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## Seedlings: Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. What occurs during the seedling phase? Is there a specific number of people needed to form a seedling? How long does it take for a seedling to achieve charter chapter status?**

When a chapter first begins, it is called a "seedling." It only takes one, or a handful of people to start a seedling. At the outset, a seedling usually has an acting president as its only official officer and member. Seedlings may also have acting co-presidents. The start date is the date the acting president confirms to Wild Ones (via email to [info@wildones.org](mailto:info@wildones.org) or phone) that he or she wants to form a Wild Ones chapter. To officially launch a seedling, the acting president must provide the geographic areas and/or ecoregions the seedling will serve (counties and zip codes) the seedling name in the format of "Wild Ones SEEDLINGNAME (Seedling).", and the preferred contact (name and email) to be listed on the Wild Ones website. The seedling name should be geographic in nature.

There is no set amount of time a seedling must exist before becoming chartered. Once a seedling meets all the requirements to become a chapter, the seedling will be chartered.

### **2. What types of specific resources, support or guidance does Wild Ones provide during the seedling start up process?**

Wild Ones will provide a Seedling Startup Kit with brochures and other information. The Wild Ones Chapter Liaison will identify and reach out to Wild Ones members (current and recently expired) in the seedling's geographic area. The Chapter Liaison will routinely check in, answer questions and schedule meetings with other seedlings/tenured chapters to brainstorm avenues for outreach and member recruitment. If you are in a region in which Wild Ones already has an existing chapter, the Chapter Liaison will coordinate networking with officers from that chapter. Seedling/chapter officers have access to the Wild Ones Zoom accounts to facilitate scheduling online meetings and events. Financial support from Wild Ones in the form of dues reimbursement is available upon chartering (see question #6).

### **3. What is included in the Seedling Starter Kit?**

- 50 Wild Ones Membership Applications
- 50 In Harmony with Nature brochures
- 50 Rain Garden Brochures
- 5 Wild Ones Bookmarks
- 6 Best of Wild Ones *Journal*
- 1 Hard Copy of Doug Tallamy's DVD *Toward Harmony with Nature*

In addition to the materials included in the Seedling Starter Kit, a current list of Wild Ones chapters and chapter contacts is available for seedling/chapter officers to view on the Wild Ones Member Account page.

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#### 4. How does a seedling recruit members?

On a national level, once the geographic areas and/or ecoregions the chapter intends to serve is determined, Wild Ones will identify if there are active or potential members in the area. Wild Ones cannot disclose names of members but will contact active and recently expired members to let them know a seedling is forming and ask if they would like to join/get involved with the seedling. Wild Ones will also share on its social media channels and in the monthly Member e-Newsletter that a new seedling has formed and encourage “Partners at Large” members (PALs) to join.

At a local level, the acting president should explore ways to recruit other interested people to be members and serve as future officers. Social media channels provide many free opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals who are ready to engage with and support a Wild Ones chapter. Set up a public Facebook page and an Instagram account and post quality content on a regular basis; be sure to include meeting and event dates. Connect with other mission-aligned organizations and other like-minded public groups whose members may be interested in joining Wild Ones. It is important if you create social media channels that you have the time, tools and resources to maintain them. If you cannot commit to posting and responding to comments/messages on these channels on a weekly (ideally daily) basis, then it is best to wait to launch these tools until you have volunteers with social media expertise to assist you. Most tenured Wild Ones chapters have active Facebook and Instagram accounts; some connect with the public via Twitter, LinkedIn, Nextdoor and YouTube.

Setting up a booth at local events such as fairs, festivals and farmer’s markets and having friendly faces and Wild Ones literature on hand is another great way to recruit members.

Sharing press releases with local media outlets is another way to get the word out about a new Wild Ones seedling/chapter. Cultivating contacts with local media is particularly effective in rural, less densely populated communities. When composing a press release, be sure to:

- Follow proper formatting: address the release to the editor of the newspaper, magazine or other publication you are sending to.
- Write an attention-grabbing headline. [e.g.: *Cultivate a Connection to Nature with Wild Ones SEEDLINGNAME; Wild Ones SEEDLINGNAME Shares Tips on Growing Milkweed*]
- Include all the information an editor will want to have before he or she puts an article into the newspaper; be sure to include contact information for the acting president and seedling/chapter.

Samples of Wild Ones press releases are available for seedling/chapter officers to view/download on the Wild Ones Member Account page.

#### 5. Can an individual join Wild Ones without joining a local chapter?

Anyone can join Wild Ones without designating a local chapter; those members are considered “Partners at Large” (PALs).

**6. To become a "chartered chapter," what are the requirements a seedling must meet?**

To charter, a seedling must meet the following requirements:

- Ten or more active/paid Wild Ones members.
- Designation of the five major chapter officers: a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and a Membership Chair. Chapter officers must be one the 10 or more members on the chapter roster. There is no term limit for any office, and a member may hold more than one office; it is strongly recommended that the President and Membership Chair hold only one office due to the time commitment these two offices require. Seedling members volunteer to fill the chapter officer roles; official nominations and chapter elections (in-person, online or via e-ballot) should be held annually (ideally in November) upon achieving charter status. Email is the primary mode of communication between Wild Ones and chapters; reliable access to email should be considered when recruiting chapter officers.
- A 12-month calendar of planned events (one event per month is recommended); four of the events must be confirmed in order to be chartered.

**7. What is the Wild Ones membership structure and dues? What percentage of membership dues goes to a chapter? When does a seedling become eligible for dues reimbursement?**

There are 5 different types of memberships: Limited Income/Student, Household, Affiliate, Business and Lifetime. Each type, except for Limited Income/Student, also has 3 different levels: Wild, Wilder and Wildest. See below for the dues associated with the different types and levels.

Membership Levels	WILD	WILDER	WILDEST
Limited Income/Student	\$25	--	--
Household	\$40	\$60	\$100
Affiliate (NFP/Educators)	\$90	\$120	\$150
Business	\$250	\$600	\$1,200
Lifetime	\$1,500 (1x payment or 3 installments)		

Dues are 100% tax-deductible and are used to help fund mission-focused programs like Butterfly Gardens across the country and Seeds for Education grants that engage youth in caring for native gardens.

Business & Affiliate membership dues are higher because there are more benefits associated with these memberships, including business information being featured in the Wild Ones Journal which is published digitally on a quarterly basis and shared with 5,000+ members. Digital back issues of the Journal are available online and are free for the public to read and share.

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A percentage of dues (from 10-55%) is reimbursed to the chapters based on each member's dues level and a reimbursement percentage that represents the time that has passed since the chapter was chartered. The dues reimbursement percentage declines annually, on the charter anniversary date.

While seedling chapters are organizing, all dues reimbursements will be held in reserve by the national office until the chapter charters. Once chartered, the accumulated dues reimbursements will be deposited into the chapter's business account at the bank of record, and a Dues Reimbursement Report will be emailed to the chapter treasurer. The chapter president and treasurer co-sign to open a business account for the chapter.

**8. What qualifies as a Wild Ones event? What is the required number of events per year? Who schedules these events? What types of events do chapters host? Where are events held?**

To generate an awareness of Wild Ones and recruit members to join, events should focus on outreach and education. Events should be free and open to the public. Some established chapters host a handful of member-only events as a member benefit. Many chapters hold 1-3 fundraising events per year (tours, spring/fall plant sales, book sales, symposia and conferences are examples of fundraising events).

Chapter meetings, programs, presentations, sales, swaps tours, digs, activities, hikes and tabling all qualify as planned events. Often chapters combine a meeting (where chapter business is discussed) with an educational program. Many established chapters schedule a separate series of officer/board meetings to conduct chapter business. A calendar of 12 planned events is required to charter (one event per month is recommended); 4 of the events must be confirmed to be chartered. The president or any of the chapter officers/board members can schedule events. Events may be held online or in person. Venues include meeting spaces at public libraries, schools, universities, community centers, nature centers, garden centers, grocery stores, public gardens, and private homes and gardens.

Chapters are encouraged to plan activity-oriented, hands-on learning events. Spring digs, fall seed collections, winter seed exchanges, early summer garden demo days and seasonal tours of public and private native plant gardens focus on the how to landscape with native plants. Online and in person programs and events should focus on why and how to naturalize residential, commercial and public outdoor spaces. Minutes of any meetings where chapter business is discussed (with the chapter membership or among board members) should be recorded and retained by the Chapter Secretary, preferably in an electronic file format.

**9. How do I schedule a seedling's first event?**

To get started, if there a nature/environmental center, native plant society or garden club in your area, ask for time at one of their meetings to speak about Wild Ones and generate interest in joining the seedling. Next, set a meeting date for anyone who expressed interest to gather to discuss the details. Ask invitees to bring other acquaintances. Make it a fun meeting. This meeting is an opportunity to do some initial networking and to identify a few dependable, enthusiastic people to assist with the start-up efforts. Be sure to collect names, contact information and consent to contact for each person who attends any meetings/events regardless of whether they volunteer to serve on the chapter's board. Always thank attendees for coming and share news and information about the seedling to encourage future participation. Most chapters maintain both a membership roster and non-member email lists.

**10. Wild Ones focuses on educating the public about the benefits of landscaping with native plants. How is this achieved? How have events changed during the pandemic?**

Chapter programs and events focus on the how and why to plant native plants. Many chapters are hosting online educational meetings/programs/webinars to members and the broader community. Wild Ones provides Zoom access and training to chapter officers and online hosts. Chapters are encouraged to follow CDC and state/local health and safety guidelines and mandates for all in person events.

**11. Does Wild Ones provide written material for handouts or online resources to seedlings/chapters to pass along to community members?**

Seedling/chapter officers have access to downloadable and printable resources and handouts to share with the public. Print copies of brochures and handouts (beyond what is provided in the Seedling Starter Kit) are available to purchase at cost (plus shipping) from the Wild Ones office in Neenah, Wisconsin. Chapters are encouraged to develop their own resources that pertain to their local ecosystems; chapters are invited to share resources on the Wild Ones website. Wild Ones is developing newsletter, slide and handout templates for seedling/chapter use.

**12. Do Wild Ones Chapters work in conjunction with cooperative extension offices? If so, how do the two overlap or coordinate events/activities?**

Wild Ones provides a community of support for people with varying degrees of experience who are passionate about landscaping with native plants.

Cooperative extension offices serve local communities as educational resources for expertise in horticulture, agriculture, nutrition and home economics. While interest in and support for native plants and native landscaping varies from region to region, by and large, Wild Ones views cooperative extension office staff as allies and valuable resources. Professional experts from extension offices are often called upon (usually free of charge) to present to Wild Ones members on topics such as invasive species, insect identification, shoreline restoration, sustainable landscape practices, etc.

**13. What other support does Wild Ones provide to seedlings/chapters?**

Upon chartering, the chapter will receive logo files and other marketing and messaging information from Wild Ones. A chapter website will be created, and initial training provided by Wild Ones technical support staff. Chapters populate and maintain their own website, event calendars, social media channels and mailing lists. Many established chapters draft and distribute chapter newsletters/e-newsletters. The Chapter Liaison is the primary point of contact at Wild Ones for support with chapter growth, fundraising, resource and content development and event planning. Wild Ones is currently working on creating a platform for chapter officers to connect with each other regularly to share ideas and seek advice and assistance from other chapters.