

A voice for the  
natural landscaping  
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Working toward  
the next four decades of  
growing native plants and  
restoring natural landscapes.

# Wild Ones®

NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

Nov. | Dec. 2016



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COVER PHOTO:

Annie Martin [www.mountainmoss.com](http://www.mountainmoss.com)  
Mosses can grow in all U.S. planting zones  
because they tolerate sub-freezing  
temperatures. *Rhodobryum ontariense*  
with *Thuidium delicatulum* thrives in  
the snow in Brevard, North Carolina.

## JOURNAL

6

Moss Magic

10

Moss-some Landscaping

13

Monarchs Unite

19

Golden Opportunity

20

'Weeds' Ban

2 Notes from the President 3 Executive Director Notes 5 We Want You 15 Plant a Seed 16 Member Garden

18 News 21 Book Review 22 Center Update 23 Welcome New Members 24 Chapter Info / Calendar





Promoting environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities.

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## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT



Janice Hand  
President

### New to being your president, but not new to our mission

I'm new to being your national president, new to writing this column, and new to leading 4,000 members of one of the environmental movement's least-known and best organizations. But I'm not new to the importance of planting and promoting native plants.

My initial reason for joining Wild Ones is the same one that drives me now — the deep personal satisfaction that comes from knowing that my simple individual act of incorporating native plants into my landscape makes a difference.

In 2013, I moved home to Bozeman, Montana — I'm fourth generation Montanan after all — after residing in Illinois for more than 30 years. I first joined Wild Ones in 2004 in the Lake-to-Prairie chapter in northwestern Illinois. By 2008, that chapter had faded and national board member Steve Windsor set up a local meeting to reinvigorate the chapter. Sitting around my dining room table, four of us split the leadership responsibilities and chapter development work that resulted in a now-thriving chapter. (Ask me sometime about the program held in the dark at a deserted nature center...)

I'm not afraid of a challenge and here's a relevant illustration. One of Montana's favorite native flowers is arrowleaf balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*). Encouraged by the drift gracing a hillside only 1/4 mile away from my home, I tried the nurseries. No luck. I found that arrowleaf balsamroot is almost never found for sale since young plants are totally unimpressive, have an easily broken taproot, and take up to five years to flower. (After seeding, a plant will put up one leaf in year 1, one or maybe two leaves in

year 2 and only at about year 5 will it actually bloom.) Well, I really want that plant so I now have seeds and after discussions with the native plant research professor at a nearby university, I'm going to try three ways to grow it. Stand by for pictures in about 5 years ...

Why did I decide to take on the presidency of Wild Ones? There are two main reasons:

1. Every piece of me believes in our mission and in what we can collectively accomplish.
2. It's a way to pay back a debt to Wild Ones for all I've learned and the people I've met.

I plan to follow in the grand example set by Immediate Past President Tim Lewis. I will especially follow his leadership on easing "us vs. them" thinking between chapters and the national office. Part of that is to focus on transparency.

The first step toward transparency was the three chapter president financial and organizational briefings held Sept. 14 and 20, followed immediately by a survey to gather chapter input. Because some themes kept coming up again and again, the next step toward transparency was an email sent to chapter presidents in mid-October ("Staying on Mission") clarifying some often-misunderstood Wild Ones facts.

While we work toward joint understanding and a financial solution, I have a request: Let's all take a deep breath, be kind to each other, and keep our focus and energy directed toward our Wild Ones mission. Not too long from now, we'll be on a far, far better path. I promise.

*Janice*



Please see page 5.

Established in 1977, Wild Ones is a national not-for-profit organization of members who teach the benefits of growing native plants and work together to grow and restore natural landscapes.



Wild Ones' definition of a native plant:  
A native plant is a species that occurs naturally in a particular region, ecosystem and/or habitat and was present prior to European settlement.



Gail Gerhardt  
Executive Director

## We are all in this together

For those of you who haven't heard, I have decided to resign as the national executive director of Wild Ones and return to my previous employer. I have enjoyed the past year with Wild Ones and will take with me many new friends, a new understanding of native plants that I can pass on to others, and a deep appreciation for volunteers and volunteer-based organizations. You are all truly amazing and I appreciate the effort and hours you give to promote Wild Ones.

While Wild Ones has some challenges ahead, I believe my departure, as well as other staffing changes, will give us the chance to review our practices and carefully study our current structure. This is the ideal opportunity to restructure and redefine staff duties and positions to create a more efficient, smooth-running, member-friendly environment, while cutting costs. Yes, we are faced with a challenge, but in every challenge there is opportunity.

In September, President Janice Hand and I held three sessions on the state of Wild Ones' finances. We believe they were very well received and opened a line of communication that was previously missing. Janice and I agree that Wild Ones must continue this open dialogue and transparency.

As we make changes to ensure Wild Ones' survival for decades to come, I want to stress that **we are all in this together**. It is not a matter of us vs.

them, national vs. chapters, or staff vs. volunteers – **we are all Wild Ones**. Please know that we have procedures and policies in place and a good foundation; now we just need to work together to restructure, reorganize and figure out how we can work more efficiently, be more user friendly and make the organization financially sound into the future.

Now is the time to fix our financial problems once and for all. After all, becoming financially sound means we can do more, reach more people in additional demographic areas, serve more communities, get better connected on a national level, and continue our mission.

Wild Ones' staff has, and will continue to do much to provide our members with the service they require. Staff is responsible for tending to daily operations and serving more than 4,000 members, 50 chapters, the Board of Directors, multiple committees and the general public. In addition, we maintain Wild Ones' electronic presence (website, Facebook and Twitter), our financial records and reporting, programs and databases.

Please, bear with us as we go through a much-needed transition. Wild Ones will indeed become a stronger, better, and even more reputable organization. **WE** are Wild Ones and **together** we can accomplish great things! ❁

## FOREVER WILD

### LIFETIME MEMBERS

Esther Hope, Twin Cities  
Lisabeth Stanley, Twin Cities

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Please review your contact information for staff and update your records if needed.

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**Email:** info@wildones.org

### Wild Ones cancels P.O. box

Wild Ones has canceled its post office box and will now only be using its street address.

Please make sure to update the address in your address book or publications and handouts.

The correct address is:  
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**W**ild Ones needs your skill and enthusiasm to participate in national committees.

To better reflect member viewpoints and to promote transparency, Wild Ones board committees need *member* participation. This is a chance to move the organization forward and make a difference to Wild Ones. Volunteers are needed for:

- Finance Committee
- Communications Committee
- Governance Committee
- WILD ONES JOURNAL Advisory Council

Volunteer applicants will be assigned based on their relevant skills and ability to work cooperatively via online/telephone meetings.

### Join the Finance Committee...

This committee focuses on the financial wellbeing of Wild Ones. It is chaired by the national board treasurer. Some specific duties – help prepare the annual budget, oversee performance of Wild Ones finances and investments, and recommend methods for funding mission objectives.

We need active, committed members who will contribute to and ensure the financial success of Wild Ones.

Do you have skills and experience in:

- financial reporting, controls, auditing or budgeting?
- treasurer, CFO, or investment management?
- accounting, bookkeeping, payroll, or QuickBooks?
- grant writing, donor management, or fundraising?

If yes, please email chair Rick Sanders at [Treasurer@wildones.org](mailto:Treasurer@wildones.org).

### Join the Communications Committee...

This committee focuses on all forms of communication with members, chapters and the public at large. It assists the national board in setting direction for programs and services offered to members. Some specific duties – assist the board in evaluating programs and services; may evaluate Wild Ones marketing and promotion with chapters, like-minded organizations and the public; and may evaluate Wild Ones communication via THE JOURNAL, website, Facebook, pamphlets, merchandise design, and use of the Wild Ones logo.



This committee is considering three immediate tasks for 2017 – advising the board by:

- Studying/recommending a replacement for the Wild Ones calendar (suspended for 2017 due to cost);
- Developing a program to bring back former members; and
- Determining the effectiveness of the website in helping members and the public

Would you like to assist in improving communication between chapters and sharing resources? Do you have background:

- as an author, writer or in a role that required writing for action?
- in marketing, customer service, or evaluation?
- in website, graphic design or photography?
- in developing conservation programs or learning initiatives?

If yes, please email co-chairwoman Denise Gehring at [dhgehring@gmail.com](mailto:dhgehring@gmail.com).

### Join the Governance Committee...

This committee ensures the smooth functioning of the operations of the Board of Directors. It updates board governance policies and procedures; facilitates board education and self-assessment; periodically reviews and updates the bylaws; updates the New Board Member Handbook; sees to board member recruitment and nominations; and may plan the annual meeting.

Do you have skills and experience in these areas? If yes, please email governance chairwoman Karen Syverson at [karensyverson@gmail.com](mailto:karensyverson@gmail.com).

### WILD ONES JOURNAL Advisory Council

This is an ad hoc committee that will provide guidance to the paid editor of the WILD ONES JOURNAL. Its primary function is to review submitted articles for content and accuracy, determining an appropriate approach to controversial topics (with input from Wild Ones assigned staff, the national president, and perhaps the national board if needed), and to help the editor with long-term planning for THE JOURNAL.

Do you have skills as:

- an editor (journal, newsletter, or similar periodic publication)?
- a writer or manuscript reviewer?
- deep knowledge of native plant facts?
- contacts among nature writers and authors?



**Can you help with any of these skills?**

If yes, please email WILD ONES JOURNAL editor, Barbara Schmitz at [write2us@sbcglobal.net](mailto:write2us@sbcglobal.net).



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Moss lawns offer year-round green beauty, as well as environmental advantages. This moss garden is located near Asheville, North Carolina.

Inset: Annie Martin, known as Mossin' Annie, specializes in creating moss landscapes that add magic to your garden.

# Bringing MOSS Magic

As you enter the magical world of mosses, the emphasis is truly on green. The green allure of these tiny plants begins with an expansive range of verdant shades that create amazing visual appeal – ultimately touching our spirits with a sense of serenity. Yet, the green benefits of bryophytes (mosses and their "cousins" — liverworts and hornworts) include eliminating groundwater contamination, solving erosion issues, managing storm water run-off and even reducing air pollution.

Mosses may be mini in size but these eco-friendly plants offer MAXI options for greening today's landscapes while being kind to our environment. Dating back 450 million years, bryophytes are considered the first land plants; it took another 50 million years before other plants such as ferns started to grow on our planet. These miniature pioneer plants are not only stunningly gorgeous, but they also provide options for stabilizing steep hillsides (i.e., *Polytrichum*) and minimizing the effects of rushing storm water (i.e., *Climacium* and *Thuidium*). Beyond the aesthetic appeal and environmental advantages, moss gardens offer serene retreats to soothe the human spirit.

Just the mention of the word "moss" conjures up images of green ... and smiles on the faces of moss lovers. A major green benefit is that they offer beauty in your garden throughout the entire year. In winter, when the impact of flowers has faded and gardeners resign themselves to accepting dormant stages and brown mulch/pine needle dressings, emerald mosses reign supreme. As different mosses go through seasonal or reproductive transitions, the nuances of green in the landscape can range from dark, deep green to neon-chartreuse to shades of greens with golden overtones. To add even more delight to dull winter landscapes, moss sporophytes (the reproductive equivalent of flowers) display intense hues of glimmering jewel tones — crimson, gold and bronze. You'll be able to enjoy sporophytes in every season since mosses don't follow typical growth patterns of other plants. The magic and intrigue with mosses is extraordinary when glistening raindrops encompass the spore capsules emphasizing hombra hues of brilliant colors.

Moss lawns provide an option to the American obsession with grass and provide huge benefits to our environment. No chemicals are needed with moss lawns, in contrast with the

array of environmentally destructive methods used by landscapers to keep grass lawns beautiful. Since mosses are small in stature and grow relatively slowly, they don't need mowing. Air pollution from mowers and weed wackers, which have minimal emission control devices, is eliminated. Successful moss lawns often include *Climacium*, *Dicranum*, *Eurhynchium*, *Hypnum*, *Thuidium* and many more species. When supplemental watering is provided or irrigation systems are incorporated, mosses will exhibit faster and more consistent growth patterns.

As green roofs gain acceptance as a way of greening urban spaces, reducing storm water run-off and lowering the heat index of buildings, mosses are native plants that are desirable plant choices. Think about it. Mosses already grow on roofs. From an engineering perspective, elaborate structural modifications and layers are unnecessary since mosses don't weigh much and few species require any soil depth.

Mosses add a sense of antiquity and permanence even to new construction of hardscapes. Placing mosses between pavers or stones used for patios or walkways raises the bar in appeal and





# into your garden

Story and all photos  
by Annie Martin

[www.mountainmoss.com](http://www.mountainmoss.com)

provides an instantaneous illusion of longevity. Permeable driveways and parking lots with mosses are both functional and attractive. Moss colonies strategically inserted into crevices of walls provide unexpected green touches. Suggested bryophyte types include *Atrichum*, *Ceratodon*, *Entodon* and *Hedwigia*.

Moss features can add interest to traditional gardens or innovative sustainable landscapes. Of course, mosses seem to be a natural choice when creating water features such as rain gardens, bogs or waterfalls. While a site assessment is beneficial to determine best mosses, recommendations include *Mnium*, *Plagiomnium*, *Sphagnum* and *Thuidium*. Amazingly, bryophytes are often left out of the recommended plant inventory or generalized as "moss" rather than specific species appropriate for the site resulting in haphazard results. Public perception is permeated by misunderstandings based upon myths, coupled with a lack of knowledge of growth habits.

Moss is not just moss. In fact, it's more appropriate to say mosses plural! Expanses of green mosses and huge hummocks of moss mounds are composed of thousands of individual moss plants that grow together in colonies. Many species of mosses offer

a myriad of textures and a variety of shapes. In the mountains of western North Carolina where I live, there are more than 450 types of bryophytes with over 20,000 species worldwide including mosses, liverworts and hornworts. While many mosses can grow in places where other plants struggle, for instance nutrient-poor soil, the diversity of mosses indicates a variety of microclimate, soil and moisture conditions. Certain mosses grow sideways in intertwined mats (pleurocarps) while others grow in an upright manner (acrocarps) growing down into the soil — even dense clay or gravel substrates.

Most people are unaware of the vast number and species of bryophytes, as well as their unique botanical characteristics or how to achieve desired success with moss gardening applications. It's not surprising they have been overlooked as viable plant choices that offer environmental advantages. Yet, mosses are relatively easy to grow. If you use the right moss for the right place, you can join the ranks of other successful moss gardeners. To move beyond a passive "just let it grow in" attitude, it's important to assess your basic knowledge and the truth factor of the most commonly accepted moss myths.

*continued on next page*

## MOSS fact or fiction?

### 1 Mosses grow in the shade.

It is true that many mosses do grow in shady or partial shade/sun areas under the cooling canopy of trees or in shadows of tall buildings, but not necessarily. That's right. Some moss species grow in direct sun exposure. Take a look around urban areas and you'll find thriving touches of velvety green in the cracks of concrete sidewalks or on rooftops subjected to an extremely high heat index and scorching temperatures.

### 2 Mosses grow in northern exposures.

This belief is partially true, but don't count on mosses as a compass to find your way out of the woods based upon this assumption. Mosses grow on the north side because it retains more moisture. However, if humidity levels are high and rainfall is frequent, mosses will grow facing south, east and west as well. An observed advantage of the north side may be prevailing winds that blow leaves and litter away, allowing mosses to receive needed sunlight for photosynthesis.

### 3 Mosses like moist conditions.

Indeed, this accepted fact about mosses is true. Mosses thrive in niches that retain moisture and in regions with more rain. Heat and drought conditions can cause mosses to stress or go dormant and they might temporarily lose some of their visual appeal. Some mosses dramatically change in appearance from wet to dry while others shrivel up a bit or just look dry. Upon rehydration, some bryophyte species (i.e., *Hedwigia* and *Rhodobryum*) will magically transform in seconds or minutes right before your eyes.

With these misconceptions explained, let's explore what makes bryophytes so special in the Plant Kingdom. Their unique botanical characteristics reveal implications for gardening methods and landscape applications. Unlike other plants, mosses have no vascular tissues (xylem and phloem that transport water and nutrients). And mosses are different in other ways, too. Being aware of the distinctions between mosses and other plants is valuable to aspiring moss gardeners in terms of planting and maintenance.



Moss colonies can include several species growing in harmony together. Variations in texture, shape and shades of green/gold add dimension to moss-scapes. Sporophytes add extra color delights. Some moss species grow sideways (pleurocarps) and others grow upright (acrocarps).



*Dicranum scoparium* and *Thuidium delicatulum*



*Climacium americanum*



*Atrichum angustatum* with sporophytes



*Thuidium delicatulum* with sporophytes



*Polytrichum commune* and *Thuidium delicatulum*

## Bryophyte botany

Mosses have no roots, only fibrous rhizoids that help them attach to surfaces. These rhizoids don't provide nourishment to the moss plants. Instead, mosses feed and drink through their leaves. While most colonies can be dislodged by hand, amazingly these tiny rhizoids hold tight to substrates in high winds and major thunderstorms and don't blow or wash away.

**Lesson:** Mosses don't need fertilizers. Mosses can attach to all types of substrates from soil to concrete to asphalt shingles.

Mosses have no flowers and no seeds for plant reproduction. Instead, they reproduce through a two-stage cycle that includes sporophytes, or thin stems called setae that resemble pine needles topped with capsules that hold spores. Sporophytic color and capsule shape are distinctive characteristics essential in species identification.

**Lesson:** Sporophytes add colorful dimension to moss landscapes. No true moss will ever have flowers, seeds or roots so don't fall prey to buying vascular plants with "moss" in their name at your local garden center (i.e., Irish moss or Scotch moss). As for spore dispersal, you can cross your fingers and hope they blow in or some bird/critter deposits the spores in your yard.

New moss plants can also grow via vegetative reproduction. Mosses can grow asexually from plant fragments and gemmae.

**Lesson:** That is a major benefit for moss gardeners in terms of introducing new species or encouraging expansive growth in moss landscapes. Distribution of moss fragments is an effective method for planting mosses.

Mosses have no cuticle, or the waxy substance that covers leaves of vascular plants. This feature allows moss leaves to absorb water and micro-levels of nutrients from dust particles. Additionally, most mosses have leaves that are only one-cell layer thick, increasing the absorption rate.

**Lesson:** Mosses hydrate quickly and therefore, brief watering sessions are beneficial while long drenching soaks are totally unnecessary. One cell layer leaves are translucent and transmit light flow differently than vascular plants with dense leaves. This "see through" aspect adds another dimension of magic, especially at night under the light of a full moon. Providing supplemental fertilizers is not necessary, thereby eliminating the negative impact of chemicals in the groundwater table.

Mosses have internal phenolic compounds that enable them to be resistant to typical garden insect pests.

An additional benefit is that mosses are deer-resistant.

**Lesson:** No chemical or organic pesticides are needed to ward off unwanted or destructive insects. Therefore, there is no chemical run-off to contaminate the groundwater table. Since mosses don't taste good, you don't have to worry about deer and their voracious appetites.

Mosses are naturally resistant to diseases.

**Lesson:** No herbicides are necessary.

Mosses have their own built-in "anti-freeze" and they are immune to the damaging impact of cold temperatures. Mosses not only survive sub-freezing temperatures, but they actually exhibit new green growth.

**Lesson:** Mosses are hardy in all U.S. planting zones. Mosses can actually grow and reproduce during cold winter months.

Are you convinced yet that year-round green mosses are the right horticultural choice for you? Are you eager to get started with your own moss journey? Check out Mossin' Annie's recommendations for planting and maintaining happy moss campers on page 10. 🌱

**ANNIE MARTIN**, owner of Mountain Moss Enterprises, of Pisgah Forest, North Carolina, and author of *"The Magical World of Moss Gardening,"* (Timber Press, 2015), advocates the joys and environmental benefits of gardening with eco-friendly mosses. Known as Mossin' Annie, she cultivates shade and sun moss species at her Mossery in the mountains of western North Carolina. Live mosses are available in trays, living walls and pre-vegetated moss mats that roll out like a green carpet. With the passion of an environmentally responsible mosser and practical experience as a moss farmer, Martin provides educational lectures and workshops around the country. "Born to be a moss artist," she is a licensed landscape contractor specializing in moss-scapes — intimate moss gardens to expansive native restoration projects. Join her Facebook group — *Go Green With Moss* — a gathering of moss lovers from around the world. Follow Mossin' Annie on *Twitter*, *Instagram*, *LinkedIn* and *YouTube*. To order live mosses, visit [www.mountainmoss.com](http://www.mountainmoss.com). Autographed copies of her book are available from her website as well. To engage Martin's services as a garden lecturer, moss consultant or landscape designer, contact her directly at [mossinannie@gmail.com](mailto:mossinannie@gmail.com).





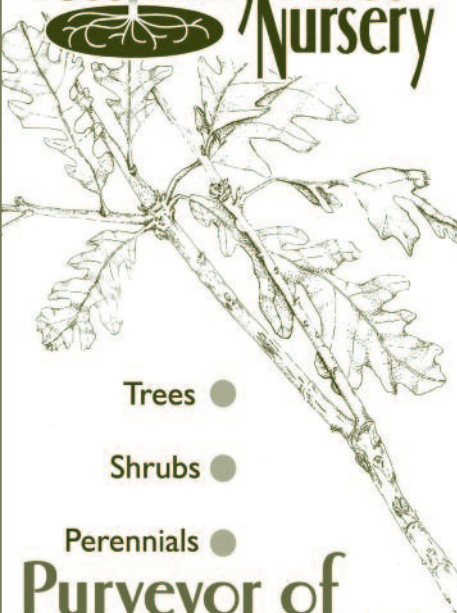
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**D**o you want to avoid winter gardening doldrums? Are you wishing that your garden would provide year-round green delights? Are you tired of mowing grass over and over again? Do you have a spot where nothing seems to grow?

Featuring native mosses could be the answer to your landscaping dilemma. Mosses are relatively easy to plant, but keep in mind that they are not drought-tolerant or maintenance-free. Attention to essential needs, particularly watering, walking and weeding, is valuable if you want to join the ranks of successful moss gardeners.

### Letting mosses grow in versus planting on purpose...

You may be lucky enough to have mosses growing on your property, indicating your microclimate conditions are desirable. To encourage growth, keep areas free of leaf litter and debris and remove weeds/grass by hand. Using this passive approach, mosses will continue to grow at their own pace. Supplemental watering will only help them grow better and faster.

However, if you don't have the patience to wait for Mother Nature to provide a moss invasion naturally, you could take a more assertive stance and intentionally plant mosses. But before you begin, assess the microclimate of your intended

location. Most importantly, determine the sun exposure, moisture niches and areas of concern regarding erosion or soggy spots. Consider the shade factor for the whole year, not just the summer when leaves of deciduous trees provide

# Moving forward with moss-some landscaping

canopy. A site consultation by a moss landscape specialist who can provide a valuable assessment of conditions and recommendations regarding the most appropriate mosses for your intended sites is a good first step. Afterward, you can determine if you want to proceed on your own with a DIY project or engage the services of a professional moss landscaper for a turnkey installation.

If you decide to strike out on your own, you'll need to acquire moss. Harvesting or rescuing mosses is a topic that warrants serious consideration of your own commitment to responsible land stewardship. If you want to gather them yourself, please do not remove mosses from our national/state/local forests and parks. These public areas are designated as protected lands so that future generations can enjoy them. Also, beware that questionable practices exist in the moss industry. Regretfully, buying from a seemingly "reputable" nursery or online moss supplier is not a guarantee that mosses have been obtained through ethical and environmentally responsible means. If you purchase mosses that are packaged dry, be aware that as a consumer, you could very well play a role in driving illegal harvesting practices. The better alternative is to buy live, fresh mosses cultivated in a mossery.

### Planting methods

To prepare the target garden area, clear all leaf litter, twigs, acorns, wood chips (especially mulch) and small stones down to the bare soil. Kill or remove weeds and grass. In other words, clean up your garden canvas before you begin planting.

Assess pH by doing a soil test. Although some moss species prefer calcareous soil, even limestone, many mosses prefer acidic conditions with a pH of 5.5. If you need to adjust the pH, add aluminum sulfate or sulfur. Utilize the Internet to locate a chart of appropriate ratios for soil modification. There is no need to add fertilizer or good topsoil.

For most species, soil should be hard-packed rather than soft. Walk on the ground before planting. Undulations, dimples or slight indentions will be advantageous as places where

The moss green roof at The North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville, created by Mossin' Annie, exemplifies how certain species tolerate direct sun exposures including *Ceratodon purpureus* and *Polytrichum commune*.





moisture can accumulate. My exception to this rule is planting *Climacium*, my favorite moss species that has upright plants and linear rhizoids. Loose, rich soil is best.

If you are planting in an area where grass and weeds have been prevalent, then you may want to use a weed barrier. Black landscape cloth works well. It's not really necessary to add soil on top since rhizoids will attach to the fabric. In terms of design, add hardscape elements such as boulders, paths, stone patios or walls before you begin.

Following a conceptual plan, plant appropriate mosses to emphasize the differences in height, shape and shades of green. For a contiguous planting where you desire 100 percent coverage from the beginning, inter-leaf the edges of mosses that grow sideways and nestle upright mounds next to each other. Close planting helps moss colonies retain moisture. The immediate gratification and green WOW factor of this solid planting method is truly moss-some!

If you are an ambitious moss gardener, but have limited funds and large areas to cover, you might consider using the "cookie sheet" planting method with hand-sized sections supplemented by the distribution of moss fragments in the blank spaces. Or you can just use fragments spread over the entire area. Moss colonies can be cut with scissors or pulled apart by hand. The heavier the coverage of plant fragments, the faster you will see significant growth. Be prepared, however, that based upon your microclimate, it could take from 6 months to a couple of years to achieve desired results.



### The 3 W's of moss gardening success

After planting, WATER and WALK on your mosses. This procedure helps rhizoids establish a connection to the ground. Continue this recommended procedure for at least the first month after planting. During this initial stage, thoroughly saturate the soil before you walk.

Even in places with extremely high annual rainfall, it is advisable to provide supplemental watering, especially if there are extended periods of dry, low-humidity days or drought. Also factor in the impact of high winds in drying out the mosses. I live in a county in the North Carolina mountains that receives the highest annual rainfall east of the Rocky Mountains. Normally, anywhere from 75-105 inches of rain occurs each year. However, this year we had an early spring with hot temperatures and we experienced weeks of no rain interspersed with only occasional thunderstorms. With the attitude of a protective mother, I want my beloved mosses to be lush and healthy all the time and I've learned that I can't count on Mother Nature. Believe you me, I provide supplemental watering on a regular basis.

Because mosses hydrate quickly — remember no cuticle and one-cell layer leaves — watering sessions should be brief, usually between 2-4 minutes, and should occur several times in the day with morning being the least important time in contrast with morning soaks provided to vascular plants. Timing between sessions and length of watering/misting should be determined by touching the mosses to assess if they are still wet or have dried out. Most likely, automated watering should occur three times during a normal hot summer day — for example, at 10:30 a.m., 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Drenching soaks are unnecessary, but misting or watering is beneficial in keeping mosses thriving and looking good. Using an overhead oscillating sprinkler on a battery-operated controller/timer will relieve you from daily watering duties.

*continued on next page*

**Inset:** Creative designs featuring a variety of moss species emphasize distinctions in texture adding dimension and interest in moss gardens. This moss spiral is in Pisgah Forest, North Carolina.

Formerly a privet thicket, this serene moss retreat in Madison, Georgia now offers a place to relax with boulder and log sitting areas.





## Moss maintenance

The third “W” of moss gardening is WEEDING — an inevitable chore. There are many tiny weeds and grasses that can sneak into mosses. Staying on top of weeding duties will help mosses grow without competition. Using two bare hands (no gloves or tools), gently wriggle the weed out of the mosses, using one hand to hold moss colonies in place while removing weeds with the other hand. It’s a good idea to get

in the habit of removing any moss fragments from roots of weeds and to use those for “starters” in new areas or to repair damaged spots that need to be filled back in.

Keep mosses free of leaf litter and debris. Like other plants, mosses need sunlight for photosynthesis. While the leaf removal is usually considered an autumn activity, keep your mosses clear during other seasons as well. Once mosses are well established, you can use a power blower. Blow leaves while wet and use rapid, jerky motions rather than a steady, hard blowing technique. Do not rake mosses unless you have a super gentle touch.

**Inset:** Mossin’ Annie’s path to enlightenment is a mossy one.

Lush green mosses (*Hylacomium brevistore*, *Climacium americanum* and *Atrichum undulatum*) encompass the stone path leading up a hillside in her personal moss garden.

In creating moss designs, plan for variations in shades of green and colorful sporophytic displays as in this moss rainbow in Madison, Georgia.

While it is unnecessary to remove debris daily, mosses will deteriorate or die when sunlight cannot reach them over time.

It is possible that you’ll experience dislodged colonies as a result of critter damage. Birds eagerly hunt for worms and sometimes they steal moss fragments to line their nests. Squirrels can play havoc scurrying around and burying or retrieving their winter stash of food sources. Nighttime visitors such as raccoons might leave moss colonies strewn about your moss garden. And to your horror, you might witness your own dog running in a frenzy and tearing up your moss feature. Don’t fret over upturned mosses; simply put them back in place. And ... water and walk on them again.

Covering your mosses with wildlife netting is one way to prevent critter damage. Using netting on a seasonal basis is also an easy way to deal with leaves or other annoying debris such as male catkins and seedpods. By carefully lifting off the netting, you can clean your mosses up in one swoop. Netting should be stretched taut over the moss area. Hold in place with rocks in the corners or secure tightly with landscape staples.

Following these basic guidelines, you should be ready now to begin your own moss journey and to embrace the magic of eco-friendly mosses in your garden. In addition to the aesthetic and environmental benefits of these ancient plants, mosses offer intangible connections to nature. Featuring magnificent mosses in your landscape will be good for your soul and for our planet. 🌿



## Moss fakers: Plants called ‘mosses’ that aren’t true bryophytes.

Don’t be fooled by plants that have “moss” in their common name. There are a number of “moss fakers” adding to the confusion and misconceptions about mosses.

**Irish moss** and **Scotch moss** (*Sagina subulata*) sold by garden centers are not real bryophytes/mosses. Hint: They have roots and flowers; no true moss will ever have either of these characteristics.

**Club mosses** are actually lycopods (*Lycopodiopsida*), and like real mosses, reproduce with sporangia.

**Reindeer moss** (*Cladonia rangiferina*) is a gray/pale green/white fructicose lichen.

**Spanish moss** (*Tillandsia usneoides*) is not a moss or lichen but actually a vascular flowering plant in the Bromeliaceae family. It grows as an epiphyte on live oaks and other trees in the southern U.S.

## A side note from the other side of the moss fence

The joke is on the moss hate-mongers trying to eliminate it from grass lawns. The more you mow, the more moss fragments will spread to new areas.

Adding lime may stress mosses, but many species can withstand this change in pH and rebound. Chemical weed killers that are systemic should have no long-term negative effect on non-vascular mosses.





# Monarchs — A uniter of souls

Story and photos by Candy Sarikonda

**M**onarchs are a flagship species, a butterfly that is recognized and enjoyed by many people.

Conservationists promote monarchs and their habitat, knowing that people's love of monarchs will help spur the preservation of habitat for bees, birds and other wildlife. But the gift of the monarch goes way beyond just being a flagship species. Monarchs unify souls.

I have witnessed many times how the joy of interacting with monarchs can help build bridges across languages and cultures. I enjoy Tai chi and take classes at a local community garden. I have repeatedly left Wild Ones' monarch brochures in their public displays. I arrived one day to find my teacher, Mr. Don, holding the brochure. A native of China, Mr. Don asked me about the monarchs while another student attempted to translate his words for me. I was surprised by his interest; he was really engaged and anxious to learn about them. He pointed to the caterpillar photo. I told him the English word for caterpillar, while he taught me the Cantonese word. He then pointed to the monarch butterfly, and we exchanged words for "butterfly." We laughed and enjoyed this time of sharing, and the entire class joined our discussion. I explained

that monarchs were in trouble and needed milkweed. Puzzled, Mr. Don looked at me. I pointed to the plant, and told him "milkweed." He asked me for plants. The next week, I brought him five swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) plants for his garden. He was delighted.

My mother-in-law is from India. She speaks little English, and I speak even less Telugu. But we try our best to converse without my

**Yeshoda Sarikonda releases a monarch in late September.**

husband present to translate. One time, as I cleaned monarch enclosures, she came over to ask me about them. Why was I working so hard to care for them? I told her I am helping nature; I want to make this world a better place. She nodded, still unsure. I encouraged her to hold a butterfly. At first she declined since she is quite fearful of insects. I reassured her that the monarch would not hurt her, and she held out her hand. I placed the butterfly on her hand, and she smiled delightedly. Her face just beamed, and she could not suppress her smile and joy. She asked for a picture, and I took one. We had fun circulating the photo to other family members in India. It is my favorite photo of her.

On a broader note, it is well recognized that the monarch butterfly is an international traveler during its annual migration. The lifecycle of the eastern monarch takes this butterfly across the borders of Mexico, the United States and Canada. Monarch advocates in each country are working together to preserve this beautiful butterfly and its habitat. As scientists and visitors from the U.S. and other countries visit the overwintering sanctuaries, the people of Mexico have the opportunity to share their culture. Visitors learn about the importance of Day of the Dead and the indigenous culture's special love of monarchs. This holiday is a time of remembrance, a time when families decorate their homes and pay homage to deceased family members. Each year, monarchs first arrive to the overwintering sanctuaries around the time of this holiday, signaling the arrival of ancestral souls to their hometowns. Since pre-Hispanic times, the people of Michoacán have believed that the monarchs are the spirits of their ancestors, and families anxiously await the arrival of monarchs around Nov. 1 each year. Dr. Isabel Ramirez describes the monarchs' magic, explaining: "They provide a feeling of tranquility, peace and wonder... I think they are small pieces of sunlight." Truly, the monarchs are beings of light.



**In Mexico, residents celebrate the return of monarchs to their overwintering sanctuaries, signaling the arrival of ancestral souls to their hometowns.**

Many of us who work with monarchs can share similar stories of sharing and transformation. Monarchs are a gift. Each one of us has the ability to save this spectacular insect. By working together, sharing together and planting together, we can make sure the monarch butterfly will continue to enthrall people of different cultures for many years to come. 🌸

**CANDY SARIKONDA** is a Monarch Watch conservation specialist and serves on the national "Wild for Monarchs" committee. A member of the Oak Openings, Ohio chapter of Wild Ones, she enjoys monarch research, habitat restoration, writing and photography, and hopes to use those interests to leave this world a better, healthier place for generations to come. For more information, go to <http://monarchwatch.org/cs/>.



**A male monarch nectars on common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*).**



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By Kris Hall

At our autumn neighborhood picnic, Colleen Kacinski's daughters released a monarch butterfly I had raised, giggling and applauding as the monarch landed in their mom's hair. To capitalize on their interest, I sent them a native plant catalog, a flier on planting a butterfly garden, and a handout on the lifecycle of monarchs.

In the spring, Colleen and her Girl Scout co-leader Samantha Boardstarr contacted me to help them with a "Journey" project, an extended lesson with activities, for their Daisy Scouts, who are part of Troop 1531 of the Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois. The leaders used books, planting guides, and websites like [Monarch Watch](#) and [Journey North](#) to plan the activities. The "Journey" they planned included reading "[A Butterfly is Born](#)"; coloring a handout on the lifecycle of a butterfly; purchasing an *Echinacea* sp. and an *Asclepias* sp. for each girl from the native plant sale of the McHenry County [Wildflower Preservation & Propagation Committee](#); planting these species in their home gardens; taking pictures of their plants and keeping a butterfly journal; and taking a "field trip" to my yard. For the "field trip," I made a scavenger hunt where the girls looked for insects, bees, butterflies and different types of flower petal patterns. I also showed them a monarch caterpillar and monarchs on my meadow blazingstar (*Liatris ligulistylis*).

The girls, who are currently in first grade, earned their "Journey" patch called "[It's Your World-Change It. Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden.](#)" 🌸

**KRIS HALL** is a *Wild Ones* member with the *Lake-to-Prairie Chapter*.



Daisy scouts viewing monarchs.

## Help Girl Scouts 'make the world a better place'

Part of the Girl Scout Law encourages the scouts to "make the world a better place." The national Girl Scout program offers Journeys and badges that show them how they can do just that.

Here is a listing of some other Journeys or badges that Wild Ones chapters or members could help young scouts earn. You can find some of the badge requirements online for Daisies, Brownies and Juniors [here](#), or contact your local council to find out more about the other requirements.

### DAISY

- It's your Planet — Love it
- Between Earth and Sky Journey

### BROWNIES

- Bugs badge
- It's Your Planet — Love it
- WOW! Wonders of Water Journey

### JUNIORS

- Flowers
  - Gardener
  - Animal Habitat
  - GET Moving Journey
- (There is a section on butterflies)

### CADETTEs

- Trees
- Animal Helpers?
- Breathe Journey (Parts could apply)

### SENIORS

- Sow what? Journey
- Voice for Animals?

### AMBASSADORS

- JUSTICE Journey

**SARAH ROBERTS**,  
community development  
coordinator with the Girl Scouts  
of the Northwestern Great Lakes,  
helped compile this listing.

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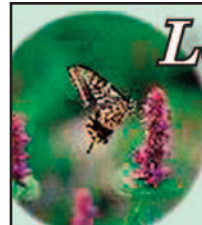


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A hedgerow provides

This side flowerbed shows the curving border of their lawn, and is home to native plants such as purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), sweet coneflower (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*), nodding onion (*Allium cernuum*), prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*) and more.

## Member Garden

Janet and John Allen,  
Habitat Gardening in Central New York

More than two decades ago, Janet and John Allen's yard in central New York looked like most any other yard across America with a big, expansive lawn. But since the late 1990s, it has evolved into a safe haven for birds, pollinators and insects, as well as a learning tool for any one who just happens to walk or stop by.

After years of being an ornamental gardener, Janet said they became interested in native plants in the 1990s. But at first it was nearly impossible to make the switch because of the difficulty finding native plants for their garden and yard. "It was like we were in a black hole," she said. "We were so far behind in central New York that we had to order plants from Prairie Nursery (in Westfield, Wisconsin) and ... hope they would be native for New York."

So instead of focusing solely on native plants, Janet and John decided instead to focus on providing habitat, including food, water and cover for birds, pollinators and other animals.

Janet learned about Wild Ones and not only joined, but also co-founded the local Wild Ones chapter, Habitat Gardening in Central New York. And as their interest and knowledge grew about native plants, their garden kept growing and changing. Today, their 80-foot x 180-foot yard is home to 17 kinds of trees, more than 140 types of wildflowers, seven vine species, a dozen species of native grasses, and a few dozen important native shrubs. Janet

estimates that 90 percent are native to the Northeast.

Very little lawn remains. "I've kept a semi-circle of lawn in the front that we don't do anything to," she said, in part to demonstrate that you don't need to treat your lawn with fertilizers to keep it green. "It compares favorably to others' lawns. It's green; we pull the weeds by hand and we don't have many dandelions."

In fact, Janet said their soil keeps improving because they leave on their grass clippings and the fallen leaves from trees.

Her favorite plants are the ones that provide for birds, bees and butterflies, especially as host plants. A few of those favorites include jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis* and *I. pallida*), anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*), milkweeds (*Asclepias incarnata*, *A. syriaca*, *A. tuberosa*), Culver's root (*Veronacastrium virginicum*), mountain mints (*Pycnanthemum muticum*, *P. virginianum*, *P. incanum*), and native honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*). But high on her list is also pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*), other dogwood shrubs such as gray and silky, various *Amelanchiers*, bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*) and spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*).

But to Janet, one of the yard highlights is the pond and stream they added for their 25th wedding anniversary 15 years ago.

"It provides habitat for toads laying eggs in the spring and their tadpoles, dragonflies laying eggs and developing, attracts migrating warblers, provides a place for birds to get a drink and to bathe, and especially important, it is a great source of mud, grasses, and mosses as bird nest building materials," she said.

Janet said they intentionally created borders and paths, often lined with logs, which help to keep native plants inside



This dead apple tree doesn't have a large enough trunk for a cavity, but it's a popular "grocery store" for birds, such as this downy looking for bugs, and a favorite perching spot for many birds. The Allens purchased the tree sign from <http://cavityconservation.com>.





bright colors each fall.



the beds and also provide insects a good place to nest. They offer tours of their property, and they put out a sign in the front yard noting when a tour will take place. Janet also puts out signs telling people about things like pesticides, and cites the Academy of Pediatrics warning about the problems it can cause children's health. Another sign addresses the benefits of toads, including their healthy appetite for insects. And yet another sign attached to a dying tree informs people that even dead trees have a greater purpose: providing food and shelter for wildlife and nesting birds. In fact, Janet and John have four small dead trees in their yard – an apple tree, a pear tree, a small redbud and a pagoda dogwood that never grew very tall.

However, they've certainly been successful in getting birds to visit their yard. You can see their 75 feathered visitors, as well as view their many butterfly and other pollinator visitors, on their [website](#) by clicking on the creatures tab. The website also includes good information on native plants, composting, and much more.

The Allen's habitat garden is definitely more than a hobby. "It's vitally important for the future of biodiversity and for preserving a healthy planet," she said. "You can ask any child and they'd likely acknowledge that plants are a source of life. But I'm beginning to understand that in such a profound way."

In part, she thanks Doug Tallamy for that transformation. His book, "[Bringing Nature Home](#)," has helped her to understand more profoundly that plants and the soil underneath are a source of life.

"If you don't have native plants, you might as well put out plastic plants

One of Janet Allen's favorite part of her yard is this pond, which is about 10-ft. x 7-ft. and less than 24 inches deep. Janet said toads often mate there in the spring, and dragonflies also lay their eggs there. Surrounding the pond is Joe-Pye weed, anise hyssop, *Iris versicolor*, lizard's tail, cardinal flower lobelia, biennial primrose, plethora and *Chelone glabra*.

because you're not supporting life," she said. "I worry about what we're leaving our grandchildren. It's important to address climate change as soon as possible, but we also need plants left to sustain life on the planet."

She gives one important piece of advice to anyone new to native gardening. That is, start small. "Don't try to do it all at once. Start small and eliminate a little bit of grass and see how things work and notice what insects and butterflies come," she said. "Then over the next few years, do a little bit more and more." 🌿

**Right:** An aerial view of the Allen's yard taken from their roof 10 years ago. It shows their raised organic vegetable garden beds, a three-bin composter under the pear tree, a "solar" clothes dryer, a pond and stream, part of their native grass area (bottom mid-left), and a meadow area in front of the vegetable garden.

**Bottom:** Wild Ones signs are abundant in the Allen's side flower bed.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We'd like to feature our members' native gardens, large or small, in upcoming issues. If you're interested in sharing your native garden, send two or three high-resolution photos, as well as a brief description, to [journal@wildones.org](mailto:journal@wildones.org). Please include your contact information so we can get in touch with you.

## Yard highlights

- Home to 17 kinds of trees, more than 140 types of wildflowers, seven vine species, a dozen species of native grasses, and a few dozen important native shrubs
- Includes man-made stream and pond and large edible garden
- Yard is pesticide and chemical free, and the Allens make compost outdoors and vermicompost indoors so they don't have to fertilize artificially
- Dead trees left standing to provide food and shelter for birds and insects
- Located in central New York in the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province, in one of the older first rings of suburbs around Syracuse





## ||| HAWAII

The International Union for Conservation of Nature reported that 38 plant species found only on Hawaii's islands have become extinct and said that hundreds more face extinction.

The IUCN blamed invasive species such as pigs, goats, rats, slugs and other plants for the decimation of Hawaii's native flora.

About 415 plant species endemic to Hawaii were surveyed as part of the IUCN's Red List assessment of threatened species and nearly 87 percent have been classified as being threatened with extinction. The Red List is considered the most authoritative database of tracking the health of plant and animal species in the world with nearly 83,000 species on the list.

## ||| ILLINOIS

A seven-year restoration of 1,800 acres at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie north of Wilmington, connected with a larger piece of the park that already has been restored, will help wildlife in the area to thrive.

The prairie's 20,000 acres are the first tallgrass prairie established in the United States and home to a herd of more than three dozen bison since fall of last year, The Herald-News reported.

"This does not exist anywhere else," said Gary Sullivan, senior ecologist at The Wetlands Initiative, which has teamed with U.S. Forest Service at Midewin on the land's restoration, along with the National Forest Foundation.

"The extensive native plants in all areas create a mosaic. It will take awhile to get it where we want it, but we will restore about 600 species when finished to bring conditions back to support wildlife."



# NEWS from across the NATION



## ||| MINNESOTA

Gov. Mark Dayton issued an executive order limiting neonicotinoids, a class of pesticides that harm bees, stressing that more must be done to protect pollinators.

Dayton's order directs the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to require verification that any application of neonicotinoid pesticides is necessary due to imminent threats of significant crop losses. It also creates a task force to study issues impacting pollinators and to recommend long-term solutions. State government will set up an interagency team on pollinator protection.

The governor also ordered state agencies to lead by example on the 8 million acres of land they manage statewide. Those steps will include turning highway rights-of-way into better habitat, with more of the kinds of plants pollinators crave. Neonicotinoid-treated plants and pesticides will be prohibited in the 40-acre State Capitol complex, and pollinator-friendly plants will be included in the Capitol's landscaping plan.

• • •

The University of Minnesota's new state-of-the-art Bee and Pollinator Research Lab on the St. Paul campus opened in October, in hopes of finding solutions to protect bees and pollinators.

Two-thirds of the nearly \$5 million cost was covered by state-funded bonding, with the balance coming from private gifts and donations. The new facility features a 10,000-square-foot laboratory that consolidates lab space, honey extraction, observation hive space and office space.

## ||| OREGON

Western monarch butterflies migrating between the southern Oregon coast and the South Cascades will soon find patches of strategically placed milkweed and other nectar-bearing plants on this leg of their journey.

A group of public and private entities received a nearly \$200,000 grant to restore and enhance 300 acres of western monarch habitat stretched across six sites along key migration paths through southern Oregon.

"This is the epicenter of the migratory route," botanist Clint Emerson from the Rogue River – Siskiyou National Forest told Oregon Live. "That makes this compelling."

The plants include three locally native species of milkweed and 26 other plants such as coyote mint (*Monardella villosa*), winecup clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*) and harvest brodiaea (*Brodiaea elegans*), Emerson said.

Restoration sites include 60 acres of Rogue River – Siskiyou forest along the coast, 60 acres of Forest Service land on the western slopes of the Cascades near Mount McLoughlin, 60 acres at Table Rocks and 120 acres of public and private lands in the Ashland-Colestin area. Most of the work will be done in early 2017.

## ||| WISCONSIN

The invasive Asian jumping worm could harm native plants by potentially accelerating the loss of nutrients from soil, a new study predicts.

Jiangxiao Qiu, postdoctoral researcher with The Nature Conservancy, led the study, published in the September 2016 "Biological Invasions," on the worm that is named for the way it wiggles when touched or disturbed.

The jumping worm has been present in Wisconsin soils since 2013, and Qiu experimented on soil samples taken from southern Wisconsin as well as areas of the UW-Madison Arboretum.

According to The Daily Cardinal, Qiu found that the worms led to an up to 95 percent litter depletion in four months. The worms transform the soil into something that is not as beneficial to the native plants. In fact, the new, irregular soil structure is preferred by other invasive plants, he said, and is also often too poor and grainy for many native plant species.

In areas where the worms are present, they are densely populated, up to 150 worms per square meter. They also are difficult to control since they reach sexual maturity within 60 to 90 days and their cocoons can survive the cold winter months nestled in the soil. 🌸

**Midewin National Tall grass Prairie**

PHOTO: U.S. Forest Service



There's good news, and more good news. Native plants are gaining in popularity, and December happens to be a good time to plant. Seeds can be sown right over the ground or snow (that's what the wind does, after all). Moisture, freezing and thawing will soften the seed coats and help germination when the weather warms up. From black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) to blazing star (*Liatris*), from milkweed (*Asclepias*) to goldenrod (*Solidago*, *Euthamia*), there are many varieties that will add interest to your yard.

Of the native flowers we have in our landscape goldenrods are a favorite. Why plural? Because there are so many varieties. Botanists identify 24 species found in Wisconsin, 25 if you consider "tall" and "Canada" to be separate. Throughout North America there are several dozen more varieties, and they are native to the lower 48 states, plus Alaska and Canada. Goldenrods are a great choice to plant; they grow in all conditions, from old fields to shaded forests to wetlands. For our home landscape, I particularly like "showy" (*Solidago speciosa*) and "stiff" (*Solidago rigida*) goldenrod. The showy has a huge tuft of bright yellow flowers and a maroon stem. Stiff has large leaves that contrast nicely with other plants. Their bright yellow looks great next to the purple flowers such as New England aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*).

These beautiful plants provide golden opportunities for countless beneficial native insects to feed in summer and fall. There's even a goldenrod crab spider (*Misumena vatia*). In winter, the seeds protrude above snow and attract

goldfinch, pine siskins, juncos and tree sparrows. Ruffed grouse and cottontails also feed on goldenrod. Alabama, Kentucky and Nebraska list goldenrod as their "state flower," and at one time, it had even been suggested as our national flower.

Although it is commonly blamed for attacks of hay fever, goldenrods are innocent. They just happen to bloom at the same time as ragweed. Their pollen, however, is heavy and sticky and dispersed by insects, which are attracted to both pollen and nectar.



A hover fly, also known as a syrphid fly, is thought to mimic bees. Not surprisingly, it is often seen hovering or nectaring at flowers like goldenrod.



A yellowjacket nectars on goldenrod and adds interest to a yard.

# A Golden Opportunity

Story and photos by Dale Goodner

A bumblebee feeds on goldenrod. There are several dozen varieties of goldenrod, which can grow in all conditions.



Robert Frost preferred to call the bald-faced hornet another name it goes by, the white-tailed hornet. But no matter what you call it, these wasps like to eat flower nectar, fruit juice, sap and insects.



Even in late fall or winter, goldenrods serve a purpose and will help to attract goldfinch, pine siskins, juncos and tree sparrows to your yard.

Because some goldenrods can be found growing in disturbed areas along with such weedy plants as the wind-pollinated ragweed, they can be wrongly labeled as hay fever culprits. I like to point out this lesson to kids: Be careful with whom you hang out; their reputation could rub off on you.

Goldenrods are a terrific choice for natural landscaping. They are "grateful" in the sense of growing well without a lot of effort and coaxing from the gardener. They are an excellent foundation for a healthy landscape that supports life. Most will grow to about three feet tall and produce spikes of showy yellow flowers that bloom in late summer and fall. We leave them alone until spring because they provide winter food and cover.

The scientific name, "Solidago," derives from Latin, and means "to make whole." It is reputed to heal wounds, hence the old colloquial name, "woundwort." If you want to identify various species of goldenrods, you need to pay attention to the overall look of the inflorescence, not just to the flower. Leaf shape is also important in differentiating species.

Check with local growers to find sources for goldenrod seeds or seedlings, or gather seeds yourself in late fall and spread them in your landscape where you'd like to add some color, texture and bird activity. 🌼

**DALE GOODNER** was an interpretive naturalist in Peoria, Illinois for two decades. After retiring as supervisor of interpretive services in 2009, he and his wife, Mary, returned to northeast Wisconsin. Both Dale and Mary serve on the board of the Friends of Whitefish Dunes State Park, and both volunteer for the Door County Land Trust, leading hikes in several nature preserves. Mary also serves on the board of the Door County chapter of Wild Ones.



Mary Goodner in one of their home landscape beds. Her husband, Dale, says she's the horticulturist in the family.



**Editor's Note:** Excerpts of this article were taken, by permission of the author, from *Discount Inn, Inc. v. City of Chicago*, by Charlotte Adelman, published in the June 2016 issue of *Administrative Law*, the newsletter of the Illinois State Bar Association's Section on Administrative Law.

By Charlotte Adelman

**T**he ban on overgrown weeds is big business for the city of Chicago, which has collected more than \$19.5 million in fines from property owners since 2009. But some city gardeners are fighting back saying inspectors are targeting their wildflowers — not weeds — because the city ordinance is too vague,” journalist Benjamin Woodard of DNA Info, a neighborhood news source, wrote in 2014.

That summer, following a fine of \$640 for “uncut weeds” levied on their intentionally planted native plant prairie garden, Raymond and Kathryn Ward sued Chicago to abolish the law that prohibits vegetation in excess of 10 inches tall that is neither managed nor maintained because it violates their constitutional rights. But, the Wards aren’t the first Chicago residents to challenge the city’s weed ordinance. And they won’t be the last, even though Chicago courts have repeatedly upheld the ordinance and seem likely to continue to do so in the future.

In fact, the outcome was the same on Sept. 25, 2015, when an Illinois Appellate Court upheld the constitutionality of Chicago’s weed ordinance in *City of Chicago v. Shachter*. The origins of this case reach back to 2009, when Jay F. Shachter, a Chicago homeowner and gardener, received a notification that he had weeds over 10 inches tall in his yard. Shachter unsuccessfully argued the weed ordinance’s inherent ambiguity and subjectivity, its lack of notice to the citizenry about what the law does or does not prohibit due to its failure to define what a weed actually is, and its lack of any rational relationship to any legitimate public purpose. Citing dictionary definitions defining a weed as a plant “growing where you don’t want it,” Shachter testified, “All of the plants on my land are growing exactly where I want them.”

## Chicago continues to ban wildflower ‘weeds’

However, the Administrative Law Officer (ALO) rejected his arguments, found him guilty and fined him \$340. Shachter’s appeals to the Circuit Court and the Appellate Court failed. His noble efforts on behalf of Chicago’s gardening citizenry became reactivated when, four years after receiving his first weed ordinance ticket, he received another. He lost that case, too, and suffered a variety of court-imposed indignities, and his appeals to the Circuit Court and the Appellate Court failed. (Read the [2011 decision](#) or the [2016 ruling here](#).) A story in the *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* described the latter ruling as upholding the city’s authority to issue “hefty fines” (\$1,200 plus \$60 in costs) for weed ordinance violations.

On Sept. 28, 2015, the weed ordinance was again found constitutional, this time in the U.S. District Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit in *Discount Inn v. City of Chicago*. The court evaluated two principal claims. First, did fines of \$600 to \$1,200 per day (applicable to each day the violation continues) violate the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition of excessive fines? Examining the “social purpose” of the weed ordinance led Judge Richard Posner to a [Wikipedia](#) list of ways “weeds interfere with other plants and other horticultural and environmental goals.” (According to the [Harvard Guide to Using Sources](#), though Wikipedia is convenient when, for example, you need a piece of information to settle a bet with your roommate, it is not a reliable source for in-depth research.)

Wikipedia noted that a number of native or non-native plants are unwanted for a number of reasons, primarily applicable to agriculture. But, some of the reasons were applicable to many plants, and not exclusively to weeds, such as that weeds provide food or shelter for “animal pests” like seed-eating birds. However, many Chicago residents welcome seed-eating birds like juncos, goldfinches, chickadees and cardinals.

Nonetheless, Posner concluded: “Chicago has a valid ecological interest in weed control, an interest that justifies an ordinance forbidding *tall* weeds. A far from astronomical fine such as \$1,200 aimed at limiting the city’s weed population is not excessive in the sense that the word bears in the Eighth Amendment.”

(Remember, Chicago forbids weeds in excess of 10 inches on average, not “tall” weeds.)

Chicago residents with gardens may ask, what is the social purpose (or legitimate governmental interest) of imposing an arbitrary 10-inch average height requirement on home flower, vegetable or other gardens? What scientific or other relevant evidence did the city use when arriving at this arbitrary number? What about city residents who value dense plantings of tall trees and shrubs to create sound barriers, privacy shields and bird habitat? Though his opinion ignored native plants, Posner wrote of them admiringly, commenting in passing, it is “plausible that the weed ordinance does not embrace native plant gardens.” He despaired of weeds killing admirable plants “that are valued for beauty, fragrance,

nutritional value, etc.” But he failed to recognize that much “valued” vegetation, including vegetables, flowers, shrubs and trees that grow in excess of 10 inches in height, potentially subject their owners to fines of \$600 to \$1,200 per day. In contrast, violations by Chicago drivers of vehicles that can cause injury and death result in much lower fines, such as \$25 for a vehicle in an “unsafe condition.”

A weed, as defined in Chicago’s Rules and Regulations for Weed Control, is “vegetation” that is in excess of 10 inches tall on average and “not managed or maintained.” The case of Kathleen Cummings demonstrates the provision’s subjectivity. In 2012, the retired teacher was ticketed for weeds exceeding 10 inches. The inspection targeted the front yard, which in 2004 received the first place award in Chicago’s Conservation and Native Awards program and in 2005, an honorable mention. The AOL found Cummings’s front yard had been maintained in basically the same condition in 2012, the time of the inspection and ticketing, as it was in 2004, the time of the first place award. The incongruity of finding an award-winning garden, which remained in its award-winning condition, guilty of being unmanaged and un-maintained, did not occur to the AOL who found Cummings guilty and fined her \$600 plus costs. Cummings and another individual filed a class action suit.

## Courts consistently uphold constitutionality of weed ordinance



By Patricia Hill

The second of the two principal claims was that the weed ordinance is vague and forbids expressive activity protected by the First Amendment. Disagreeing with Discount Inn's argument "that the 10-inch ceiling on weeds violates the free-speech clause of the First Amendment," Posner argued that allowing weeds to grow tall couldn't, in and of itself, be regarded as creating works of art. He inserted illustrations into the opinion including a photo of "a vacant lot submerged by weeds that nearly cover the cars in the background." The photo below depicts goldenrod (*Solidago*) and a blue flowered aster (*Asteraceae*)— native Illinois prairie plants that provide native bees with nectar and pollen and birds with seeds — struggling to reestablish themselves, after virtual extinction, in an empty lot.

Posner wrote: "Taken to its logical extreme, the plaintiff's defense of the weed would preclude any efforts by local governments to prevent unsightly or dangerous uses of private property. Homeowners would be free to strew garbage on their front lawn, graze sheep there, and broadcast Beethoven's Fifth Symphony 24 hours a day through outdoor loudspeakers—all in the name of the First Amendment." But these predictions ignore city protections including Chicago's Sanitation Code, Noise Ordinance and Public Nuisance Ordinance. Posner's specious arguments unjustly doom the vegetable and flower gardens of thousands of ordinary Chicago residents for whom they represent harmless, beneficial and satisfaction-producing activity. But, he and the other circuit judges do have their worries.

"We do worry that compliance with the weed ordinance may be difficult," Posner writes. "We are not reassured by

the city's statement that a property owner "can use a ruler to determine whether a plant is more or less than 10 inches tall and can likewise use simple arithmetic to determine the average height of the plants on his property." What if there are a thousand plants and therefore a thousand measurements to be made and the results then averaged? But difficulty of compliance is not a persuasive ground for deeming the ordinance unconstitutional."

Still, difficulty of measurement was a persuasive ground for deeming a less arduous standard to be appropriate when Posner considered the city employees who enforce the weed ordinance. "There is the difficulty of calculating the average height of the weeds in what may be a large lot. We assume that the city employees who enforce the ordinance do not attempt precise measurement, but instead make a rough estimate of the average height of the weeds; there seems no practicable alternative—imagine trying to measure the height of each weed in a lot and then averaging the heights of all the weeds," Posner wrote.

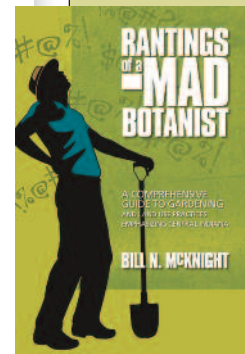
Posner wrote of admiring native plants that are beautiful and nondestructive when properly managed. He pointed out some of the difficulties created by the weed ordinance and Chicago's regulations. These observations might help pave the way for their eventual repeal and replacement. A good candidate for this is the Wild One's Model Municipal Ordinance, which would solve all the problems if adapted to Chicago.

John Holden, a spokesman for the city's Law Department, said in a 2014 interview that lawsuits challenging Chicago's weed ordinance have no merit, and that the city would continue to "vigorously" defend the ordinance. So long as the weed ordinance produces substantial revenue for Chicago, residents should expect court rulings in favor of its constitutionality. 🌻

In his written opinion, Judge Richard Posner described this photo as a "vacant lot submerged by weeds that nearly cover the cars in the background."



**CHARLOTTE ADELMAN**, a retired attorney, along with her husband, Bernie Schwartz, is co-author of *"The Midwestern Native Garden: Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants"* and the forthcoming *"Midwestern Native Shrubs and Trees, Gardening Alternatives to Nonnative Species, An Illustrated Guide."* It will be available in February 2017.



I own more than 100 books about gardening. But Bill N. McKnight's recent book, *"Rantings of a Mad Botanist: A Comprehensive Guide to Gardening and Land Use Practices Emphasizing Central Indiana,"* is the most comprehensive gardening book I ever read. I thought I knew

everything there is to know about gardening, but I found out I don't.

McKnight, a curator and biology teacher for more than two decades who has produced natural history books for the Indiana Academy of Science, starts by telling us in the introduction that we can have the garden of our dreams, but that it **will require time and effort**. To get to the real head-turner, it will also require **passion, patience, talent and knowledge**, and the right piece of land (with some contour and good soil).

He then tells us why we should garden: it is mentally and physically therapeutic and is a source of longtime enjoyment; it is the work, the journey and the outcome.

I can certainly attest to that.

In addition, it is excellent exercise, it gets you outside, it is a way to discover and enjoy ancient rhythms, and it is a way to express oneself artistically. Plus, there is a satisfaction that comes from growing plants and eating better.

I can also attest to all of those.

Then McKnight goes on to point 2 and says that while gardening is the No. 1 hobby in our country, we are not a gardening society. I have to agree with him again.

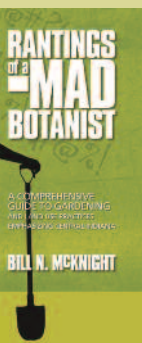
There are 25 points in his introduction, all valid in my view. I would like to point out three that especially speak to me:

- You do not need a large property to have a nice yard/garden. Me: My yard is only 50-ft. wide and 125-ft. deep.
- You do not need to be wealthy to have a nice garden. Me: I'm not and I do.
- Gardening can also be a lifestyle and social outlet, maybe even a necessity. Me: Besides my work, my leisure, my social life and all my other gardening activities, I even belong to an Environmental Book Club.

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This only begins to touch on the introduction, but I'll move on to the book itself.

The book features 106 topics divided into activities and topics, beginning with #1 Assessment and Plan and ending with #50 Tools and Equipment. Then it proceeds into Gardening by Season (four chapters); Animals (six chapters); and Specific

Groups and Categories (45 chapters) that includes, for example, Plants for Clay Soil, Drought-Tolerant Plants, Moon Gardens and Shade Plants.

It finishes with 17 Commandments of Gardening beginning with "Plan," and ending with "Mother Nature is Always the Home Team."

I read the book from cover-to-cover pre-publication, looking for inconsistencies, misspellings and more. Not finding anything of that nature, I added comments based on my own gardening experience. Bill was so impressed (or needed to fill up space) that he included them in the book, giving me credit. He so agreed with "All gardening is local" that he repeated it several times throughout the book. I'm humbly grateful.

The U.S. printed book itself is a real book: It has a hard, smooth, shiny and charmingly decorated cover and sturdy pages with print one can actually read. The pages are divided into two columns, broken up interestingly with drawings, charts and aphorisms.

The 450-page book can be ordered at <http://www.themadbotanist.com/book> and sells for \$45 plus tax, shipping and handling. An e-book is also available. 🌸

**PATRICIA HILL** is a professional landscape designer who has devoted the past 15 years to designs featuring only native species. Over 10 years, Hill compiled her copious notes, designs, and photographs into a book, "Design Your Natural Midwest Garden," which was published in Spring 2007 and features 32 designs and over 200 color photographs of built and conceptual gardens. Her gardens have been featured in many local garden walks, including the prestigious AAUW Garden Walk. She started her website and blog five years ago, and publishes a weekly essay about native plants that appeals to beginner and experienced gardeners alike. For more information, go to [www.naturalmidwestgarden.com](http://www.naturalmidwestgarden.com).

St Mary's High School in Menasha, Wisconsin sent a busload of students to the WILD Center for Student Service Day. Seventeen students and three chaperones helped clear a lot of buckthorn from our property. Besides working, the students and chaperones learned about Wild Ones, and native and invasive plants. Thank you to St. Mary's High School for thinking of us on Student Service Day, and thanks to the students and chaperones for participating.

• • •

The national Board of Directors of Wild Ones gave Tim Lewis, immediate past president, three chinquapin oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*) trees as a retirement gift. Purchased at his chapter tree sale to plant where he chose, Lewis said he picked the chinquapin oak because they are one of his favorite trees as they are relatively fast growing and tolerate most soil types. Lewis decided to place the 3-foot to 4-foot trees at the WILD Center, where they were planted in an arch around the west side of the observation mound. While the trees should reach 12 feet in a few years, they are currently being protected by fencing to keep deer from eating them. So we now

have an area in the prairie that Lewis can be very proud of and his legacy will continue at Wild Ones. Congratulations to Lewis on his retirement, and thank you for "Planting a Seed" at the WILD Center. 🌸

**Volunteer Dave Edwards** waters one of the chinquapin oaks that were presented as a gift to Tim Lewis by the national Wild Ones Board of Directors.



Immediate past president Tim Lewis plants one of three chinquapin oak trees given in his honor at the WILD Center.



Rich and Pat Fischer of the Fox Valley Area chapter of Wild Ones help plant chinquapin oak trees at the WILD Center during a First Thursday event. The trees were given in honor of Tim Lewis, immediate past president.







## Chapter Anniversaries

16 years — Mid-Missouri, Mo.  
17 years — Kalamazoo Area, Mich.  
20 years — Lake-To-Prairie, Ill.  
22 years — Fox Valley Area, Wis.  
25 years — Green Bay, Wis.

## Mark Your Calendars


**January 28, 2017**

Fox Valley Area Chapter  
21st Annual  
Toward Harmony  
with Nature Conference  
[www.towardharmonywithnature.org/](http://www.towardharmonywithnature.org/)  
8 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.  
Oshkosh Convention Center,  
Oshkosh, Wis.

**February 27 -  
March 3, 2017**


National Invasive Species  
Awareness Week  
<http://www.nisaw.org/>




 [www.facebook.com/wildones.nativeplants.natural-landscapes](http://www.facebook.com/wildones.nativeplants.natural-landscapes)

 <https://twitter.com/WildOnesNatives>

 [pinterest.com/wonational/](http://pinterest.com/wonational/)

 [www.linkedin.com/company/wild-ones-native-plants-natural-landscapes](http://www.linkedin.com/company/wild-ones-native-plants-natural-landscapes)

 [www.youtube.com/user/WildOnesNPNL](http://www.youtube.com/user/WildOnesNPNL)




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For information about starting a chapter in your area: [www.wildones.org/connect/chapter-start-up-information/](http://www.wildones.org/connect/chapter-start-up-information/)



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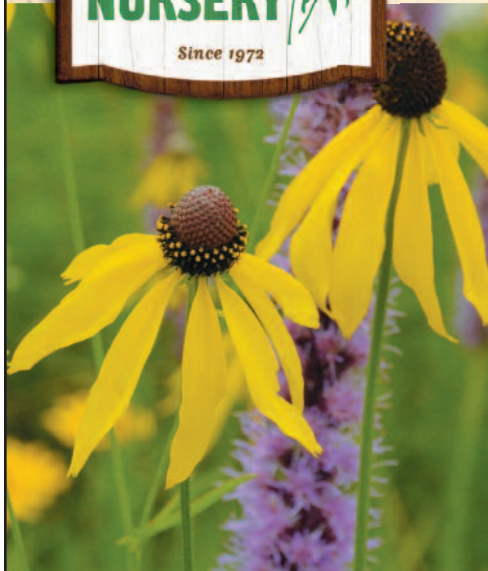
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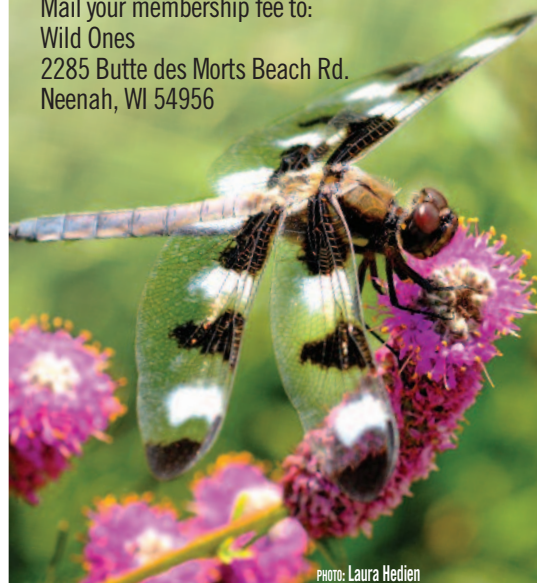


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