued to keep this early blooming prairie plant nibbled to the ground, but they surprised us all, and have produced the loveliest of blossoms anyway. Regardless, we are still fencing the baptisia and orchids to play it safe. 🌱

Welcome Our Newest Chapters

Illinois Prairie Chapter, which is located in central Illinois, in the Bloomington/Normal area, was chartered this past December, with 18 members, and are already at 72. Their chapter president is Sherrie Snyder. Congratulations on a great job. Thanks, too, for being such fantastic hosts at the Second Quarterly National Board Meeting this past April.

Kettle Moraine Chapter, initiated by past national Vice President Mariette Nowak, chartered this past March. Formed during the retreat of the western glacier, this area in Wisconsin is made up of a very large glacial moraine that is dotted with kettle formations, which now make up many of the area's lakes and ponds, including Horicon Marsh, a little farther to the north. These great geological features are sure to provide many interesting tours for this chapter.

Northfield Prairie Partners Chapter is made up of many members from the Northfield region of Minnesota. Organized by Arlene Kjar, this chapter is already receiving great support from its community.

THE SEX LIFE OF JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

It's often said that the Jack-in-the-pulpit changes its sex as it ages. Is that really true?

Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), was among the first plants that I started from seed, under the tutelage of Roberta Case. Some members of the Michigan Chapters of Wild Ones may remember Roberta Case "Boots", who passed away a number of years ago.) It was then that I first read a description of the growth habits of this plant. The story goes that it starts life as a male, and in later years, when it has grown two leaves, it becomes a female. This scenario bothered me; it felt like large pieces of information were missing or somehow misrepresented.

I quote the following description of Jack-in-the-pulpit life in process from the notes of botanist W. H. Camp, written around 1930, while he was a doctoral student at Ohio State University, now archived by New York Botanical Gardens where he spent a good deal of his professional life.

Studies by the writer since 1925, both on marked plants in the field and in experimental plots, have shown that *Arisaema triphyllum* begins as a weak, non-flowering plant with a small corm. This is true for both the seedling plant and the plant having its origin in a vegetative off-shoot. After several years of growth – generally more than three, depending on the habitat – the plant has its first flowers. The first inflorescence is generally small and contains only staminate or male flowers.

Since the habitat is a decided factor in the development of the individual, subsequent stages in the life history are closely linked with the environment. If the plant is in a moist, rich woods and little disturbed by animals, it increases in size from year to year, both in the aerial and subterranean parts. In several years a few carpellate or female flowers may appear on the spadix, sometimes mixed with the staminate flowers, but generally near the base of the inflorescence. This intermediate or monoecious stage (with flowers of both sexes represented on the same plant), generally lasts several years, the proportion of carpellate flowers becoming greater until the whole inflorescence is made up of carpellate flowers.

It is thus apparent that in *Arisaema triphyllum* a single plant, if grown in a suitable habitat will, during its life history, run the whole gamut of sexual expression from the immature non-flowering condition into the male and from that through varying degrees of intersexuality into a female condition. It remains thus as long as the plant is undisturbed, or does not become weakened through an over-production of side corms.

The stability of the sexual state is dependent upon the physiological condition of the individual. If the habitat is unfavorable to good growth, the plant may remain in the staminate or monoecious state indefinitely.

Camp describes the process just a little more specifically than the old wives' tale does. I asked Dr. Anton Reznicek, the curator of the University of Michigan herbarium, for his thoughts:

I've not been fond of loose usage of male and female (as in *Arisaema*). This is a plant that is a monoecious hermaphrodite. Most plant species are hermaphrodites, with perfect (bisexual) flowers, but it is also common to have plants that have male and female flowers scattered on the same plant – think ragweed. What is unusual about *Arisaema* is that the plant has the ability to control how many male and female parts it produces. So I think the interesting element here is the sexual expression – male one year, female another, monoecious yet another year, and, of course, also vegetative – and how this is controlled.

The plant is always the same – it does not change sex as such, it changes how its innate (and unchanging) bisexuality is expressed, and this includes being vegetative. We never say that a vegetative individual of a plant has changed its sex to simply "none" because it does not flower that year! This is the same situation.

Careful use of terms should clear up any confusion, and I prefer the use of carpellate and staminate as opposed to male and female, with all the implications those terms carry for us animals.

Dr. Reznicek's comments bring the large pieces of the puzzle together. And a puzzle it truly is. ▲



In a Jack-in-the-pulpit, the petaloid structure is actually a bract, called the spathe. It encloses the spadix, which carries the staminate and the carpellate flowers.

VOCABULARY

Monoecious describes plants that have both male and female reproductive parts occurring on the same plant. The word comes from the Greek, roughly translated as "single household." They may both appear within the same flower, (which is then termed "perfect"), or on separate branches, but still on the same plant. The occurrence of male and female parts may also be separated in time – the male flowers may occur early in the season and the female later – or vice versa. The state of being monoecious is referred to as "monoecy."

Dioecious translates roughly from the Greek as two separate housekeeping setups. Applied to plants this means that male and female parts occur on completely separate plants. The state of being dioecious is referred to "dioecy" (along with monoecy – great Scrabble words).

Carpellate flowers are ones that carry the female reproductive organs. Carpels are typically composed of a stigma, which receives pollen, and a style, which connect the stigma to the ovary, which contains unfertilized seeds (female germ cells).

Staminate flowers carry the male reproductive organs of a plant, the stamens. Stamens typically consist of pollen-producing anthers and thread-like filaments that hold the anther in position.

In a Jack-in-the-pulpit the **spathe** is the cowl or mantle part of the bloom (actually a conspicuous bract). It encloses the **spadix**, which is a fleshy spike that carries the staminate and carpellate flowers.

WILD CENTER WISH LIST Computer less than four years old • First-aid kit • Bunk beds
Four-rung stepladder • Small dresser • Gardening tools • Native trees and shrubs,
especially male and female winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) • Canoe or kayak.



A CHEMICAL REACTION: A MOVIE SHOWS THAT ONE VOICE CAN MAKE

Film review and commen

Just about anyone who has ever read the warning labels and the list of ingredients on the back of a can or bottle of lawn chemicals has probably wondered, “Wow. It’s actually legal to sell this stuff?” All those chemicals, with names so long no one but a chemist could read them. And the warnings are enough to scare anyone who’s paying attention.

That’s one question. The question that follows is, “How do they get away with this? Shouldn’t there be a law against spraying suspected carcinogens on lawns where children, pets, and even adults are playing?”

We’ve all heard about what’s happening to veterans of the Vietnam War – the deaths and illnesses caused by exposure to Agent Orange – but we don’t seem to hear much about what happens when people come into contact with lawn and garden chemicals right in their own back yards.

There’s a war going on right now in retail stores, in legislatures, and in courts – and the side in favor of banning the use of these chemicals is finally starting turning the tide.

The film, “A Chemical Reaction,” tells an amazing modern-day David and Goliath story, one which is sure to lift the spirits of all who are grieving the tragedy in the Gulf and other eco-disasters and degradation.

This must-see documentary describes how a few “little” people (as British Petroleum would call them) took on the lawn-chemical industry – and won. It started in Hudson, Quebec, Canada, a small town of 5,000 people. The heroine is a dermatologist, Dr. June Irwin, some of whose patients fell victim to the chemicals applied to lawns throughout her town. This dedicated woman went to each town meeting for six years, describing the dangers of lawn chemicals, as documented by her own research and that of others. In addition, she wrote countless letters to newspaper editors and others on the subject.

The film also highlights Paul Tukey, a U.S. citizen and one-time professional landscaper, who became seriously ill due to work with pesticides. He fears that these same pesticides may have permanently harmed his own son. Paul is now an award-winning activist who has written *The Organic Lawn Care Manual*, and started the organization, SafeLawns, to promote natural lawn care.



A substantial body of research shows compelling evidence of the health effects of pesticides. The Ontario College of Family Physicians reviewed 250 peer-reviewed studies published from 1992 to 2003, and found significant links between pesticide exposure and skin reactions, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, brain, prostate, kidney, and pancreatic cancers. They also found that pesticide exposure consistently affects the nervous system. Children exposed to pesticides had elevated risks for several cancers, including brain cancer and leukemia. The College made a strong overall recommendation: “Given the wide range of commonly used home and garden products associated with health effects, our message to patients should focus on reduction of exposure to all pesticides, rather than targeting specific pesticides or classes.” See the full report at ocfp.on.ca.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has echoed these concerns. It reports that 95 percent of lawn pesticides used in the U.S. are possible or probable carcinogens.

Pesticides used on lawns have also been associated with immune-response deficiencies, neurological diseases, and birth defects. A 1987 National Cancer Institute study showed that children whose parents used garden pesticides were 6.5 times more likely to develop leukemia. Pets are affected as well. Studies show

A DIFFERENCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES

ntary by Mariette Nowak



that lymphoma occurs significantly more often in pets of pesticide users than in pets of non-users. Lawn chemicals also cause the majority of wildlife poisonings reported to the EPA. For more information, see epa.gov/nps/toolbox/other/KSMO_LawnChemicals.pdf and "Childhood Leukemia and Parents' Occupational and Home Exposures," by Lowengart, R. et al., in *JNCI*, July, 1987, pp.39-46 at safelawns.org/blog/index.php/2010/02/why-ban-lawn-pesticides-let-us-count-the-reasons/.

It was statistics like these, plus her own research, that spurred Dr. Irwin to continue publicizing the problems with pesticides. In 1991, the new mayor in Hudson, Michael Elliot, supported her efforts, and on May 6, 1991, six years to the day when Dr. Irwin made her first appearance at a meeting, the town of Hudson banned the nonessential cosmetic uses of lawn chemicals on public and private property.

The chemical industry, of course, was not content to let this ride, and two companies, ChemLawn and SprayTech, took them to court. Eventually, the case went all the way up to Canada's Supreme Court, which ruled that the ban was legal, in a unanimous 9-0 decision in June 2001. (ChemLawn has now changed its name to TruGreen.)

Since that ruling, bans have been enacted throughout Canada. The provinces of Alberta, New Brunswick, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec, as well as many municipalities outside of these provinces – over 80 percent of the country – have now enacted bans on lawn and landscape chemicals. In the wake of these bans, Home Depot in Canada decided to stop selling 60 pesticides. (Unfortunately, this has not been done in the U.S., where Home Depot continues to sell these products.)

The lawyer defending Hudson's ban before the Supreme Court of Canada knew that, despite the plethora of data on the dangers of lawn chemicals, huge multi-national chemical companies with all their financial resources could easily buy expert testimonials denying this. Because of this, he based his defense on the Precautionary Principal. The Precautionary Principal states that when an activity could harm human health or the environment, precautions should be taken, even when there is not absolute scientific proof or consensus. It is actually a common sense principal: Better safe than sorry.

The Supreme Court of Canada based its decision on the Precautionary Principal, and this principal has been adopted as a part of the law in both Europe and Canada, and many other countries around the world, but not, unfortunately, in the U.S.

Since Canada's ruling, the chemical companies are trying a new tactic. Dow and Chemtura are seeking compensation based on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), claiming that the law "breaches legal protections owed by Canada to U.S. investors." Therefore, the fight in Canada is not over.

In the U.S., the chemical lobby has been quietly working to ensure that local bans, such as Hudson's, would be illegal. They have accomplished this by getting state preemption laws passed in 41 of 50 states – laws that make it illegal for local governments to pass laws that are more restrictive than those of the state.

Nevertheless, a number of states – Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York – have bans or restrictions on the use of pesticides on school grounds. In addition, local communities in various states, including Illinois, Maine, and Wisconsin, have banned chemicals on public property. However, no law in the U.S., to this author's knowledge, goes as far as Canadian laws in banning the use of lawn chemicals on private property.

"A Chemical Reaction" is an important and inspiring film that you won't want to miss. Consider bringing this film to your own community and becoming part of the movement to ban lawn chemicals in your neighborhood. See the movie's web site at ChemicalReactionMovie.com. ▲

Preemption Laws

The first preemption law in the U.S. prevented states from passing more restrictive auto-pollution standards than standards passed by the U.S. Congress. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of this preemption law, as well as preemption laws that prevent local communities from passing more restrictive clean water standards than standards mandated by their states. In other words, all these preemption laws make it easier for big business to pollute.

In two of the 60-inch planters, wild senna (*Cassia hebecarpa*) took center stage. It grew tall and full, and looked majestic. Even though it only bloomed a little and a few of the bottom leaves yellowed by late summer, we'll use it again.

Gray headed coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*) poked its bright yellow blossoms through prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) and side oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), which helped hold it erect. Both of these grasses, plus prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*) provided great texture while serving as fillers. The other grass we used was little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) a great filler, but it didn't produce seed heads, even though these were mature plants from a member's garden.

Prairie sage (*Artemisia ludoviciana*), with its silvery color, provided an accent, but it didn't bloom, most likely due to lack of sun.

Seven species we won't invite back

Monarda (*Monarda fistulosa*), showy goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*), and blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) sprawled ungraciously and bloomed very little. Prairie blazing star (*Liatis pycnostachya*) bloomed well, but seemed to be reaching for the sky, and didn't fit in. No blossoms appeared on white prairie clover (*Dalea candida*). Nodding onion (*Allium cernuum*) hid beneath its neighbors, and never bloomed. Wild petunia (*Ruellia humilis*) didn't bloom well, sprawled, and probably needed more sun.

We had two opportunities to have an informational table during the farmers' market. Placed directly in front of our plants, we introduced many people to what we do, and felt we were reaching a completely new audience.

Unfortunately, On Broadway insisted that we remove all of the plants, because they planned to put Christmas decorations in the planter. So, in late October, all the plants were cut back, and we offered them to Westwood Elementary School, De Pere, one of our Seeds for Education winners.

This year, I'll make another plea to leave the plants in place at the end of the growing season. I feel they won't interfere with the seasonal decorations, and it would let us continue to test the toughness of native plants. 🌱



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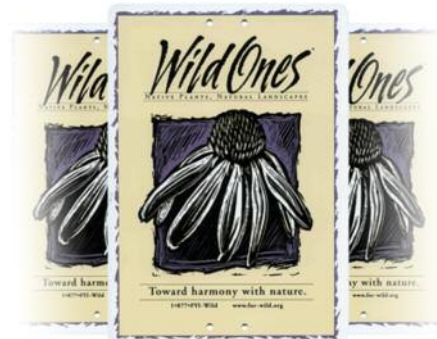
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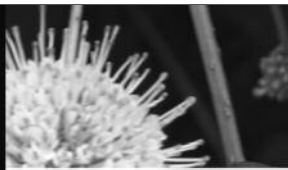
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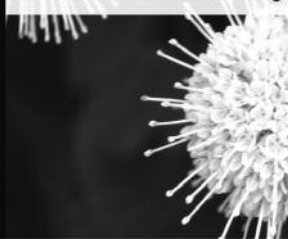
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Is It Possible to Have Too Many Books?

Nahhhhh, we didn't think so, either. With everything changing so fast these days – in the world of native plants, invasives, and natural landscaping – it's important to keep up to date. Web sites

only take you so far, and so when you need to really dig deep into your favorite topics, nothing beats a great book. And to find just the right book, you need a store with the biggest selection. That's why we make the Wild Ones **Amazon-**

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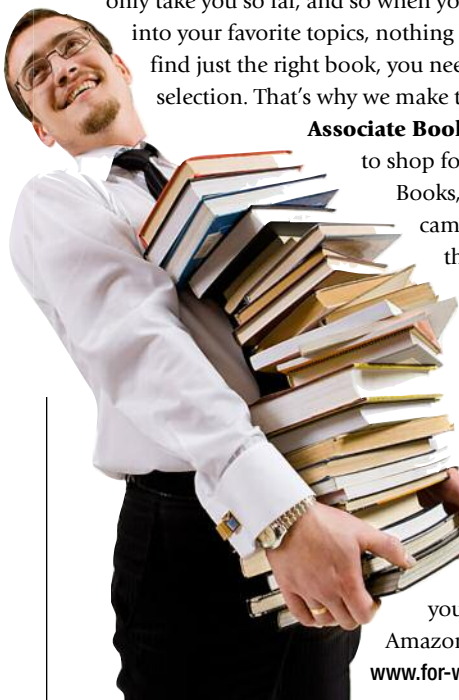
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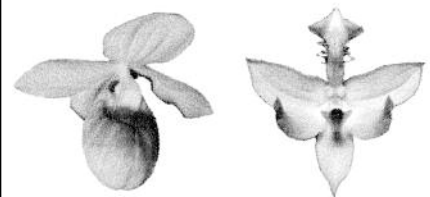
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Milwaukee Southwest-Wehr Chapter #23

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

CHAPTER ANNIVERSARIES

Brainerd (MN) 2 years
River City-Grand Rapids (MI) 4 years
Habitat Gardening in Central New York 7 years
Western Reserve (OH) 7 years
Door County (WI) 10 years
Arrowhead (MN) 11 years
Gibson Woods (IN) 11 years
Flint River (MI) 12 years
Ann Arbor (MI) 15 years
Madison (WI) 16 years
Columbus (OH) 17 years
Rock River Valley (IL) 17 years
Milwaukee North (WI) 32 years

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Door County (WI) Chapter

Michelle Serreyn

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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/.



Bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*) is a plant you can count on to attract bees, hummingbird moths, and actual hummingbirds. Photo by Vicki Bonk from the 2008 Wild Ones Photo Contest.



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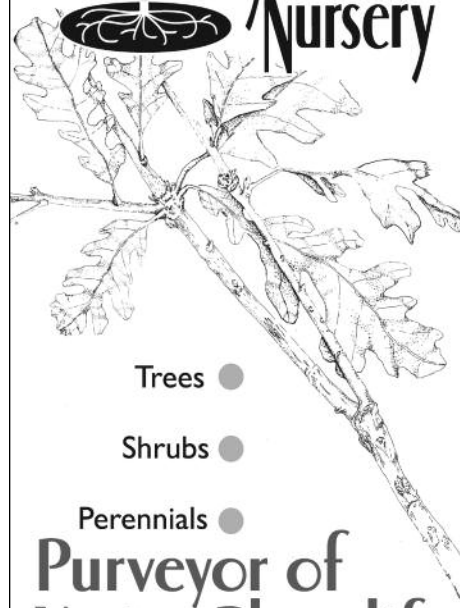


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Wild orchid in the forest. Photo courtesy of Har Adar.

Nothing stays the same

By Glenn Pollock

This Monday, while returning from visiting a relative, my mother and I stopped by a small corner woodlot – about 10,000 square feet of virgin forest that has escaped the plow and saw. The floor of the forest was white with blood root, snow trillium, Dutchman's breeches, Virginia water leaf, leeks, and many more yet to wake up this spring.

My mother said, "This is what it was like when I was young. People do not understand nature. If they did, they would not destroy it. They just do not care. When I was a child, my sisters and I would pick handfuls of flowers from the prairie across the road from our farm house. Then the old man who owned the prairie died, and the land was sold and plowed. I guess they needed the money."

Mom is 94, and lives on the farm near Vail, Iowa. ♣

Mark Your Calendars

August 3: Photo Contest Deadline Send your entries to photocontest@wildones.org.

August 19-21: Wild Ones National 3rd Quarter Board Meeting and Wild Ones Annual Membership Meeting At the WILD Center, in Neenah, Wisconsin. There will also be some special workshops on growing Wild Ones. Watch the web site or contact headquarters office for more details. Wildcenter@wildones.org.

November 12: Wild Ones 4th Quarterly Board Meeting To be held via web conference.



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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Robert & Carol Niendorf Library materials (collection of *Journals*).
Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter
Toni Daniels Various books for Wild Ones Library and a guest book.
Greater Cincinnati (OH) Chapter
Jan & Dick Koel 30-cup coffee maker for the WILD Center kitchen.
Menomonee River Area (WI) Chapter
Menomonee River Area (WI) Chapter Variety of trees and shrubs to use in restoring the riparian woodland buffer at the WILD Center.

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Mandy & Ken Ploch Menomonee River Area (WI) Chapter

AMAZON COMMISSIONS

Commissions paid from **Amazon.Com** for the last two months came to \$140.57. Thank you everyone who remembered to do their shopping at Amazon.com through the Wild Ones bookstore link.

ROOT RIVER (WI) 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. The total donation amount still stands at \$6,020. Let's not disappoint Root River Chapter by not meeting their challenge. The challenge is open to individuals as well as Wild Ones chapters.

