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Wild Ones®

NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

January | February 2017

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2016 photo contest
winning entry

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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

My prediction:

2017
will be a
big year
for Wild Ones

Happy 2017 to you! Jan. 1 is traditionally the time to set resolutions. I hope one of yours is to plant more native species, plant more enthusiasm about natives among your friends and family, and plant the idea of Wild Ones membership in others' minds.

I want to tell you about my 2017 resolution for Wild Ones. It's more of a prediction, really. I believe 2016 gave us a wonderful gift — the chance to "re-boot" Wild Ones. Just like people don't really change unless hit by a hard prod, neither do organizations. How many of us just keep going on until life clobbers us with a crisis or major situation? It could be a death, a birth, a financial or health crisis, or winning a seven-figure lottery. Seems like it's only then that we find it in ourselves to make a needed change.

So, when I say Wild Ones has been given a great gift, I mean it. How many organizations are given a chance to just stop, pick what's working, drop what's not and then design for its needs — for its future? Not only have we been given that chance, but look at how exceptionally well armed we are to do so.

Look at our 40 years of history that goes back to founder Lorrie Otto leading a natural landscaping workshop attended by nine people in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. That small group morphed into a national organization with 4,000-plus members across the United States who work to preserve, restore and establish native plant communities. Along the way, Wild Ones learned how to help its members and the public by developing information, programs and people.

Look also at our board members who have stepped up, and by now have spent hundreds of hours filling in to keep our doors open, along with our interim Executive Director Pam Wilcox who, with her 30 years of nonprofit experience, is

guiding our progress. Look, too, at staff member Kim Walbrun who has single-handedly made sure we haven't forgotten the basics of member service.

Now do you see why I'm so excited about 2017? This is the year we will see the results of our gift. That's what sits in the background as I work on my plans as national president for Wild Ones in 2017. I find that my thoughts keep bouncing forward to Dec. 31 where my mind's eye sees what we will look like then.

So, in the spirit of New Year resolutions and predictions, here's what I see for us:

- *We will have the right staff* — talents and number — for the future. This includes skills in member service, fundraising and spreading the word about natives. Result: happier staff, chapters and members.
- *The national office will be newly lean and agile*, with streamlined office processes and systems. This includes more and better use of technology that fosters better national/chapter service and offers an expanded capacity for member self-service. Result: happier chapters and members.
- *Fundraising will be driven by a solid plan*, using a mix of ongoing fundraising, grants and (hopefully) sponsorships. Result: a happier finance committee, staff, chapters and members.

In addition, we will take care of the "invisible" work that makes an organization run smoothly. This is the internal small stuff that is necessary for an efficient organization. One example is having up-to-date and complete standard operating procedures that ensure new staff members know exactly how to complete tasks and do so consistently. It involves a greatly simplified financial accounting system so everyone can understand our books.

This is a big year for Wild Ones and I am secure in predicting big things for us. Seems to me that Robin Sharma, Canadian writer and leadership speaker, got it right when he said:

"All change is hard at first, messy in the middle and so gorgeous at the end."

So, please forgive the "mess" and wait for the "gorgeous."

Janice

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.



Pamela Wilcox
Interim Executive Director

Unleashing the potential of Wild Ones

My first thought when asked to consider the interim executive director role at Wild Ones was ... wow, what an incredibly timely call. After 25 years of living in Chicago, we were in transition. My husband and I had just moved into our newly built Wisconsin home, a house surrounded by 2 acres of barren mud just begging to be transformed. But I was having a devil of a time finding a landscaper who embraced native landscaping beyond simply planting a wildflower garden.

My desire for a mixture of structured and prairie landscape has been shaped by the good fortune of living across from Chicago's Millennium Park and watching Lurie Garden develop from its conception. The words "native plants" were certainly not part of the consciousness of most urban condo owners at that time. Locals were appalled at what looked to them like a big patch of weeds. But then a funny thing happened as the garden's color and form took shape, and people got used to what they were seeing. Lurie Garden is now a beloved favorite spot — a city showcase and oasis where office workers lunch on garden benches, naturalists learn onsite, young people smooch, and tourists snap pictures to send home.

Lurie Garden and a public awareness of its beauty are part of a national movement that is finally coming of age. Wild Ones has an amazing opportunity to grow with and shape the still emerging trend toward native landscaping. The ability to paint a beautiful picture with prairie plants should be part of the lexicon of every landscaper as they talk with clients. Wild Ones has the potential to make that happen.

Like all nonprofits, Wild Ones has challenges. An uncertain economy and always scarce people and financial resources have most nonprofits rethinking their business models in order to remain successful. And, as most of you know from your own workplaces, when key staff members depart, as happened at Wild Ones, it takes some time to replace the institutional knowledge lost, reorder responsibilities and reestablish processes.

By the time you read this, the national office should be well through that process. My expertise, whether working as a CEO, executive director, interim executive, consultant or serving as a board member, is assisting organizations through such transitions and helping them align resources with aspiration. As interim executive director at Wild Ones, my goal is to help the national office retool and continue to provide the service that chapters so richly deserve, as well as to assist the board in crystalizing its mission and brand and determine the infrastructure and development necessary for Wild Ones to reach its full potential.

I am happy to have the opportunity to work with Wild Ones during this exciting time and embrace President Janice Hand's JOURNAL message. Wild Ones will overcome current challenges and is looking forward to a very productive 2017. Many, many thanks to all of you — national board and staff, chapter leaders and members — for your patience, dedication and effort to serve and promote Wild Ones and its mission.

With gratitude,

Pam

Your
membership dues
are
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It's true. Since Wild Ones is a national not-for-profit natural landscaping organization created solely for the purpose of educating the public, its donors can deduct their contributions including membership dues.

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WILD ONES JOURNAL

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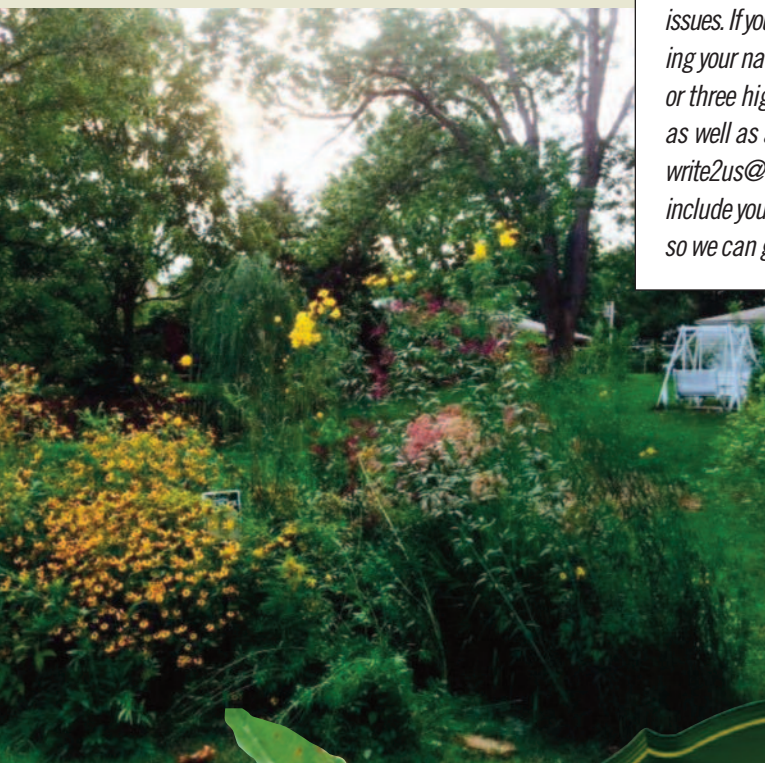
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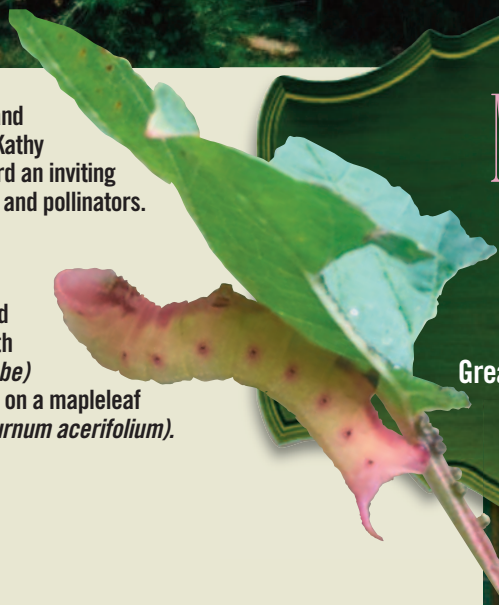


Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) and sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*) attract hummingbirds and bumblebees to Kathy McDonald's native garden.



A mix of native trees, shrubs and flowers make Kathy McDonald's yard an inviting place for birds and pollinators.

A hummingbird clearwing moth (*Hemaris thysbe*) larva munches on a mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*).



Member Garden

Kathy McDonald,
Greater Cincinnati Chapter

By Barbara A. Schmitz, Journal Editor

All photos by Kathy McDonald

Starting from scratch took on new meaning for Kathy McDonald when she downsized and moved to an older home five years ago.

"What appealed to me was the flat yard," she explains about her new home. "Before, we had a big deck with a yard that had a very steep slope; it was impossible to plant and fuss around in."

McDonald has been "fussing around" ever since, either adding plants or just moving them around her half-acre lot. "My goal is to have very little grass and to create little paths throughout my backyard."

Co-founder of the Midwest Native Plant Society, McDonald says she constantly plays in her yard, and weather permitting, looks daily for caterpillars. In fact, she

remembers her excitement the first time she found a tiger swallowtail caterpillar on her tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), or luna moth caterpillars on her walnut trees (*Juglans nigra*). After learning that luna moth caterpillars usually spin their cocoons in the leaf litter at the base of trees, she stopped mowing and started sifting through leaf litter.

"Every year I learn and it's a new adventure," she says. "It's a whole new way of looking at your yard."

The yard was basically all grass when she moved in, McDonald recalls. "The first thing we did after moving was to put in a 5-foot by 7-foot pond," she says. After that, she started replanting dozens of native plants she had brought along from her previous home, including American bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*), small tulip trees, milkweed (*Asclepias*), and lots of perennial flowers. By the second year, the yard had already become a "Certified Wildlife Habitat" by the National Wildlife Federation.

Today, McDonald estimates that 75 percent of the plants in her yard are native to Ohio, while many others are native to the eastern states. Her goal is that one day, 85 percent of her plants will be native Buckeye State plants.

McDonald says host plants always take priority in her yard, and native shrubs are her favorite. "I love the pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*). I'm thrilled to death to look at my prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*) and find a giant swallowtail caterpillar. Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) attracts birds and butterflies and survives deer; it is really good to fill in under trees."

She acknowledges that her pocket prairie in her backyard has soil so rich that it doesn't really look like a

prairie. “That’s why I am trying to restore as much woodland as I can, with canopy trees, and shrubs and flowers underneath.”

In fact, learning about local ecoregions has helped her realize that her yard should really be woodland. “I have some woodland poppy coming up all over the yard,” she says. “I want to fill in a lot under the trees with more shrubs and flowers. My goal is to have something manageable and not too labor intensive.”

About a year ago, McDonald started work on her front yard, adding in lots of native plants, as well as some nonnative plants such as coral bells (*Heuchera*) to give it that “suburban appeal.”

“I’ve gotten away from planting 100 percent native,” she says. “I think it scares people. I am not a purist anymore, but I stress that we need host plants for *Lepidoptera* and other insects.”

McDonald hired a designer to help redo her front yard, which now includes an L-shaped area with shrubs and small trees. “We wanted to create some privacy, so there would be little areas to sit and watch wildlife. By breaking the yard up, it makes it seem bigger and a little more interesting.”

A wildlife rehabilitator for a long time, McDonald says she first became interested in native landscaping when she realized the importance of habitat to birds. “If I’m trying to release a barred owl and there are no trees, then I have a problem,” she explains.

But her interest expanded to butterflies and other pollinators after reading Doug Tallamy’s book, “Bringing Nature Home.” “That opened up a whole new way of thinking for me,” McDonald says. “It made me realize that songbirds only feed their young insects, and planting native plants was a way to increase the number of insects in your yard.”

McDonald is hopeful that her yard is just part of the solution to the overall challenges facing birds, pollinators and plants. “With climate change, we’re seeing species disappear, and we’re not seeing the number of birds and butterflies that we did 30 years ago,” she says. “I’m hoping my yard will contribute to part of the answer, even if it’s just a little corner.”

While she has had people tell her that her yard is beautiful, McDonald says it is still a work-in-progress, and she doesn’t think neighbors understand the importance of her yard to birds and pollinators. “No one gets that we are gardening with a purpose,” she says. In time, hopefully they will. 🌸

Miami mist (*Conoclinium coelestinum*), New York fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*) and bluestem goldenrod (*Solidago caesia*) brighten up the side of McDonald’s home.



Adams County provides a real escape to nature

When Kathy McDonald really needs to escape and get back to nature, she can just go to her cabin in Adams County, Ohio.

About a two-hour drive from her home near Cincinnati, McDonald says Adams County is the second most diverse area in Ohio. The area has nine designated nature preserves, which provide critical habitat for more than 100 species of rare plants and animals.

One of those areas is the 16,000-acre Richard and Lucille Durrell Edge of Appalachia Preserve. “It’s a great place to escape to, and is just heaven,” McDonald says. It’s also where she sees lots of native orchids, such as pink lady-slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*).



The pink lady-slipper orchid (*Cypripedium acaule*) is often found near Kathy McDonald’s cabin in Adams County, Ohio.

Monarch caterpillars of various sizes chew on the leaves of common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*).



About the Yard

- The ½-acre yard is located in suburban Cincinnati in southwest Ohio.
- About 75 percent of the plants are native to Ohio, and many others are native to the eastern states.
- It includes a small prairie, a woodland garden, a rain garden and two ponds, with many bird feeders and birdhouses.
- A hedgerow of native shrubs includes pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), host to the zebra swallowtail; wafer ash (*Ptelea trifoliata*) and prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*), host plants to the giant swallowtail; Common spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), host to the spicebush swallowtail, and others, and provides food and shelter for birds and pollinators.



Blueets or Quaker ladies (*Houstonia caerulea*) is a perennial species in the Bedstraw family.

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What good are awns?

By Peter Lesica

It's the middle of winter, and I'm still picking grass seeds out of my favorite wool socks. I'll bet they're cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*), which has those long, needle-like awns that project out from the grass flowers. Cheat grass is an introduced weed, but many of our native grasses also have those annoying awns. These include needle grasses (*Stipa* spp.), bromes (*Bromus* spp.), three-awn (*Aristida purpurea*), wheat grasses (*Agropyron* spp., *Elymus* spp.) and fescues (*Festuca* spp.), among others. Ranchers really have a problem with all these grasses. Although they are palatable early in the season, the awned seeds get lodged in the mouths and noses of their livestock. They get into dogs too. It's hard to imagine that grass awns evolved in so many species just to annoy us.

It is believed that awns evolved as a mechanism to disperse seeds, and they do this in three ways. The first way is obvious to a guy with grass seeds in his socks. The awns get attached to the fur of animals, bird feathers or your clothes. If the wind is strong enough, awns may also help seeds become airborne and travel from the parent plant. Finally, awns have been shown to allow the grass seed to move along the ground and find a suitable place to germinate. This can happen because grass awns are hygroscopic, that is they twist and untwist in response to changes in the humidity of the air.

During the day it's hot and dry, and the awn curls up and becomes shorter. At night when the temperature drops and relative humidity increases, the awn expands, and the seed is pushed forward. Many grass seeds have backward-pointing hairs, allowing them to move forward with ease, but preventing their backward movement. The cells that make up an awn are constructed of two types of material. Most of the cell expands when it absorbs water and contracts when it dries. However, little fibers inside the cell are stiff and do not change with humidity. These fibers cause the awn to twist and bend when it dries. The grass seed is harnessing energy from the sun to move along the ground. Although awns have been shown to cause grass seed to move along the



EDITOR'S NOTE:

This article was reprinted, with permission, from Kelsey, newsletter of the Montana Native Plant Society, Volume 24, No. 2, Winter 2011.

ground, researchers have been unable to show that a longer awn is associated with greater dispersal distance. So why do some plants have really long awns?

Dispersal is not the only service an awn provides. As the grass seed moves along the ground it may eventually happen upon a depression, a safe site for germination. The seed becomes stuck in the depression, so now the expanding and contracting of the awn literally drills the seed

into the hole. No help from gardeners needed. At least two studies have shown that seeds with longer awns become buried deeper and are more likely to germinate. Furthermore, some grasses, like *Aristida*, have seeds with three awns, and removing even one of the awns makes it less likely that the seed will bury itself (by the way, a self-burying seed is termed trypanospermic). So awned grass seeds are just like worms; they can crawl along the ground and dig into a good spot.

Understanding trypanospermic behavior is important as well as being a great natural history story. Many of our native grasses with awns are important for restoring degraded grasslands. These include bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*), green needlegrass (*Stipa viridula*), mountain brome (*Bromus carinatus*) and needle-and-thread (*Stipa comata*). Unfortunately, awned seeds get tangled up with each other, making it more difficult to broadcast them evenly across a restoration site. Some restorationists remove grass awns before broadcasting the seed. However, these studies have shown that this practice may reduce the germination and survival of awned grass species. ❁

PETER LESICA is a botanist, educator and research management consultant in Missoula, Montana who also serves as the chairman of the Montana Native Plant Society. Lesica is the author of "Flora of Glacier National Park" and "Manual of Montana Vascular Plants," and he has also coauthored publications on Montana's rare plants, wetland plants and alpine vegetation, as well as conducted vegetation ecology research throughout the state. He is an affiliate faculty of the University of Montana and president of the Conservation Biology Research.

Large photo: Bluebunch wheat grass (*Agropyron spicatum*) is a native grass with awns. PHOTO: Jose Hernandez; hosted by the USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database
Inset photo: *Bromus tectorum* is an introduced weed with long, needle-like awns. PHOTO: Robb Hannawacker; courtesy of Wikimedia

Native conifers dominate our winter forests

*Story and photos
by Rob Zimmer*

WHITE CEDARS can be identified by their leathery and flat scaly leaves.



SPRUCES can be identified by short, sharp, square needles.



Nature provides stunning seasonal beauty with the many species of conifers that call North America home. They thrive in just about every habitat, and make exceptional landscape choices for those who wish to bring nature home, especially for winter wildlife food and shelter.

Native conifers can be separated into three families: Pine (*Pinaceae*), Yew (*Taxaceae*) and Cypress (*Cupressaceae*). All are wind pollinated. Pines, spruce, tamarack, hemlock and fir trees are in the pine family. Canada yew is in the yew family, while white and red cedar and bald cypress are in the cypress family. Learning to identify the different conifers by their appearance, foliage and cones is a fun and interesting way to explore the natural world.

Following are some tips to help you get started:

PINES can be identified by their longer needles in bundles.



PINES

In general, pines can be distinguished from spruces by their thin needles that grow in clusters. The long, fine needles of white pine (*Pinus strobus*) are arranged in bunches of five at branch tips. These wispy needles give the tree a soft appearance when viewed from a distance. The slender cones of white pine are about 5 inches long. Look for this widespread species in sandy soils.

A tall northern tree, the red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) has long stiff and brittle needles in clusters of two. When bent, the needles break. Its short woody cones grow on the tips of its twigs. Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) is a smaller scrubby tree that needs an open sunny habitat. Look for bundles of two short needles, and tight cones that need fire to open for seed dispersal.

SPRUCES

In general, spruces feature short, sharp needles that individually grow out of short woody pegs that surround its stems. Their needles are square in cross section, unlike firs that have flat, soft needles.

Black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and white spruce (*P. glauca*) are the most common native spruces. The cones of spruces tend to be more papery and smaller than those of the pines. Black spruce are common in the soggy soils of northern swamps and bogs. While white spruce can grow as an associate, it can also grow in a larger range within mixed forests and near streams.

Red spruce (*P. rubra*) is also found in the north, but persists at windswept higher elevations in the Alleghenies and Adirondacks. Adapted to harsh weather, spruce grows tight grained and elastic wood — perfect for musical soundboards of stringed instruments. A western cousin, Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) has been used for traditional landscaping throughout the east, far from its native central and southern Rocky Mountains.

CREeping JUNIPER

Growing in northern areas from the Great Lakes to as far as coastal Alaska, creeping juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*) is well adapted and reduces erosion on gravelly and sandy hillsides, dunes and grasslands. With foliage similar to eastern red cedar, this juniper is identified by its low-growing, sprawling habit, rather than as a classic, upright tree. In some locations, this shrub may reach no more than a foot in height. It is state-listed as endangered or threatened in at least six states.

WHITE CEDAR

Eastern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*), commonly known as arborvitae, grows in many areas of the upper Great Lakes and northern U.S. Preferring moist, swampy soils, this tree forms dense cedar thickets where it grows in combination with balsam fir, hemlock and yellow birch. This conifer can be identified by its flat, thick, fan-like foliage and little, brown clustered cones.

RED CEDAR

Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), also called juniper, is quite different from white cedar. Red cedars sport beautiful female cones that look like waxy, blue berries in fall and winter. The foliage is sharper than white cedar and the reddish heartwood is quite fragrant. Slow growing, red cedar prefers upland, slightly dryer areas than white cedar, and is often a pioneer tree in fields and prairies.

HEMLOCK

The great hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*) that tower over the steep ravines and bluffs along the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Michigan shore are my favorite old growth conifers. With short, flat needles aligned elegantly along each branch, these massive trees dominate areas such as Wisconsin's Point Beach State Forest and Whitefish Dunes State Park. Slow growing, they flourish in cool, shady, moist habitats in eastern North America. Winter finches and cross-bills forage on their tiny brown cones for seeds.

TAMARACK

Tamarack (*Larix laricina*), also known as larch, is not an evergreen conifer. Just like deciduous trees, tamaracks drop their needles each fall. These trees feature short star-shaped clusters of 10-20 soft needles along the branches, with tiny purple upright cones. In autumn, tamaracks transform into beautiful shimmering gold, sometimes remaining well into January. ❁

ROB ZIMMER is a nature and garden writer in Appleton, Wisconsin. He is the author of the books "Voices of the Wind: Four Seasons in Wild Wisconsin," "Reflecting: Nature in Black and White" and "Wild Seasons: The Beauty of Native Wildflowers," which are available on Amazon. Zimmer also speaks on a variety of native plant and gardening subjects, and will be speaking at the Wild Ones Fox Valley area chapter conference, Toward Harmony with Nature, in January 2017. Visit www.robzimmeroutdoors.com or go to www.facebook.com/RobZimmerOutdoors for more information.

CHAPTER NOTES

Greater Cincinnati Wild Ones

sponsored a seed ball workshop at the Civic Garden Center's Green Learning Station in November. Three types of milkweed seed were offered: common, swamp and butterfly weed.

Northfield Prairie Partners

held a luncheon at St. Olaf College on Dec. 8. They also participated in the annual Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 17 in Rice County, Minnesota. The program has been collecting data on birds since 1966.

The Tennessee Valley Chapter

held its holiday social Dec. 12. Members and their families who attended donated canned goods that were later delivered to the Chattanooga Area Food Bank.

The Blue Ridge Chapter

had a successful seed and book swap in late November. They also sponsored a viewing of "Hometown Habitat" on Dec. 13.

The Greater DuPage Chapter

is gearing up to celebrate its 25th anniversary with a potluck dinner and speaker at the DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church in April. They will also sponsor a viewing of "Hometown Habitat" in March at the Downers Grove Public Library.

Dorothy Boyer, member of the

Milwaukee North Chapter,

presented "Healing the Earth with Native Plants" to her chapter and members of the Milwaukee Southwest Wehr Chapter during their annual Christmas party and seed exchange on Dec. 10.

The Mountain Laurel Chapter

held its annual potluck lunch on Dec. 10 at the home of members Bill and Lois Glazier in Mystic, Connecticut. On Dec. 15, they also participated in a webinar titled "Monarchs and Climate Change" that featured Wild Ones National Honorary Director Dr. Karen Oberhauser of the University of Minnesota Monarch Lab and co-chairwoman of Monarch Joint Venture. ❁

Grass Roots Initiative — The Grass Roots Initiative is a 1.3-acre exhibit that explores the uses and history of grass and lawn care.

Danthonia spicata
poverty oatgrass

Lawn of future — *Danthonia spicata*, or poverty oat grass, may become the lawn of the future since it thrives in dry soils and prefers open locations. It grows well without fertilizer, watering, pesticides or frequent mowing.

GRASS ROOTS

Welcome to the first exhibit to explore the science, history, and environmental benefits of grasses!

Human interaction with grasses has a long and rich history. Today lawns are a hot issue in the ongoing environmental stewardship debate. Science allows us to make the best use of these adaptable and resilient plants to enhance and protect the environment. Look for banners throughout the exhibit to explore the science behind grasses in our everyday lives.



Use the QR codes on the banners to learn more and to link to our Grass Roots Web site.

INITIATIVE TEACHES USES, HISTORY OF GRASS, LAWN CARE

Story and photos by Julie Macier

I visited the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. in September. While exploring the Arboretum's website prior to my visit, what caught my attention was not their native plant collection, but their Grass Roots Initiative and its accompanying documents, particularly a document titled, Mythbusters: The Truth about Turfgrass.

It states: "Research has demonstrated that turfgrasses are equal to native species in their ability to reduce nutrient runoff and leaching through the soil. However, there is still interest in developing native grasses for lawn use" for specific areas of the country. As a member of Wild Ones, who yearly shrinks my lawn, expands my native plantings, and avoids pesticides, this was the exhibit I wanted to see.

The 1.3-acre Grass Roots Exhibit is one phase of the Grass Roots Initiative, a four-year project that began construction on Nov. 15, 2013 and opened to the public on Oct. 16, 2014. Located near the Visitor's Center, a series of banners and permanent signs lead tourists and others through the various grass plantings sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Turfgrass Federation. The banners pose questions and display QR codes revealing the answers. This provides a fun and less technical way to explain the science, uses and history of grass and lawn care. One area features a rain garden of sedges and grasses. The associated banner explains how rain gardens filter pollutants and nutrients from storm water work in conjunction with the adjacent lawn. The most striking banner, "Remarkable Roots," contains a National Geographic photo of a prairie grass plant with an extensive 14-foot root system!

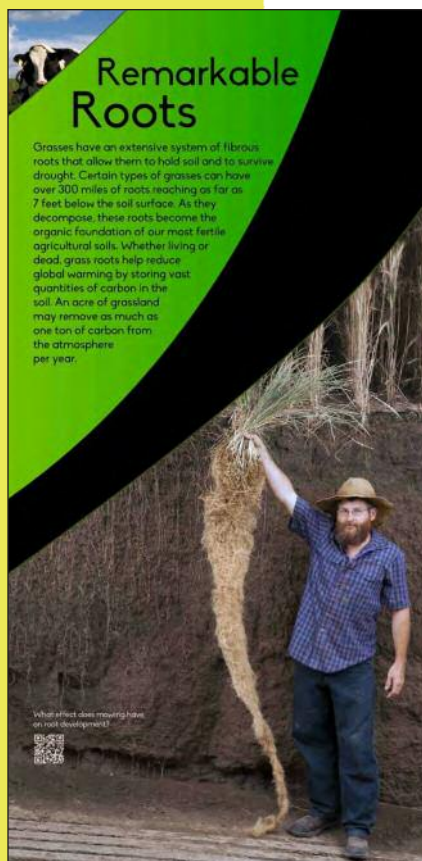
A goal of the exhibit is to demonstrate and encourage proper lawn maintenance to limit pollution of the waterways, especially the Chesapeake Bay.

The mythbusters factsheet states: “Like humans, turfgrasses need feeding to be vibrant, growing and healthy. Research has shown that turfgrasses are often much better at filtering excess nutrients and sediment than agricultural crops, or even lawn weeds. This is because healthy turfgrass has many miles of fibrous roots that hold soil and filter rainwater. Therefore, maintaining a healthy lawn by applying timely nutrients is environmentally beneficial and helpful to the Chesapeake Bay” and other bodies of water.

The banners also describe the history of lawns beginning in ancient times through the present. Today, environmentally conscious citizens match their lawn needs to their growing conditions (arid, wet, hot, cold). Hoping to find grasses that require less maintenance for the various conditions, Arboretum scientists experiment with native species of grass for lawn use. One such grass under cultivation, *Danthonia spicata*, or poverty oat grass, has many promising features. It “thrives in dry acidic soils, prefers shaded locations ... and grows well without fertilizer, watering, pesticides or frequent mowing.” It sounds like it could be the perfect environmentally friendly lawn grass, and it is native to many areas of the country. It will be interesting to see how research on this grass progresses.

Heading to Washington? You can visit in person daily 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. except on Dec. 25. Admission is free. For more information, explore the [interactive banners](#) or the [U.S. National Arboretum website](#). 🌸

JULIE MACIER, a retired special education teacher, has been a Green Bay Wild Ones member for 20 years and is a past president of her chapter. She would like to thank Geoffrey Rinehart, Grass Roots program coordinator of the U.S. Natural Arboretum, for his help and willingness to answer questions about the banners and for sharing his lawn maintenance presentation.



Above: Agro-ecologist with a 14-foot tangle of grass, Salina, KS
PHOTO: Jim Richardson for National Geographic

Below: Rain garden
PHOTO: Courtesy of the Ritter Public Library
Rain garden diagram
PHOTO: Courtesy of Kitsap County Public Works

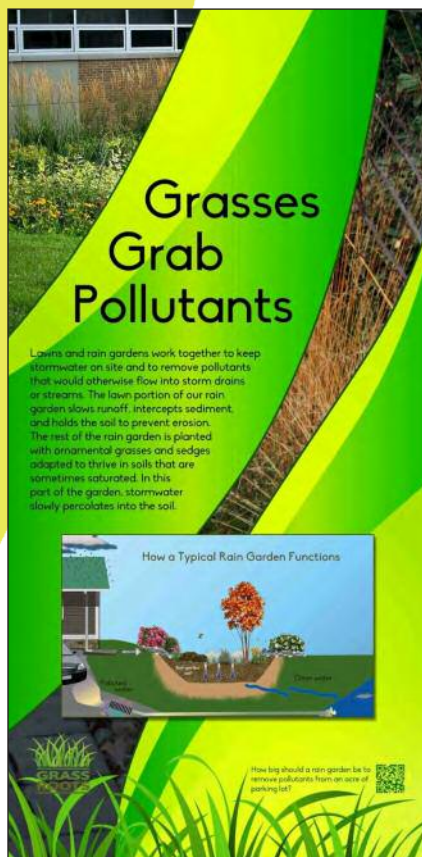


PHOTO: Barbara A. Schmitz

Asclepias tuberosa **2017 'plant of year'**

By Donna Van Buecken

The American Perennial Plant Association has announced the 2017 Perennial Plant of the Year: butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*). This is a good thing, of course, for native plant enthusiasts. Now garden centers and big box stores will carry this native species in response to the anticipated demand.

This sounds like a win-win for monarch butterflies and other pollinators — Yeah! More habitat! But, there is a big however.

First and foremost, both the buyers and sellers are going to have to be diligent about making certain the plants have not been grown using systemic insecticides.

Second, many perennial gardeners may not realize the number of insects that use this plant (aphids, ants, beetles, tussock moth caterpillars, bees and wasps — just to name a few) or that it is susceptible to mildew.

Third, buyers will need to carefully read the label regarding planting conditions. Butterfly weed likes to grow in well-drained soils in full sun, although the [Missouri Botanical Garden](#) notes it is also does well in poor, dry soils. Its long taproot makes it difficult to transplant and move.

It will take a big effort on the part of monarch butterfly enthusiasts everywhere to educate the nonnative plant gardeners about how to maintain this milkweed as appropriate habitat for female monarchs and their larva.

DONNA VAN BUECKEN was the first executive director of Wild Ones, and in her retirement writes a blog on native plants and natural landscaping at [www.accentnatural.com](#). She is a member of Wild Ones Fox Valley Area.

A bee basks in the sun on *Asclepias tuberosa*.

PHOTO: Martha Johnston





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BOOK REVIEW

By Charlotte Adelman

“Most of us in developed countries live in environments in which our interactions with organisms of other species are largely hidden. Our direct experience is limited to our pets, to the plants and animals in our gardens and parks, to the insects and other pests that annoy or plague us, to infectious microorganisms, and to the foods we eat, many of which we purchase pre-packed in grocery stores. We should remember, however, that our lives and our health are intimately related to and affected by the innumerable species that form part of our environment — those that contribute to our health as well as those that cause disease,” writes Dr. Robert Perlman in “[Evolution and Medicine](#).”

Lately, we’ve been hearing a lot about insect pollinators. A *de rigueur* subject, it is on the agenda of every self-respecting garden club. It’s not as if pollination is something new. A tiny insect covered with pollen grain that became the first-ever fossil record of insect pollination dates back 100 million years, according to [Science Daily](#). Then there’s the *X. morganii praedicta*, a giant hawkmoth with a foot-long tongue. Charles Darwin [predicted its existence](#) in 1862 as he sat in his London office while examining a dried specimen of an orchid sent to him from Madagascar that had unusual foot-long nectar spurs. Darwin wrote to a friend that scientists would one day discover the orchid’s co-evolutionary partner: an insect with a foot-long proboscis or tongue. Though ridiculed for his statement by some contemporary entomologists, the creature was ultimately discovered in 1903 — some 20 years after Darwin’s death. In 2004, 143 years after Darwin’s prediction, a biologist captured videographic evidence of the moth with its long proboscis feeding from and pollinating the long-nectaried orchid. You can view this on [YouTube](#).

Of course, entomologists study pollinators. But popular books on gardening and attracting wildlife to your garden basically ignored the subject for years. So, what happened to bring pollinators to the front burner?

“A growing interest in native pollinators, specifically bees, is partially a result of massive public awareness about the decline of European honeybees worldwide,”

notes [Native Pollinators](#). “While honey bees are clearly not the only hardworking pollinators that deliver a bounty to humans and other animals, their recent deaths from Colony Collapse Disorder starting in 2006 have captured the world’s attention,” states [Pollinator Partnership](#).

Since 2006, naturalists and native plant gardeners have taken increased notice as popular books and articles finally started addressing the plight of our pollinators. The insects themselves turn out to be aesthetic and fascinating little subjects. Learning about pollinators is a lot of fun. But, most of us are limited in good sources of information about this important topic.

This is where [Pollinators of Native Plants – Attract, Observe and Identify Pollinators and Beneficial Insects with Native Plants](#) comes in. Written by Heather Holm, owner of a landscape design and consulting business specializing in native plant landscapes and restorations, the book is accurately described as a comprehensive, essential book that profiles over 65 perennial native plant species of the Midwest, Great Lakes region, Northeast and southern Canada, plus the pollinators, beneficial insects and flower visitors the plants attract. Beautifully designed and illustrated with more than 1,500 photos of plants and insects, the book is a helpful resource for gardeners, native plant enthusiasts, landscape restoration professionals and others interested in attracting, supporting, identifying or planting for pollinators. Readers learn to attract and identify pollinators and beneficial insects as well as customize their landscape planting for a particular type of pollinator with native plants.

It is a common misconception that bees, for example, can utilize any and all flowers. One of this book’s services is to put this fallacy to rest. It is true that the majority of flower-visiting insects are polylectic, collecting pollen from many genera or families of plants. However, even though the bee species that are oligolectic, pollen specialists that collect pollen from a single plant genus to a few plant genera, are a minority, they total a goodly number of bee species, and play vital roles. Why are some bees generalists while other bees are specialists? Each strategy has advantages and disadvantages. Holm identifies and discusses specialist bees that visit the perennials she profiles, such as the mining bees (*Andrena* spp.) that are goldenrod and aster specialists. (For a definitive list of oligolectic bees in Illinois, see [Illinois Wildflowers](#).) Nice touches in the book include listing complementary plants, butterfly and moth host plants and providing range maps. This very attractive and information-packed book is definitely a keeper.

“Pollinators of Native Plants” can be purchased through the [Wild Store](#) or [Holm’s website](#). 🌸

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.



||| CALIFORNIA

Insects may help San Diego State University researchers track climate change, [KPBS News](#) reported.

San Diego State University biologist [Daniel Marschalek](#) has spent years collecting pollinators — including bees, wasps, beetles and butterflies — that populate a small section of [Mission Trails Regional Park](#), believing it is important to know how local insect populations are doing.

Collecting, measuring and cataloguing insects tells researchers about a population's health.

San Diego State University entomologist [Douglas Duetschman](#) said that information also tells scientists about the health of the environment where the bugs were caught.

While studying pollinators is not new, studying pollinators in native habitats has largely been ignored in the past, Duetschman said.

“No amount of preserving the land for that plant will protect the plant from extinction if its pollinator is driven out of the system. So we need to start thinking about the system, not just the piece of land we're protecting,” he said.

||| MARYLAND

About 200 acres of pollinator habitat will be restored on Baltimore Gas and Electric Company's electric rights-of-way located in Maryland state parks, [Business Wire](#) reported in November.

The rights-of-way are currently maintained by mowing, but will be transitioned to meadow or prairie ecosystems, according to the BGE and Maryland Department of Natural Resources initiative.

“This partnership benefits the state, our customers and, most importantly, the pollinators that are vital for a healthy environment,” said Derrick Dickens, vice president of technical services for BGE.

||| MICHIGAN

Researchers are taking a new approach to invasive plants. They're harvesting them for fertilizer and fuel, [Michigan Public Radio](#) reports.

Brendan Carson, an ecology research associate from Loyola University Chicago, said an invasive European cattail has crossed with a native cattail to make a hybrid in [Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge](#). When there are too many cattails in one place, they can crowd out native plants, which means a wetland can lose its ability to filter water, and birds and fish can suffer from a lack of food and shelter.

The team uses a harvester that consumes cattails, and then gives the shredded cattails to local farmers, who use them to fertilize crops.

Other universities are finding different uses for invasive plants. Researchers at Lake Superior State University and Michigan State University have started using invasive plants like reed canary grass to make [fuel pellets](#), while the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh is using a [biodigester](#) to turn cattails and other materials into electricity.

||| MINNESOTA

Minnesota will release a new critical habitat license plate in early 2017 with a design that features pollinators in native habitat.

According to The Daily Journal, the Minnesota Legislature created the critical habitat license plate program in 1995 to provide an additional opportunity for residents to contribute toward conservation. Motorists who purchase a critical habitat plate pay a \$10 initial fee, plus a minimum annual contribution of \$30 to the Reinvest in Minnesota program. Every dollar generated through the sale of the license plate is matched with private donations of cash or land.

Critical habitat license plate revenue has generated more than \$59 million to acquire or improve 22,000 acres of critical habitat and helped fund nongame wildlife research and surveys, habitat enhancement and educational programs.

||| VERMONT

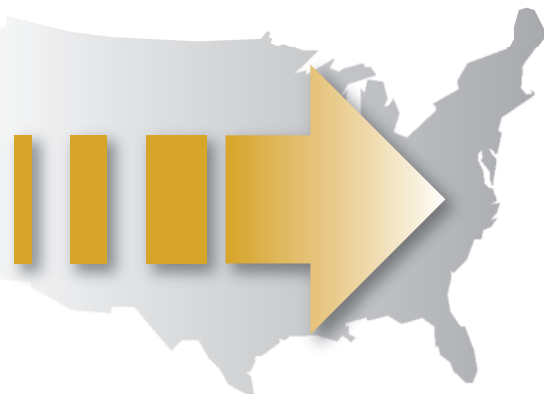
An expanded federal program to improve wildlife habitat on private agricultural land could help preserve two types of rare turtles found in Vermont, the Associated Press reported.

Officials have not yet specified any projects to improve habitats of the wood turtle and spotted turtle, but the federal government will work with farmers and others to restore wetlands to land that might have once been drained with ditches or other alterations to make it more suitable for agricultural use.

“That fits in perfectly with the needs of the wood turtle and the spotted turtle because they have a range of wetland and stream habitat that they need and that's the kind of areas we're looking at in these projects,” said Jim Eikenberry, wetlands specialist for the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The [Northeast Turtle Project](#) is one of 11 new projects in 30 states from Florida to Alaska being added to the service's Working Lands for Wildlife effort. 🌻

NEWS
from across the
NATION



LEARNING HOW TO care for your piece of the Earth

Member Janet Allen
is on a mission
to spread the word about
natural landscaping, and in turn,
create a healthy planet
for people and wildlife, yard by yard.

By Janet Allen

Would you like to learn more about caring for your yard, creating habitat for wildlife, and providing a healthy, joyful place for people, too?

Caring for Our Piece of the Earth is a six-session discussion course that will help you learn how — and why — to do this.

This course provides more than just learning about good stewardship of your “piece of the Earth.” It also provides a welcome opportunity to have thoughtful conversations with fellow community members about something that matters — an opportunity too often missing in our busy, high-tech lives. You might even make a new friend or two!

HOW THE COURSE WORKS

This course is modeled on the Northwest Earth Institute’s discussion courses. A group of people gathers for six sessions to discuss a common set of materials they’ve read prior to their meeting.

This is a self-facilitated course rather than an instructor-led one. The course coordinator selects a time and place to hold the sessions and recruits group members. In each session, group members volunteer to be the opener who shares a short personal opening and the facilitator who keeps the meeting on track. No one has to be the “expert.” Everyone learns together.

GROUP SIZE

The course works best with a group of eight to 12 people. This is small enough to give everyone a chance to participate, but large enough to provide a range of perspectives. Keeping the group to 12 or fewer people also makes it easier to find a suitable meeting location. And assembling a group of at least eight people ensures a range of ideas, even if some individuals have to miss a session.

Of course, individuals can use the materials if a group isn’t available, but they miss the range of perspectives that arise in the discussions. They also miss the inspiration provided by people sharing their ideas and passions. Try to form a group if you can, even if it’s smaller than the recommended size.

THE MATERIALS

Ironically, technology is what enables these face-to-face conversations. The course materials, consisting of an introduction and six sessions, are currently available at www.hgcny.org/learn-course.html. Each session is a separate PDF file that includes written material as well as links to additional online resources. PDF files should be easy for most people to access and use, but if necessary, people could use the Internet at a public library or ask for assistance from fellow course members.

WHO THE COURSE IS FOR

Whether you’ve been working for years creating your Earth-friendly home landscape or you’re just starting out, this course is for you. A range of topics and sophistication is built into the course.

Above: A child explores the holes in the trunk of a tree. The benefit of nature for children is one topic covered in the *Caring for Our Piece of the Earth* discussion course.

PHOTO: Janet Allen

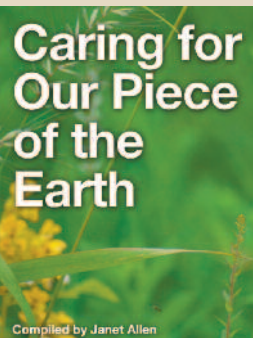
Foundational core articles address the fundamentals, and many optional articles allow people to pursue topics in more depth. Having group members with a range of experience makes the conversations all the more interesting and rewarding.

A FINAL NOTE

I would appreciate knowing if you’re using these materials, and I welcome your feedback. You can email me at janetallen3@verizon.net. I plan to update and revise the course over the coming months and years and your feedback will be helpful.

And when you’ve finished the course, please encourage others in your own community and beyond to organize additional groups. By spreading the word, you’ll help create a healthy planet for people and wildlife, yard by yard. 🌱

JANET ALLEN is co-founder of the *Wild Ones* chapter, *Habitat Gardening in Central New York*. She has written numerous articles about habitat gardening for various publications and frequently gives presentations to garden groups or at conferences. Allen is creator and webmaster of *Our Habitat Garden* and *Our Edible Garden*. Her yard is certified as a *Monarch Waystation* by Monarch Watch and a *Certified Wildlife Habitat* by the National Wildlife Federation.



Compiled by Janet Allen

Caring for Our Piece of the Earth is a six-week discussion course compiled by Wild Ones member Janet Allen.



Prospective members look over the Columbus chapter's Wild Ones display at the 2016 Ohio Pawpaw Festival.



Barbara Velez Barbosa smiles as a costumed pawpaw hugs her in the Pollinator Tent at the 2016 Ohio Pawpaw Festival.

Barbara Velez Barbosa doesn't just grow native plants; she has been helping grow the number of Wild Ones chapters throughout Ohio.

Velez Barbosa, president of the Columbus chapter, uses the Wild Ones mission to guide her activities and show people that Wild Ones isn't your usual garden club.

TIPS TO promote AND grow chapters

Columbus, Ohio chapter president shows others that Wild Ones isn't your usual garden club

By Sherrie Snyder,
Illinois Prairie
Chapter and
Barbara A. Schmits,
JOURNAL Editor

Photos courtesy of
Barbara Velez
Barbosa

After becoming her chapter's program chairwoman in 2009, Velez Barbosa started out doing educational exhibits for the Columbus chapter meetings. But as her exhibits and reputation grew, so too did the number of people who asked her to attend conferences and meetings statewide. She soon realized that many different organizations have similar goals and it made sense to work with them, rather than compete against them.

In addition, as she networked, she learned that the best way to reach out to get a Wild Ones chapter started was to create a personal connection through like-minded organizations: state parks, local parks

and recreation departments, soil and water conservation districts, county extension offices, and others.

Her mantra is "To learn the mission, work the mission." She does this by participating in as many as 50 information-sharing opportunities a year. She sets up displays (one for her Wild Ones chapter and one for the National Wildlife Federation) at such venues as the state fair, local celebrations and environmental events. She often helps to organize other like-minded organizations in a large tent to make a greater impact. For example, she coordinated activities and invited several organizations to join forces in a "Pollinator Tent" at the 2016 Ohio Pawpaw Festival in September. Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) is one of North America's largest native tree fruit.) Sponsored by Ohio Wild Ones chapters, including Columbus, Dayton area, Greater Cincinnati, Northeast Ohio and Oak Openings Region in the Toledo area, as well as the Ohio Sierra Club, the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative Tent included 16 exhibits as well as talks and a pollinator tour for children.

Besides giving out Wild Ones brochures and handouts at the various events, Velez Barbosa also obtains educational materials from The Nature Conservancy, the National Wildlife Federation, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and others. She shares these at her display booth and uses them to

educate people about the beauty and importance of native plants. She also promotes the Wild Ones' Butterfly Garden Recognition Program that encourages people to landscape with native plants for butterfly habitats.

Not only does Velez Barbosa sign up new Wild Ones members at such events, but she also encourages people to create new chapters. When people sign up to learn more about Wild Ones, she offers to meet with them to teach them about the organization, but also to persuade them to start a new chapter and collaborate with other Wild Ones chapters across Ohio.

So far, she has successfully helped the Dayton chapter take root. But she is also working with others to start seedling chapters in northeast Ohio, Athens and Marietta.

She advocates having more chapters so members have to drive shorter distances to attend meetings and other events. "I know that people are busy and if it takes them a couple hours to drive to a meeting, they likely won't go," she said. "There need to be more chapters, especially in some geographic areas. We need to grow the number of members just on our mailing list so that they are also active in the community."

One of the initiatives they have found effective is helping new members create their own native plant gardens. They offer a home garden visit where a Wild

**Do you want to
START A NEW CHAPTER?**

Call the national office at (920) 730-3986 to discuss the process and check out the Chapter Start-up Kit offered by the National Wild Ones office.



Sixteen exhibitors representing various organizations took part in the 2016 Ohio Pawpaw Festival's Pollinator Tent.

Ones member will tour the new member's property and take inventory of what plants the homeowner currently has, as well as offer a \$100 certificate for Ohio genotype species from a native plant nursery, \$20 off an annual Wild Ones Columbus membership, and once their garden is registered with the national office, a yard sign noting that their garden is recognized as a Wild Ones native butterfly habitat. Six months later, they revisit the home to ensure native landscaping was added to the original landscape design, answer questions about native plants and to take photos that are can be posted on the Wild Ones website.

Velez Barbosa said the goal is to bring nature to others, one yard at a time, all while creating a national corridor for monarchs and other pollinators. While they don't tell people what plants they must put it, they certainly promote growing native plants that will support the types of pollinators they want.

They can also offer recommendations for landscapers if residents need trees trimmed or want someone else to plant the garden, as well as other resources, she said. In fact, she has created her own website, [Monarch Pathways](#), to also serve as a resource.

Velez Barbosa said this method could be used nationwide to grow Wild Ones chapters. "Each state or county has the same resources — the DNR, soil and water conservation departments, and extension offices," she said. "We all need to advocate and educate others about natural landscaping using native plants. We need to work together to create a national corridor so all pollinators can thrive." 🌸

The start-up kit will help you learn about the steps and policies to having a successful chapter.

By Candy Sarikonda

Be the change you want to see in the world." It's a simple statement, but it has powerful implications. Is there something you care passionately about? Do you want to make your voice heard? Start by contacting your elected officials.

Navigating the legislative realm can be challenging. But it begins with a simple understanding of how the United States Congress is structured. Congress consists of two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The Senate is made up of two members from each state, resulting in a total of 100 members. Each state has equal representation in the Senate. Senators serve a six-year term, with terms staggered so that every two years approximately one-third of the Senate will be up for re-election. The Senate has some powers the House does not have, such as consenting to or confirming the appointments of Cabinet secretaries, federal judges, other federal executive officials and uniformed officers, military officers, regulatory officials and ambassadors.

The U.S. House of Representatives also consists of elected officials. The number of voting representatives in the House is fixed by law at no more than 435 members. The number of representatives per state is proportionate to the state's population. Also referred to as a congressman or congresswoman, each representative is elected to a two-year term serving the people of a specific congressional district. Among other duties, representatives introduce bills and resolutions, offer amendments and serve on committees.

How do you contact your senator or representative? There are many sites available that will help you find the contact information for your elected officials. One such website is [USA.gov](#), where you will find assistance for determining who is your elected legislator, as well as contact information for the President, senators, representatives and others. You may choose to call the office of your elected official or write a letter.

There are several steps to follow when writing a letter or email to your senator or representative. (See [sample letters](#) for ideas.) A good rule of thumb is to keep your letter or email short and to the point — generally one page is recommended. First, begin with addressing your elected official appropriately. Start by writing "Dear Senator" followed by his or her last name for senate officials. Begin with "Dear Representative" followed by his or her last name for House officials.

Next, introduce yourself, being sure to identify yourself as a constituent. Include any credentials you might have. Then, state why you are contacting your elected official. If a specific bill is involved, include the correct title and number of the bill. Be specific about your topic. Be factual, and state why this topic affects you. Provide resources that back up your statements.

Conclude your letter or email by stating the specific action you want taken. Ask that you be contacted with a response, and provide your contact information. Be courteous and respectful. Make sure to thank your elected official for his or her time.

If you choose to call your elected officials, use your letter or email as your talking points memo. Your letter will serve to remind you of important points you want to make during the conversation. It is wise to follow up your phone call with a letter or email.

Contacting your elected officials can be a bit intimidating at first. But remember, they are your elected officials. Exercise your right to vote, and hold your elected officials accountable. It is a right every U.S. citizen must uphold, and our duty to our country, our fellow Americans and our planet. 🌿

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/>.

HOW TO *contact your elected officials*



PHOTO: Courtesy of publicdomainpictures.net



Pearl crescent enjoying brown-eyed Susan
PHOTO: Jacki Kossik



Viceroy on a purple coneflower
PHOTO: Barbara Schmitz

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Gardening

WITH

Butterflies

By Matthew Shepherd

**Black swallowtail on
purple coneflower**
PHOTO: Jessica Walsh



I learned gardening at my mother's side, and I'll admit that at first I didn't really enjoy it. As she worked, my mum would leave piles of weeds and clippings; it was my job to clear them up and add them to the compost heap. Gradually, though, this became more than just a source of pocket money. I began to notice what was happening around me — how the plants grew, the changing blooms of different months, the birds, and, in particular, the butterflies. On my parents' bookshelves, I found a copy of Josef Moucha's "*A Concise Guide in Colour: Butterflies*," and began to put names to what I was seeing: brimstone, peacock, small tortoiseshell, red admiral, painted lady. I was hooked.

Over time, I took a more active role in the garden, and when we moved to southern England and had a new garden I helped my mum select plants and extend the flower borders. In time, the garden was transformed. Imagine an English country garden — complete with a thatched cottage—and you have a pretty good picture of what this looked like. And it was not just beautiful: it was full of life.

In the years since, I have planted and tended butterfly gardens around a succession of my own homes and have had the pleasure of working with schools and parks to design and create gardens.

I've also discovered that the skills learned in one place can be adapted to new locations. I moved several more times in Britain and also lived in East Africa and now in western Oregon, and have created butterflyfriendly gardens in each place.

At the core of any garden, of course, are plants. Butterfly gardens are no exception; although, rather than choosing plants based on their individual color or shape or whether they combine in a pleasing way, the choices are guided by additional considerations such as their nectar content, the degree to which they are regionally appropriate, or whether caterpillars will eat them. This is not to say that a butterfly garden will be unattractive to people — far from it. A garden full of nectar plants provides a beautiful backdrop for family barbecues and play dates, for graduation photographs and lazy summer afternoons.

When you start thinking about your own garden, one of the first pieces of information you'll need is an idea of which species of butterflies occur in your area. You can then identify the host plants necessary for their caterpillars, which may be flowers, grasses, shrubs or even trees; many of them will also be nectar plants.

Butterflies visit flowers of any hue, but generally

In addition, you will want to discover how your local butterflies survive winter — as eggs, caterpillars, pupae or adults — which will guide you in deciding how you can provide for their entire life cycle. There are numerous good field guides and websites that can help with this, but also don't forget to spend time observing butterflies to see which plants they are using in your neighborhood.

Plan your flower plantings so as to create large blocks of color because these tend to attract more butterflies. Their compound eyes are good at discerning color, although they don't see colors as we do, but they aren't good at picking out small details. Thus, a massed planting (such as a cluster of five or more of the same plants) creates a splash of color that butterflies will notice. They will potentially visit flowers of any hue, but generally prefer those that to us look white, yellow, pink, orange, red or purple. Once butterflies find their way to your garden, additional flowers will give them reason to stay.

Incorporating a wide variety of flowers with different colors, shapes and fragrances increases your chances of attracting the greatest number of species of butterflies and other flower visitors. Moreover, a successful butterfly garden will have nectar plants that bloom all across the growing season (which, in some warm climates, includes winter). The early spring or fall butterflies may not be so obvious, but providing for them can significantly boost the diversity of your garden. Potential components include springflowering shrubs such as wild lilac (*Ceanothus*), cherry (*Prunus*), hawthorn (*Crataegus*) and serviceberry (*Amelanchier*), and fall blooming nectar plants such as asters (*Symphyotrichum*), goldenrods (*Solidago* and *Euthamia*) and sunflowers (*Helianthus*).

Native plants support a wider range of butterflies and moths than do nonnative species, particularly as caterpillar host plants, as clearly demonstrated by research done by Douglas Tallamy and his colleagues at the University of Delaware. Comparing the number of species of butterflies and moths that were supported by native plants vs. nonnative ones, Tallamy found an average of 74 species on native plants and only five on nonnatives. The abundance of butterflies and moths also differed, with an average 75 percent reduction in numbers on nonnative plants compared to native plants. We shouldn't be too surprised; nonnative garden plants are often selected to be "pestfree," which means fewer biting and chewing insects, and those biters and chewers include butterfly caterpillars. (To get a deeper understanding of the importance of

this consideration, read Tallamy's book, "*Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*," which can be purchased through the [Wild Ones website](http://www.wildones.org).)

There is a place for nonnative plants in a garden, though, so if you are a lover of catmint, marjoram or English lavender, don't despair. They can serve as good nectar sources, but if you do plant non-native species, please be careful never to use invasive species even if they attract butterflies. Lantana (*Lantana*) and purple butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*), for example, are two butterfly-attracting shrubs that are identified as noxious weeds in some states.

Butterflies are sunloving insects. Good habitat tends to consist of open, sunny landscapes protected from strong winds since butterflies need warm temperatures and sunshine in order to fly and forage. With this in mind, it is ideal to situate your butterfly garden in an area that receives six to eight hours of direct sunlight each day. If you have the option, establishing your garden on a southern exposure will maximize the amount of sun received. Still, although most butterflies (and their food plants) prefer sun, several butterfly plants tolerate full or partial shade, so you can take heart if your garden space does not get full sun. Larval host plants that can grow satisfactorily in at least partial shade or edges include lupine (*Lupinus perennis*), common blue violet (*Viola sororia*), Joe-pye weed (*Eutrochium*), and pipevine (*Aristolochia macrophylla*).

One issue that wasn't a concern back when I was learning about gardening is the presence of pesticides in plants sold at garden centers. Driven by the demand for blemish-free stock, nurseries have increasingly employed a group of insecticides that act systemically. Systemic insecticides are absorbed by plants upon application and then distributed throughout plant tissues, sometimes making their way into pollen and nectar. While this provides long-lasting protection against such insect pests as aphids, it also makes the plants potentially toxic to bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects that eat pollen, sip nectar, or feed on plant tissues. An additional step in the process of selecting plants, then, is to ask garden center staff what their plants have been treated with since you will not want to purchase plants that have been treated with systemics. Nurseries that grow their own stock, and native plant nurseries in particular, will be in a better position to provide such details, while retail outlets

Great Spangled Fritillary

PHOTO: George Sydlowski



prefer white, yellow, pink, orange, red or purple.

may not have this information available. You should avoid buying plants from any source that cannot verify that they are free from systemic pesticides.

Butterflies need more than nectar sources and caterpillar food plants to survive an entire year. They also need areas in which to bask, secure places to pupate, and refuges in which to spend the winter or to seek cover during bad weather. As a result, my own garden does not look much like the ones in advertisements for hardware stores seen on television: no uniform lawn or neat rows of brightly colored bedding plants, but instead much more diversity of structure and species. Shrubs provide shelter on rainy or breezy days and the chance of a hidden spot to pupate. They also offer different orientations with changing sun angles, and thus a variety of basking opportunities where insects can warm themselves. The corners and margins of my garden are places for brush piles or logs, serving as somewhere to heap rakedup leaves or store trimmed stems and creating just the kind of untidiness that supports the greatest garden biodiversity. It is also in these places that the newts and salamanders shelter, as well as native snails.

Some neighborhood associations and cities have regulations against weeds or poorly maintained yards, and the variety and profusion of a butterfly garden may seem inappropriate to those who prefer their landscapes to be more manicured. Surrounding your garden with tidy, distinct borders can help overcome such objections, as can visible statements such as the Xerces Society's "pollinator habitat" sign, native "butterfly garden" sign from Wild Ones or "certified wildlife habitat" signs from the National Wildlife Federation. These help inform neighbors and others that the diverse native plant landscape you have created is thoughtfully maintained and cared for.

Butterflies are collectively in decline because of habitat loss, insecticide use and climate change. Some of these issues might seem too great for a gardener to address, but every yard can contribute something toward building a more sustainable landscape while creating resilience in butterfly populations and strengthening their ability to overcome threats. And indeed, butterflies are just a starting point. Once your garden is established, you'll notice that there are many other insects attracted to the flowers, as well as a host of other wildlife thriving in the healthy landscape.

The afternoons I spent helping my mother in the garden were the catalyst for what has become an abiding passion. Four decades later I still have that copy of "A Concise Guide in Colour" — with "Shepherd" in my mother's neat handwriting inside the front cover — a direct connection to the roots of my personal gardening history. Butterfly gardening may once have been the preserve of a few enthusiasts, but it is now becoming more widespread, a movement for change within our domestic landscapes. And it is immensely satisfying to see the results when, with a cup of tea in one hand and a book in the other, I find escape from the outside world amid the constant movement of flowers and brightly colored wings. 🌸

MATTHEW SHEPHERD is the Xerces Society's communications director. He previously worked with the pollinator program and is a co-author of several Xerces books, including the newly released "Gardening for Butterflies." Before joining Xerces, Shepherd led community-based conservation programs in Britain and Kenya; he has gardened everywhere he has lived.

Photos top to bottom:

PHOTO: John Magee

PHOTO: John Magee

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PHOTO: Roberta Herschleb

American Copper

PHOTO: Denise Gehring



Plan your flower plantings to create large blocks of color to attract more butterflies.

It's that time again: the 10th anniversary of the last time I read Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*. This book never gets old. In fact, if you have a hearth to sit by, with flames you can see as they cast a warm glow on wooden beams overhead, you can read Leopold every winter and not overdose.

That's because the man knew his outdoor subjects, understood their interactions and described them with love and a literate flair.

It's also because his conservation message remains compelling. Writing in the 1930s and '40s (he would die of a heart attack while fighting a brush fire on his neighbor's land in 1948), Leopold revered his farm in the sand hills of Wisconsin and feared for its future.

He described a landscape in flux; a world in which fencerows for pheasants were disappearing as mechanized agriculture promised larger yields and less wasted space. "Clean farming" it was called; Leopold dreaded it. Too often, he wrote, clean farmers live on the land but not by it.

They deplete but don't replenish. Unless we respect the land, Leopold cautioned, we will destroy it in our lust for progress.

To his credit, he realized chickadees can't vote and that people would have to vote for them. He wrote that wild creatures have the right to proper habitat, to protection from overhunting and commercial exploitation, and to coexist with humankind. We do not own the land, Leopold believed. We are short-term users.

Leopold said this during an era when landfills were called dumps, wetlands were swamps and anyone who spoke against progress because it might mean polluted water was deemed worthy of deportation.

Leopold wasn't deported, but he wasn't deified either. The fact that more people heed his words today than during his lifetime offers proof of his vision.

An expert in forestry, ecology and game management, Leopold will be remembered for insisting we place aesthetic needs on a par with economic ones. How much is it worth to hear loons cry at night? How much to see condors on the wing in the wild or woodcock on their display grounds? The worth of such things defies estimation. It transcends economics.

Leopold revered deep winter as a time devoid of distractions. He loved to listen when there wasn't a roof over his head — to a marsh before dawn, to birds and the wind through white pines. He enjoyed being alone in nature, on rainy days and snowstorm days, when others stayed inside. Some days he would rise at 3 a.m. to walk at a time when all were asleep and the land sprawled without boundaries.

Sometimes he would sit on a boulder in the middle of a trout stream and not even fish, just watch.

He counted the growth rings on every tree he cut, imagining what the tree looked like as a sapling and what was happening on the land that long ago.

Whenever he harvested a large tree for timber, he silently thanked the landowner before him who had thinned around it and helped it reach up to the sky.

We belong to the land; that was Leopold's message.

What a role model. I look forward to reading his words once again, with bare trees outside and the glow from oak flames warming wooden beams over my head. ❁

RICK MARS is a naturalist, lecturer, freelance writer and photographer from Vestal, New York. He has received many awards during his career, including an Environmental Achievement Citation from the Federation of New York State Garden Clubs; communications awards from the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and the Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania Conservation District; and the Earth Day Southern Tier's Earthstar Award for "excellence in promoting public understanding of the natural world." Learn more at www.rickmars.com.

The words of Aldo Leopold never grow old

By Rick Marsi



On the anniversary of Leopold's birth, his conservation message remains compelling



Professor Aldo Leopold addresses the Conservation Congress in June 1943, shortly before he was named Wisconsin conservation commissioner.

PHOTO: Staber W. Reese, Wisconsin DNR

Inset photos:

TOP: Aldo and Estella Leopold and their five children spent a lot of time at the "Shack," where the family restored the land and the old chicken coop. The Leopold Farm and Shack are now on the National Register of Historic Places.

SOURCE: USFS Region 5

BOTTOM: Aldo Leopold's trips to the Rio Gavilan region of the northern Sierra Madre, Mexico, in 1936 and 1937 helped to shape his thinking about land health. Leopold was born Jan. 11, 1887.

SOURCE: USFS Region 5

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Sunset Park Overseed, Kimberly	Macco Pond, Green Bay
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Warren, Michigan Council adopts ordinance to promote native landscaping

By Barbara A. Schmitz, JOURNAL Editor

After more than seven years of talking and planning, the City Council in Warren, Michigan finally acted by adopting an ordinance that allows and promotes native plants.

The council voted 5-1 on Nov. 22 to adopt the ordinance that encourages property owners to landscape with native plants by permitting Planned Natural Landscaping Areas, noting that such areas reduce greenhouse gasses and pollution, reduce water consumption, save money on watering, reduce soil erosion, decrease the need for pesticides, better filter storm water and reduce the potential of sewer overflow and basement flooding.

Although one councilor, Keith Sadowski, expressed reservations that native landscapes would become homes for rodents and that homes would become obscured from the streets, the other councilors said they supported the change, noting that people have become so far removed from the natural world that it has begun falling apart. Sadowski cast the lone “no” vote for the ordinance.

Mary Michaels, acting city attorney, reassured the council that the ordinance included a mechanism so that gardens would be harmonious with neighborhoods. She added that the ordinance would allow people to turn their yards into “bio-diverse landscapes” rather than mainly grass lawns with wraparound landscaping.

Other councilors said it was time for a “paradigm shift” and discussed the “aesthetic appeal” of native landscaping. “Hopefully, we can save the world one lot at a time,” said Cecil St. Pierre, council president.

Councilor Kelly Colegio added that native vegetation is also good for bees, especially important with the recent collapse of many hives. “I’m excited to see this,” she said. “We’re offering our wildlife a chance to live in their natural habitats so they can become self-sufficient again.”

People love the monarch butterfly, but they called its host plant, milkweed, a noxious plant before they understood that you can’t have one without the other, Colegio said. This ordinance will encourage people to continue to learn more about native landscaping, she said, and she suggested residents contact the Wild Ones for information.

The new ordinance requires the property owner to register his or her Planned Natural Landscaping Area with the city so that the property maintenance inspectors do not issue tickets or remove the native plants. The ordinance also requires that property owners remove or limit non-native and opportunistic plants in order that native plants can grow and thrive.

Lastly, the ordinance includes setback requirements that will ensure plants do not overhang onto the surrounding property or sidewalk.

Jerry Hasspacher, environmental committee chairman and member of the Sierra Club, said they have been trying to get the Warren Council to make these changes for years. He said that nearby cities have already adopted similar ordinances and that there have been no issues. “If you go to these cities, you’ll see the beauty of their natural landscaping,” he said. “Vegetation doesn’t attract rats; garbage does.”

Wild Ones member Fred Kaluza has also been active on the environmental committee and pushed for the changes. “Up take, at first, is likely to be very slow and acceptance will come with exposure,” Kaluza said. “No one expects a groundswell of rain gardens, bioswales and converted front lawns anytime soon, but the rest of us can hope.”

While Kaluza said he wasn’t 100 percent happy with the ordinance, especially the provisions for setbacks and requiring properties to be registered, he said the ordinance is much better than what was in place.

To watch the council’s debate, go to <http://www.cityofwarren.org/index.php/council-agenda>. 🌸

WILD CENTER UPDATE

The WILD Center is located along the eastern shore of the Lower Fox River in East Central Wisconsin in an area known as the Fox River Valley. The river flows northeast for 39 miles and discharges into Green Bay and Lake Michigan. The river has the highest concentration of pulp and paper mills in the world and during the 1950s and 1960s these mills produced PCBs, which ultimately contaminated the river. The Fox River Cleanup Project began a multi-year cleanup effort eight years ago that included dredging, capping and covering a 13-mile stretch of the Lower Fox River. The work has paid off as eagles have returned to the Fox River Valley. According to the Eagle Monitoring Project, growing numbers of the majestic bird are making the Fox Cities one of the best eagle viewing locations in the Upper Midwest.

The Eagle Monitoring Project is organized by the Northeast Wisconsin Alliance in cooperation with the Wisconsin DNR and Fox Valley nature centers. Naturally, the WILD Center is once again proud to be participating as a monitoring site. The project acquires information about eagles and eagle habitat in Northeast Wisconsin. Monitoring eagle numbers and ages allows researchers to document the return and welfare of eagles living along the Fox River. Recording the roosting and nesting sites is important to the preservation of the habitat needed to support a healthy eagle population.

On a designated day five times each winter, one or more volunteer eagle monitors arrive before daybreak at each of the 25 monitoring sites along the Lower Fox River. As the sun rises and for the next 90 minutes, they record detailed information about bald eagles, golden eagles and other birds they see. They also record information about the condition of the habitat. This information is analyzed and used by the Wisconsin DNR to help determine the condition of the eagle population and help guide eagle habitat management decisions.

Being a monitoring site isn’t the only connection Wild Ones has to this vital project; members from the Fox Valley Area Chapter are also NEW Alliance volunteers. Dave Peck, a Wild Ones member since 1995, is the site coordinator. He has a fresh pot of coffee brewing at the WILD Center for volunteers and Cheryl Root, a Wild Ones member since 2009, is the eagle monitoring project coordinator. 🌸

Chapter Anniversaries

- 19 years — North Park Village Nature Center, Ill.
- 16 years — Root River Area, Wis.
- 7 years — North Oakland, Mich.
- 3 years — Prairie Edge, Minn.
- 3 years — Will County, Ill.
- 1 year — Dayton Area, Ohio

Mark Your Calendars

Jan. 28, 2017

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

Feb. 18, 2017


Minnesota Area Chapters' Annual
Design with Nature Conference
www.designwithnatureconference.org/
University of St. Thomas
St. Paul campus, St. Paul, Minn.

Feb. 27 - March 3, 2017

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


March 18, 2017


Tennessee Valley Chapter's
Annual Native Plant Symposium
[http://tennesseevalley.wildones.org/
plant-natives-2017/](http://tennesseevalley.wildones.org/plant-natives-2017/)
8:30a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
University of Tennessee,
Chattanooga, Tenn.

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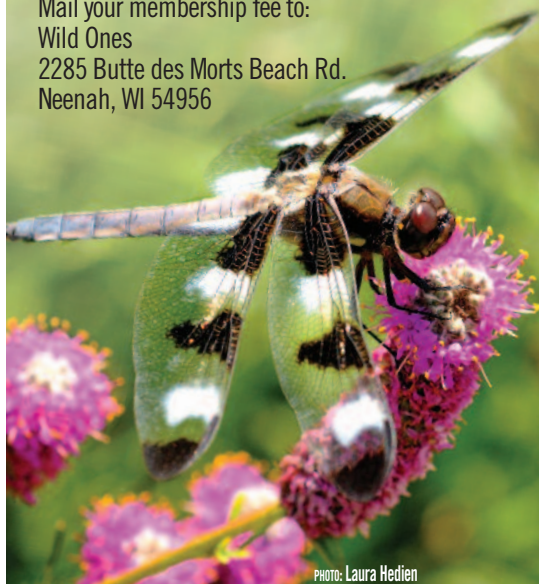


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