



Wild Ones[®]

NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

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



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

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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.

I proudly admit my lifelong trait as an unmitigated optimist. I find it's especially handy after reading the litany of headlines about sharp declines in monarch butterfly populations in the Americas, falling insect populations worldwide, the possibility of species extinctions – you read those, too.

Antidote: Environmental celebrations. It seems to me that celebrating any type of environmental victory is getting ever more important. Thinking of the upcoming April 22 celebration of Earth Day, I looked for other dedicated commemorations of environmental issues and found they start in January (National Bird Day) and go through December (World Soil Day). Here are the 14 most closely tied to Wild Ones' mission:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| National Bird Day..... | Jan. 5 |
| World Wetlands Day | Feb. 2 |
| National Ground Water Awareness Week | March – early |
| National Wildlife Week | March 12-16 |
| World Water Day..... | March 22 |
| National Environmental Education Week..... | April – mid |
| Earth Day | April 22 |
| Arbor Day | April - last Fri. |
| International Migratory Bird Day..... | May – 2nd Sat. |
| Endangered Species Day | May – 3rd Fri. |
| World Environmental Day | June 5 |
| National Pollinator Week | June – 3rd week |
| National Honey Bee Day | Aug. 22 |
| World Soil Day | Dec. 5 |

Showing Wild Ones' link. Do you or your chapter have a program or event to celebrate Earth Day? Or National Environmental Education Week, National Pollinator Week or any others? What an excellent way to show how Wild Ones' focus on native landscaping helps all species! Certainly, we've been leaders in monarch and pollinator health for quite some time. More and more, we are learning that other species need the same help found in native landscapes that provide their food and shelter.

Try it! Share it! This year, the national office will heavily promote Earth Day and Pollinator Week and other special commemorations. How about if in 2019 all members and chapters actively and publicly celebrate Earth Day or other commemorative "days" or "weeks"? These events can further spread the message that native plants are the best defense against declining species and climate change. Don't forget to tell your local media what you are doing, too. Then share your stories with the national office so we can commemorate you!

Side note: My research was fun. In case you are interested, I'm sharing some of my favorites.

- National Arbor Day began in 1872 in Nebraska, promoted by J. Sterling Morton and his wife, Caroline. That first year, over 1 million trees were planted!
- National Bird Day traces to 1894 when Charles A. Babcock, superintendent of Oil City, Pennsylvania schools, simply declared it as the first holiday in America to celebrate birds. His idea was to promote bird conservation as a moral value.
- National Wildlife Week started in 1938 to encourage learning about the diverse and fascinating array of the world's wildlife. (There's also a National Wildlife Day on Sept. 4.)

No, that's not everything I learned. I found one more special day – Jan. 6 is National Cuddle Up Day. Sorry, that will have to be for next year!

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Wild Ones Journal

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Wild One seeks volunteers for national board committees

By Susan Hall

We are looking for a few good...members.

The national board is seeking volunteers who are willing to share their expertise, enthusiasm and time as a member of a national board committee. Committees are being formed now and we need you and your ideas!

This is a great opportunity to share your passion for Wild Ones, provide community service and work with members of the National Board. Committee members are asked to serve up to two years. Please contact the National Office at info@wildones.org if interested, or recommend people from your chapter who could contribute in the following areas:

- Financial expertise - budget and accounting
- Technology - website and database programming
- Grant writing and fundraising
- Pro bono legal help, particularly experience with Wisconsin non-profits
- Photographers willing to lead the annual Wild Ones Photo contest
- Program committee - Seeds for Education and other community outreach

We are also looking for members with links to other resources or who have partnerships with other like-minded environmental organizations. Please contact the National Office at info@wildones.org.



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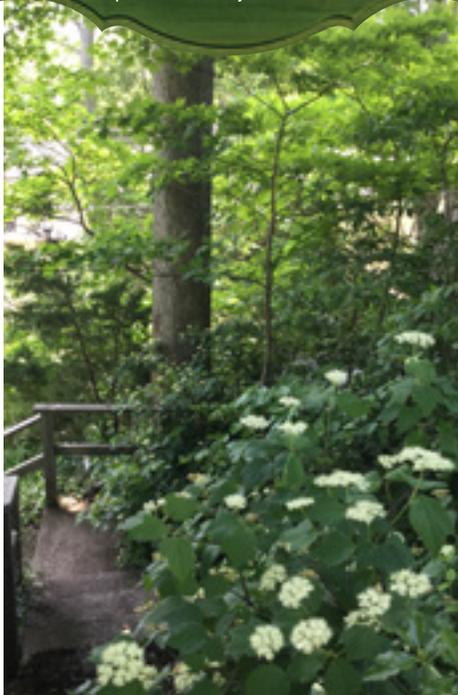


Member Garden

Janis Solomon

Mountain Laurel (Connecticut) Chapter

All photos courtesy Janis Solomon



Editor's Note: We'd like to feature native gardens, large or small, in upcoming issues. If you're interested in sharing your native garden, send four to six high-resolution photos, as well as a brief description, to barbara.a.benish@gmail.com or journal@wildones.org. Please include your contact information so we can get in touch with you.

Rhododendron calendulaceum are brilliant pink and surrounded by other nonnative varieties. The dark green trees in the background are *Juniperus virginiana*. Left: *Viburnum acerifolium* under a *Quercus alba* with *Sassafras albidum* saplings.

By Barbara A. Schmitz

Janis Solomon describes her garden as a perpetual work-in-progress rather than a manicured showpiece. But it's a work-in-progress that keeps her busy and happy.

Solomon says she is lucky she doesn't need to consider "curb appeal" due to the rugged terrain the house is built on and its distance from the road. "The closest neighbor lives about 100-150-feet away, and we have a totally different gardening style," she says. "But she enjoys looking at my garden, and I like looking at hers."

In fact, Solomon has helped to educate her neighbor about the importance of native plants, and the neighbor has added some native prairie plants to her landscape, as well as removed some invasives like burning bush.

Solomon says she started her native garden in earnest in 2008, after retiring from Connecticut College as a German studies and film studies professor and completing the Connecticut Master Gardener program. She jokes that being a "professional gardener" is her new career.

Shortly after finishing the Master Gardener program, Solomon learned

about Wild Ones and joined. She recently finished her term as a member of the national WO Board of Directors, as well as president of the local Mountain Laurel chapter, and now is vice president.

But her affection and interest for native plants started when she was a child growing up in Texas. "We lived in a small town, but spent lots of time at the farm/ranch near Breckenridge that has been in my mother's family since the late 19th century," she explains. Her mother liked to point out the different cacti, wildflowers, and shrub oaks that existed on their land. "I learned about poison oak the hard way," Solomon recalls.

Since 1970, Solomon has lived in the same home in Quaker Hill, Connecticut. It's a Bavarian chalet style home built in 1919 on a ledge, which means it's a challenging property on which to navigate and garden. "One needs to be part mountain goat to negotiate the terrain!" she says. "At 80, I can still manage it, but more slowly and with caution due to cranky knees."

Solomon says she spent the early years on her property trying to educate herself about the plants that

Member Garden

Janis Solomon
Mountain Laurel (Connecticut) Chapter



A monarch nectars on *Symphotrichum cordifolia* while reddish *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* is underneath.

were already there, and she admits to originally adding some nonnatives such as hydrangeas, holly and rhododendron.

Thankfully, when she purchased the property it was already home to an unusual number of native plants, shrubs and trees, such as oaks, maples (sugar and red), ashes, mountain laurel, yucca, many aster and goldenrod species, Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*), jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), and many others.

But as she soon discovered, there were also a lot of invasive species, such as oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*), wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*) and Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), which are still problems.

Her favorite native plants on her property (in addition to those mentioned above) include maple leaf viburnums, high- and low-bush blue-

berries, sumac species, spicebush, Clethra, ash, white and red oaks, hackberry trees, hickories, butternuts, red maples, American beech, and towering sugar maples.

She has added serviceberries, chokeberry, lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), black haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*), American holly (*Ilex opaca*), vernal witch hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*), American hazelnut (*Corylus americana*), red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) and many others. But she has also added a wide variety of native flowers and grasses, such as native columbines, golden Alexanders, mayapples, meadow rue, and yellowroot.

"It's clear that I have tried to get one of every native plant," she says, adding her neighbor has noted she has a "large palette to work with."

In addition, Solomon says virtually every large tree on the property is native, and that she probably has around 100.

About the Yard

- The Solomon property is located in southeast Connecticut, not far from the mouth of the Thames River in New London.
- The area has endless supplies of rock deposited by retreating glaciers and has mostly acidic soil. Her soil, however, is close to neutral, probably because of the years and years of leaves that were left to decay.
- The native garden takes up about half of her 1-acre lot, where she has lived since 1970.
- The native area is on the lower, relatively flat part of her property, which rises more than 100 feet from the street to the level of the house and terraces.
- Her favorite woody plants are native white dogwoods and flame azaleas; favorite herbaceous plants are blue wood aster and blue-stem goldenrod – both insect magnets.
- With the exception of ground covers, Solomon estimates that about 80 percent of her gardens are native with species indigenous mostly to the New England coastal region, and a few that are just native to the Eastern U.S.
- Her yard also includes a small patch of "lawn," which is part weeds, white clover, fescue and other grasses.

But many of the trees on the property are eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), thanks to birds that ate its berries and then "deposited" them elsewhere. "They grow everywhere. Most of the older ones are female, so uprooting the seedlings is actually a big chore."

After neglecting to uproot the seedlings for a few years, she soon discovered that several areas turned into cedar mini-forests.

However, she does have some nonnatives on the upper areas of her yard around the house. She also has some nonnative ground covers that a previous owner put in out of desperation to stabilize slopes, such as periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), common bugle (*Ajuga reptans*), Japanese pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*) and English ivy (*Hedera helix*). "They cover too large a sloped area to be easily eradicated," Solomon says, "although I am reclaiming some smaller areas."



Member Garden
Janis Solomon
Mountain Laurel (Connecticut) Chapter

Left: An immense *Acer saccharum* provides shade for *Hydrangea arborescens*, a young *Liriodendrum tulipifera* and other plants along the Solomon driveway.
Right: *Elymus hystrix* with *Rudbeckia laciniata* to the right, and *Agastache* in the background.

Last fall, for example, she killed off a 10-foot by 30-foot level area of *Vinca minor* with a vinegar solution and replaced it with Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*) plugs.

In front of a 4-foot high granite retaining wall on the lower drive, Solomon has planted a mix of swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata* L.), eastern bottlebrush grass (*Elymus hystrix* L.), purple giant hyssop (*Agastache scrophulariifolia*), black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), and other plants. She also created a border of native flowers and grasses along the road on the perimeter of the lower half of the property.

"This is still a work in progress," she says, noting that the area is already home to such plants as mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*), yucca (*Yucca*), lanceleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), New England aster (*Symphyotrichum*

novae-angliae), purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) and others.

Not surprisingly, her yard is home to bumblebees, sweat bees, honeybees, and a variety of other bees, moths and wasps that she can't identify. But her gardens also attract a variety of butterfly species, including monarchs, various swallowtails, painted ladies, fritillaries, and cabbage whites en masse. Plus, many birds are often found on the property, as well as mice, wild turkeys, bobcats, chipmunks, white-tailed deer, red fox and others.

Her advice to others is to garden incrementally and stay on top of your gardening. She knows from first-hand experience how important that is.

"I bit off more than I could easily chew in trying to landscape a half acre, which is the size of my lower garden," Solomon says. It didn't start

that way, but frequent visits to see her daughter, son-in-law and new grandchild in Istanbul, now back in the U.S., and contracting Lyme meningitis in fall 2015, made that garden a low priority. "When I finally revisited the 'lower 40,' I found what I can only describe as a jungle, and have spent lots of time and money trying to get it under control again," she said.

But contracting Lyme meningitis has made her more aware of ticks, and that's the second part of her advice: Be careful, especially if you live in areas where ticks are plentiful. "It really caused me to change my habits when I decided to attack the 'jungle' last spring," she said. "I now wear the uncomfortable protective clothing no matter what, or at least use Deet spray on my shoes and lower legs. Lyme (disease) is a real and scary issue..."



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NEWS

ACROSS THE NATION

CALIFORNIA

The western monarch butterfly population in California declined 86 percent since last year, according to a count by the nonprofit [Xerces Society](#).

The final Thanksgiving count was 28,429 monarchs, which is a 99.4 percent decline from the 1980s when the estimated population was 4.5 million. To combat those numbers, the Xerces Society has worked with monarch scientists to develop the [Western Monarch Call to Action](#), a rapid-response action plan to rescue the western population of the monarch butterfly.

In better news, the eastern population of monarch butterflies overwintering in Mexico rebounded by 144 percent over 2018 to its highest level since 2007, according to [Monarch Joint Venture](#). This year's count found monarchs occupying nearly 15 acres of forest in Mexico, up from the 6.1 acres the year before.

Monarch Joint Venture Director Wendy Caldwell said: "We are invigorated by the good news about the eastern population this year, but there is much work left to be done. With the recent release of an extremely small western population, we strive to embrace an all hands-on deck approach to rebuilding this population and continuing to grow and sustain the eastern population."

INDIANA

Indiana conservationists are celebrating a state commission's decision to make dozens of invasive plant species illegal in the state. The Natural Resources Commission adopted a rule in January that will prohibit and restrict the introduction, sale, distribution and transport of invasive terrestrial plants into Indiana.

According to [The Herald Times](#), Indiana Native Plant Society President Ellen Jacquart said the rule will apply to 44 highly invasive plant species. Provisions are expected to take effect this spring, pending approval from Indiana's attorney general and governor.

PENNSYLVANIA

Scientists have found that a bee's body size is an important factor in predicting the extent to which different bee pollinators disperse—an important trait for their adaptability to environmental changes.



Researchers at Penn State found that bee species with larger body sizes and social behaviors exhibit patterns of lower population structure than bees with smaller bodies and solitary behaviors.

"Our study has major implications for bee species conservation," said Margarita López-Urbe, assistant professor of entomology at [Penn State](#), adding that dispersal is hard to study in small insects. "Our study is the first to link bee body size and sociality with population genetic structure, which means we can predict which species may be at risk of local extinction based on these traits."

TEXAS

The Woodlands Township has launched a new [Plant for Pollinators](#) initiative that aims to protect monarchs, bees and other pollinators. The program identifies opportunities for reintroducing milkweed to their natural green spaces and areas that can be protected for pollinator habitat. It also encourages and supports residents to plant pollinator gardens—in a yard, on a balcony or patio, or at their school, business or place of worship.

WISCONSIN

After 25 years, the [Journey North](#) program — one of the largest citizen science programs in North America — has moved to the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum and welcomes the continued reporting of sightings of monarchs, hummingbirds and other migrating species.

The move to UW-Madison Arboretum should provide a more sustainable future for the citizen science program. Annenberg Learner fostered and funded Journey North's vision for the first 25 years of the program's existence, according to Elizabeth Howard, the founder and director of Journey North, and Karen Oberhauser, UW-Madison Arboretum director and Wild Ones honorary director.

Get to know your Honorary Director



NEIL DIBOLL
Lifetime Honorary Director

Q: What's the most interesting thing about you that we wouldn't learn from your resume alone? In other words, what is one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

A: I was a deckhand on towboats (barges) on the Mississippi, Ohio and Illinois rivers from age 19-22 to help pay for college. It was an extremely dangerous and physically demanding job. Once I gained sufficient seniority, I worked only on the Upper Mississippi River (St. Louis to St. Paul) because the weather was typically cooler and the scenery was great. These experiences exposed me to an aspect of America I would never have encountered otherwise, and helped to broaden my understanding of a culture very different from that in which I grew up. It was also a "rite of passage" into manhood, not unlike military service, with plenty of danger every day on the job.

Q: What most inspires you in your work?

A: My mission since the first Earth Day in 1970 has been to have an impact on preserving the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the planet. The restoration of native plant communities, and of the human spirit in the process, is a primary motivator. I was strongly influenced and inspired by environmentalists of the late 20th century such as David Brower (Friends of the Earth), Barry Commoner (Center for the Biology of Natural Systems), and yes, the traitorous Ralph Nader (Public Interest Research Group).

Q: What is the best advice you've been given? By whom?

A: My father is a man of few words, but he said: "You can either be happy or unhappy in your life. You will get that which you choose." My mother cautioned me from childhood that "Life is not fair. If you expect it to be fair, you will be disappointed your entire life." The great business guru, Peter Drucker said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." Bottom Line: You have to take control of your life and live it to the max!

Q: What would you do if you just found out that you won \$10 million in the lottery?

A: I would invest it and create a trust fund to provide college scholarships for deserving, low-income students to study Environmental Sciences. Our young people are the future, and the education they receive will shape the future of the world.

Q: What projects are you currently working on?

A: We have been expanding our greenhouse production facilities over the past few years, and are working to double our total plant production capacity between 2018 and 2023, assuming that sales continue to increase. I am also very close to completing the book I have been working on with a co-author titled "The Gardener's Guide to Prairie Plants." It will contain loads of information on identifying about 145 prairie flowers and grasses in each stage of their growth, along with cultural information, garden applications, ecological value, etc.

Q: Pretend you are leading Wild Ones. What concerns about the organization would you focus on?

A: I would focus as much as possible on educating the general public about why native plants are so important to the health of the planet, and by extension, the survival of *Homo sapiens* and all life forms. I would also focus on building an endowment for the organization to help fund future work while keeping membership dues reasonable. Finally, I would build a strong presence on the web to attract new members and provide a diverse clearinghouse of information on natural landscaping in the various regions that Wild Ones is currently serving, and expand it to serve other parts of North America to help attract and engage new members in those regions.



HOW TO GROW (or start) A SEED SWAP

About 1,000 people annually attend the Toledo GROWs Seed Swap, which takes place in a 26,547-square-foot gymnasium.

By Hal Mann

The growing line of people contains hundreds of enthusiastic gardeners, anxiously waiting for the doors to open. Given the enthusiasm and eagerness of the crowd, a passerby not knowing what is about to take place might think some famous musician is performing. When the doors open at 10 o'clock on this February day, the mass of people rush in. It seems like organized chaos. But it's not a rock concert. Some would say it's way more important. It is the Toledo GROWs Annual Seed Swap.

Scott High School Gymnasium is 26,547 square feet with 58 tables manned by volunteers offering all kinds of different seeds and gardening or conservation-related information. There are loads of vegetable seeds, like corn, squash and tomatoes, herbs and flower seeds, too. In the middle of this space, a number of local conservation and gardening organizations are grouped together, each with their own tables, displays and handouts. Located at the cen-

ter of all this activity are two tables occupied by the Wild Ones Oak Openings Region Chapter. One table holds our display, printed materials and a signup sheet for our monthly electronic newsletter. The second table holds hundreds of native seed packages for dozens of local native species. Several of our members staff this table, answering questions and advising folks which species are appropriate for their particular situation. One person stands outside the booth asking people if they are growing native plants, talking with them about the importance of these plants and directing them to the seed table. For three hours, a seemingly endless number of people continue to come, all eager to get native seed. Our volunteers work tirelessly for the entire time without a break. By the end of the event, our team is dead tired, but also thrilled to have had such interest.

But the work doesn't just take place on one day in February. Work for Wild Ones starts long before that.

Jon Zabowski, our stewardship chair, organizes native seed collection events starting in late summer and continuing through late fall. While some seeds are collected from our own yards, many are harvested from public or private areas where we've been invited to gather. In collecting our own seed, we can be assured it is local genotype that is important in supporting and protecting the local food web. It's important to stress that you should only collect from sites where you have permission. One supportive local homeowner lives on a 7-acre prairie she planted from seed she collected more than 25 years ago. Her invitation provides us with a wide range of species. As no experience is necessary to join these collection programs, everyone is welcome to help. Zabowski says: "It's a great way to learn plant identification. There are so many cool things to see in the prairie — neat insects, birds, mammals and plants." Plus, it's always fun and easy to accomplish something while enjoying nature and the company of other like-minded folks.

The second stage of Seed Swap preparation is cleaning the collected seed. Why do we do that since seed doesn't get cleaned in the wild? Cleaning and properly handling seed results in a much higher germination rate than occurs in nature. It's estimated that only 3-6 percent of seed actually germinates in the wild. On the other hand, it is not uncommon to realize 80 percent or better when collected, dried, cleaned and carefully stored. Seed cleaning is our most popular activity, Zabowski says. Working inside, out of the weather, alongside friends, away from mosquitoes or other pesky insects, makes for a nice, comfortable, yet effective way to handle this part of the process. Trays of cookies and other treats easily reached by chatting volunteers also might help account for the high participation rate.

Now it's ready to give away, right? Not so fast, native plant lovers. It's a



Members collect seed from a homeowner's prairie with her permission.

very good thing to package and label the seed so people know what they are getting. The seed preparation efforts culminate with our annual "Seeds and Soup" event on Martin Luther King Day. Diane DeYonker, our education chair, has managed and organized our work so the time spent is most productive and efficient. On this national day of service, people of all ages from the community show up to help with any final cleaning necessary and packaging.

Members and non-members, high school and college students, retired and non-retired alike gather at this public event. Cider and snacks keep the troops fueled for the work as a gentle fire in the fireplace helps to take the chill out of the air if the furnace can't keep up with the zero-degree temperatures outdoors. In the last hour as work is nearly complete, we stop to enjoy a variety of homemade soups and breads. I suspect few will need dinner after they've "sam-

Members clean seeds since it results in a much higher germination rate than occurs in nature.





Members and other community members at the Oak Openings Region chapter's 2019 Day of Service: Seeds and Soup event.

pled" the numerous offerings. No one can quite figure out how Diane manages to keep all this organized, but she does.

With boxes and boxes of seed, brochures and water, a troop of members gathers at the high school gymnasium about 2 hours before the Seed Swap begins. They quickly get everything in order, visit with friends located at tables of our partner organizations, and brace for the crowd. Diane has the packages organized in boxes according to habitat (woodland, sunny and dry, sunny and moist, etc.). She's made laminated pictures of the plants so people can see what they look like. These are also grouped by habitat. In 2018, the Wild Ones Oak Openings Chapter gave away over 850 packages of locally collected native seed. In 2017, the chapter handed out more than 600 packages. In 2018, over 1,000 people came to this community event. Several years ago, Wild Ones did an educational program in a room off the gymnasium. As soon as the presentation was over, our team was swamped by folks scrambling to get the plants highlighted in the talk.

"I enjoy the Seed Swap because we get to help educate people and promote native plants," Zabowski says. "I'm amazed at the regulars who stop by our table each year. I've been helping for the last three years and have met the same people every year. Some of them are at our table when the doors open. They are

happy to talk and trade stories, while they 'shop' for seeds. I learn something new every year and get to hear some interesting stories."

The way the Seed Swap works is this: Everyone who comes in the door gets five free tickets. When they pick up a pack of seeds at any booth, they turn in a ticket. They also get a ticket for each package of seed they bring in. These can be packages of excess seed left over from the previous season, or seeds collected from their own garden. They also can buy additional tickets.

February was the 15th year for this program, sponsored by the not-for-profit Toledo GROWs. In addition to doing educational gardening programs, Toledo GROWs currently serves and supports over 125 community gardens. Last year, 100 volunteers staffed 16 seed tables and over 40 other display tables at the Seed Swap. Guests brought 2,300 packets of seed to swap. Alison Wood-Cosmun, the community garden coordinator at Toledo GROWs, has been involved in this event for many years. She says the event broadens the gardening horizons for the gardening community. "It's a giant party, bumping into neighbors, starting conversations with strangers, and building new friendships," Wood-Cosmun says.

She also says the enthusiasm is incredible due to how-to programs, music and food. "It's a great opportunity to come together and share ideas," Wood-Cosmun says, noting that in

2019, they had more than 20,000 packages of seed available. She also notes that the feedback survey shows Wild Ones is popular and much appreciated by the participants.

Amy Stone, an Extension educator with Ohio State University, has also been deeply involved in planning this event for many years. She refers to the event as the "unofficial kickoff to the gardening season." She says: "In the middle of the winter doldrums, this builds enthusiasm for the upcoming growing season. It also gives folks an opportunity to meet and learn about different plant groups and organizations like Wild Ones."

If your community doesn't have a Seed Swap and you'd like to start one, Stone suggests you start small, connect with national seed companies to donate large amounts of leftover seed, and encourage people to collect and bring seed from their gardens. Stone adds that it's important to start planning one year before the first event. She emphasizes that the gardening public needs to know at least a year ahead so they can keep their unused seed and harvest seed from any vegetables they are growing.

For Wild Ones chapters participating in a seed swap event for the first time, DeYonker prepared a [list](#) of some helpful organizational points gleaned from her experience managing their chapter's involvement in the annual program.

Wherever you're located, get involved in a seed swap event. It's a great way to meet new friends, cast aside the winter doldrums, and spread the word about native plants.

Hal Mann is president of the Wild Ones Oak Openings Region Chapter, and a popular and entertaining speaker who talks about the many benefits of using native plants in our landscapes. In 2012, Mann decided to convert his home landscaping to all native plants and has since become a passionate advocate for using native plants. He also serves on the Wild Ones National Monarch Butterfly Conservation Program.

SFE grant funds increased native plant diversity at Alabama urban preserve

A Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education grant helped an Alabama urban nature preserve increase its native plant diversity while also helping to educate people about the role of native plants in ecology.

Project coordinator Jamie Nobles said Ruffner Mountain spent the entire \$400 grant on native plants and seeds. “Ruffner is committed to increasing the diversity of native plants while increasing pollinator diversity of the land that we manage, including our garden spaces,” she wrote in their year-end report.

The project, “Connecting People and Pollinators Through Alabama’s Native Plants,” included volunteers, teen interns and staff planting about 50 plants, as well as seeds. “We plan to continue adding native plants and habitat structures in the habitat garden, continue to increase the size of the pollinator corridors, and continue to engage volunteers and guests in participating and learning more about the native plants and animals of Ruffner,” Nobles said.

To help plants become established and to control weeds, they installed an irrigation system that uses collected rain water to help irrigate the habitat garden. Staff and volunteers help them actively manage the garden to control weeds and invasive species.

Field trips and school groups routinely walk through or are guided through the pollinator garden, Nobles said, and they plan to install signage highlighting some of the individual native plants of the gardens, as well as their role in ecology.



A swallowtail caterpillar makes its new home at the Ruffner Mountain habitat garden. Below: Volunteers take a break from cleaning out invasive species and weeds from the new Ruffner Mountain habitat garden.



“We plan to connect kids using improved signage, bee condos, and other installations,” she said. “These will help to better engage kids to look at the garden as an ecosystem instead of just a collection of plants. They can observe seasonal changes over time or watch pollinators at work.”

Her advice to others adding native plants to their landscaping is to never underestimate the opportunistic nature of nonnative, invasive plants. “In seemingly no time at all nonnative ivy, privet, or another weed can take over your garden and nearly eliminate all your hard work,” Nobles said.



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Wild Ones thrives only through the heart and dedication of its amazing members. We deeply appreciate your efforts and extend our most heartfelt thanks to all who contributed so generously to the Wild Ones 2018 Annual Appeal Campaign. We proudly share your names here.

Every effort has been made to ensure that our donor lists are accurate and reflect gifts made during the Annual Campaign period from Dec. 1, 2018, through Jan. 31, 2019. Should there be an error or omission, please accept our deepest apologies; contact the national office at (920) 730-3986 or info@wildones.org so we can correct the mistake.

Again, our thanks for your generous gifts and contributions!



An incorrect photo was included in our winter issue that highlighted photos from the Wild Ones annual photo contest. This photo, Bumblebee on Common Milkweed by Leanne Phinney, took first place in the pollinator category.

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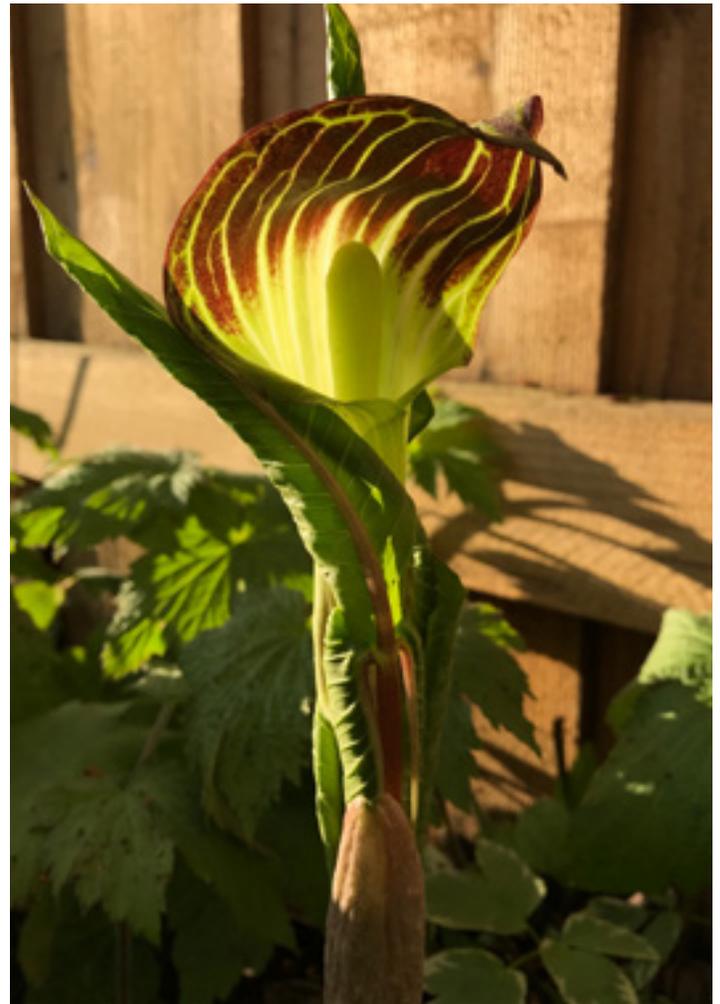
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Geraldine Fox entered this photo of Jack in the Pulpit in the 2018 Photo Contest flora category. She wrote: "I've been growing native ephemerals in my backyard. This was one from last year that we forgot about until it popped up. A giant!"

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Meet the ‘Johnny Appleseed’ of native edible plants

Cohen says the “you can eat it too” attribute of many native species offers a powerful incentive for people and organizations to “go native” in their landscaping.

By Barbara A. Schmitz
Russ Cohen grew up at the end of a dead-end street in a woodsy suburb west of Boston, spending loads of time in the woods and developing a natural bond with nature.

But it was first as a sophomore in high school that connecting to nature by nibbling on it became his passion. As a 16-year-old, Cohen recalls taking a mini-class on edible botany that ignited his lifelong af-

Russ Cohen shows off some of the native plants growing inside his nursery.



Russ with Black Walnut Honey Squares at the Avalonia Land Conservancy meeting, March 2017.

fection with native plants. “I learned about 2 dozen species of plants that grew in our area, and we made a communal meal,” he recalls.

That summer, he went to the town’s library and took out every book he could find on the subject. Soon, he had discovered more than 70 species of edible native plants in the area, and by the time he was a senior in high school, he was teaching the same class he had taken as a sophomore.

By college, Cohen says he was already sharing his love of edible native plants. “I had a handmade flyer that I would stick outside the college cafeteria, telling people to follow me around campus and learn what they could nibble on.”

But it was when he went back to New England in the 1980s that Cohen really started offering edible native plant walks and talks on a regular basis. He estimates he gives more than 40 presentations each year, and he’s been doing it for 45 or so years. “It was my second career when I was working,” he says, laughing and acknowledging it’s been easier to keep up that pace since he retired in June 2015 as the rivers ad-

vocate for the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game’s Division of Ecological Restoration.

A Wild Ones member who previously belonged to the Mountain Laurel (Connecticut) chapter and who now belongs to the South Shore Massachusetts chapter, Cohen says he gives the edible native plant walks and talks for a simple reason. “It’s just a subject I find really fun,” he says. “I don’t do it with any kind of mission, or evaluate my own performance on how many people I convert. I just like to share my knowledge, enthusiasm, passion and love for the subject, and what I hope to do is walk around with people and at least entertain them during the time they have with me.”

In his retirement, Cohen has taken his foraging walks and talks one giant step forward. He now gathers seed from a wide variety of native edible species, and then, propagates and plants them — with permission, of course — on properties such as nature preserves, land trusts, cities, towns, tribal lands, and property

“I’ve been nibbling on nature since the 1970s and have felt immense gratitude to Mother Nature for giving me all these yummy things to eat.”

owned by schools and colleges and state and federal agencies. In the process, Cohen has become known as a “Johnny Appleseed” of sorts for edible native species. In fact, he has set up his own small nursery in Weston, Massachusetts, where he grows and keeps plants that he propagates from seed. In the past three years, he has initiated more than 20 such projects.

“I’ve been nibbling on nature since the 1970s and have felt immense gratitude to Mother Nature for giving me all these yummy things to eat,” he says. “Just seeing edible plants along a trail enriches the time you spend outdoors. And if you like being outdoors, just know-

ing about edible plants makes it all that more interesting.”

Cohen says for decades he has been taking note as he traverses nature preserves, parks and other properties about which type of plants like to grow in particular spots. So when he sees a spot that’s appropriate for a specific native plant, he’ll ask if he can plant it there. And if he sees a native plant on public or private property that he would like to gather seed from to propagate, he’ll ask to do that, too. No one has ever said no.

“In fact, if you ask people if you can collect their black walnuts in October when the nuts are falling off the trees and piling onto their lawns, they say yes and go get their wheelbarrow to help you,” he says. “People are happy to see someone use them.”

And so Cohen continues to gather seed and nuts, or have seed and nuts donated to him, sow them and tend the young plants — until they grow and are ready to be transplanted on publicly accessible conserva-

tion land. He gives away everything he grows.

Cohen says he keeps track in his calendar of when things will ripen and notes when to go out to look for particular seeds. “For instance, Sept. 8 is the day to go out and pick hazelnuts in Eastern Massachusetts,” he says. “I’ve discovered that is the date when the nuts are ripe, but haven’t fallen off the bushes yet. Because if you let that happen, you will never find them, since the squirrels and chipmunks will get all of them before you do.”

He eats some of the nuts he gathers, and saves the rest to grow new plants. “But if you’re going to plant nuts, you can’t let them dry

out,” he says. So he keeps nuts he collects, such as black walnuts and butternuts, in plastic bags filled with vermiculite and stored in the refrigerator until he’s ready to sow them.

Some plants need to be cared for longer, such as beach plums (*Prunus maritima*), often found in sand dune habitats, which need to be at least 1-foot tall before they are planted out or otherwise they’ll be severely browsed by rabbits, he says. For other plants, he wraps cylinders of hardware cloth around them to protect them from animals such as deer, squirrels or chipmunks. “If only they knew what I was doing would eventually benefit them...” he says, laughing, adding that perhaps then they’d stop eating the small plants in exchange for the long-term gain.

There are other plants that need no special treatment, such as wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*). You just sow the seed, and they will start growing in the same growing season, he says. But Cohen says he is still trying to figure out how to grow some plants, such as Carrion Flower (*Smilax herbacea*), which smells like dirty gym socks, but whose edible shoots look and taste like asparagus. “Plus some woodland perennials can take multiple years, since their seeds need to go through multiple periods of warm and cold before the young sprouts will emerge. My learning curve has been very steep. But I learned from a mentor: ‘Think about how it happens in nature, and try to mimic it as much as you can.’”

Every time he’s out walking on any property, Cohen says he is taking note of what plants are already there, and also making up a list of edible native species that should do well if planted on that property. How does he figure out what plants should grow there?

“This is a skill based on decades of observation and paying attention to what grows where,” he says. “When I see a white pine forest, there are two common groundcovers: partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*)

Recipes

Russ Cohen’s Triple Maple Hickory-Nut Sandwich Cookies

Makes 25-30 sandwich cookies

(**Note:** The “triple” in the cookie name comes from the three types of maple products used in this recipe: maple syrup, maple sugar and maple cream. I have found maple creams to vary in their firmness/runniness; you want it to be spreadable, but not runny. If it is too stiff, stir in a bit of maple syrup to soften it; if it is too runny, stir in enough maple sugar to thicken it to the right consistency.)

Ingredients:

1 cup softened butter

½ cup granulated or powdered maple sugar

4 tablespoons maple syrup

1 large egg yolk

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups flour

¼ teaspoon salt

1¾ cups coarsely chopped Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*) nuts (can substitute pecans or walnuts if necessary)

Maple cream for spreading (about 1/3 to 1/2 cup)

Beat butter in a large mixing bowl for 3 minutes or until creamy. Beat in maple sugar gradually. Add maple syrup, egg yolk and vanilla extract to the bowl; beat well. Mix flour and salt together and add gradually to the other ingredients in the mixing bowl; then add the chopped hickory nuts and mix until well blended.

Place the mixing bowl with dough into the fridge for at least a half hour until it stiffens. Then remove from the fridge, divide the dough in half and shape into “logs” about two inches in diameter. Wrap with plastic wrap, waxed paper or parchment and refrigerate again until firm (at least an hour).

Preheat oven to 350° and get a greased cookie tray or two ready. Slice the logs into rounds between 1/8” and 1/4” thick, then place the rounds onto the cookie sheet, leaving some space between the slices (they will spread out a bit during baking).

Bake for 12-15 minutes at 350°; remove cookie tray from oven. The undersides of the cookies should be a golden brown color. If not, leave in for a few minutes more; if so, then flip all the cookies over, re-insert in oven and bake 4-8 minutes more until both sides of cookies have a (or are close to a) golden brown color.

Remove cookies from cookie sheet, allow to cool until room temperature, then pair the rounds up into (more or less) matched pairs. Spread about a teaspoon’s worth of maple cream on top of one cookie, then gently squish down on it with the second cookie to make a sandwich.

and wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*). If I see one, I am confident that I can plant the other species and it will do well, since the two are frequently found together.”

Cohen says many native species that have value to wildlife are yummy to people too. Juneberries (aka Shadbush, *Amelanchier* spp.), for example, are equally edible by animals (songbirds, e.g.) and people. The taste of the ripe fruit is like a cross between cherries and almonds (they’re all related species in the Rose family). And while he is not propagating or planting them, Cohen freely acknowledges that nonnative species can also be tasty. While he urges erstwhile foragers of native species from wild habitats to use some forbearance and restraint in gathering them so as not to upset the ecological balance, that is less of a concern with nonnative species. Eating invasive plants such as Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata* Thunb) or Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), both native to Asia, provide “guilt-free” foraging opportunities: you can’t pick too many of them. He uses Autumn olive fruits to make fruit

Volunteers help plant native beach plums at the Marblehead Conservancy.

Juneberry Muffins

Makes 1 dozen muffins

From Russ Cohen

Note: This recipe works equally well with fresh, frozen or dried Juneberries. If using dried berries, soak first in hot fruit juice until softened. It is also OK to substitute other fruit such as blueberries, raspberries or cranberries. The flavor and texture of the muffins will differ somewhat depending on the type of berries you use, but the results are likely to be just as tasty.

Ingredients

1 cup rolled oats

1 cup buttermilk or sour milk (to make sour milk, mix 1 cup whole milk with 1 tablespoon lemon or vinegar)

1 cup flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

¾ cup brown sugar, lightly packed (OK to substitute maple sugar)

1 egg, beaten

¼ cup butter, melted

1 to 1½ cups Juneberries (fresh, dried or frozen)

Combine oats and buttermilk in a small bowl and let stand to allow the oats to soften. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease muffin tins. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and brown sugar, and stir well. Mix together the beaten egg and melted butter. Add oat/milk mixture to the dry ingredients and stir just until all ingredients are moistened (do not overmix). Fold in the Juneberries. Fill muffin tins ¾ full. Bake for 17–22 minutes, until muffin tops turn golden brown.



Photo by Russ Cohen

rollups in his fruit dehydrator, and pies from Japanese knotweed.

His favorite edible species, of the more than 200 deemed to be native to the ecoregions of the Northeast U.S., is the Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*). "Besides producing delicious edible nuts, it's a beautiful tree, and has a high ecological value." Critters eat the nuts, while it also makes for good bat-roosting habitat on the older trees as they develop their characteristic peeling bark.

Cohen uses the nuts to make maple hickory nut pie. "I'm not exaggerating when I say everyone loves this pie," he says. He also will make a triple hickory nut sandwich cookie with the nuts, which he describes as similar to an Oreo but sweetened with maple sugar and syrup, and maple cream filling in the center with lots of nuts. "At least six people have said to me, 'This could possibly be the best cookie I've ever eaten,'" he says. "It's fun to share dishes made from wild ingredients, and show people how yummy it can be."

In fact, it was the low number of hickory trees that made Cohen decide to set aside some of the nuts he gathered to grow into shagbark seedlings. He also encouraged a Northeast seed company to carry the shagbark hickory and sent them a bagful of wild nuts to start with. Their catalog now includes the shagbark hickory, and credits Cohen. That effort has since broadened, and now Cohen is propagating and planting over 50 different edible native species.

Cohen says it is gratifying to see native plants he planted thriving in areas that were once devoid of them or covered with invasives. He adds that everyone can play a role in promoting native landscaping, even if just done on a small scale. "If you see an individual buckthorn, honeysuckle or other invasive, pop it out and put a native in its place," he says. "It's very satisfying."

Maple Hickory Nut Pie

From Russ Cohen

Pie crust ingredients:

1 cup flour

½ teaspoon salt

1/8 cup cold milk

¼ cup vegetable (canola, sunflower, corn or soybean) oil

Preparation

Sift together flour and salt into a bowl. Pour milk and vegetable oil into a measuring cup, but do not stir. Add this liquid to the flour and mix well with a fork. Dampen a table top or counter with a sponge and smooth a 12" square of wax paper and then cover with another piece of wax paper the same size as the first.

Roll the dough between the pieces of wax paper until it reaches the edges and it will be just the right thickness and size for a 9" or 10" diameter pie. Peel off the top paper, turn the dough sheet over into the pie pan, then carefully remove the remaining piece of waxed paper from the top.

Filling ingredients

3 eggs

7/8 cup maple sugar

½ teaspoon salt

1 cup light corn syrup

1/3 cup melted butter

1½ to 2 cups hickory nuts (No need to chop; large pieces are good for this recipe.)

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degree. Beat the eggs slightly, then add maple sugar, salt, corn syrup and melted butter and beat thoroughly. Stir in the hickory nuts, then pour into the unbaked pastry shell. Bake for 55-60 minutes, or until the center of the pie appears firm. Cool before serving.



Photo by Russ Cohen



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Gardening by subtraction



Stephen Packard and others cut and compost literally hundreds of rare forked aster (*Eurybia furcata*) stems and see them replaced by hundreds of precious stems of yellow pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), violet bush clover (*Lespedeza frutescens*), glade mallow (*Napaea dioica*) and Sullivant's milkweed (*Asclepias sullivantii*).

The plots look like nature. But they'd all be reduced to a few dominant species if I weren't hard at work pulling out fine plants like golden alexanders, purple Joe-pye weed, sweet black-eyed Susan and others that had become "thugs."

By Stephen Packard

One day my neighbor Malcom's 5-year-old son complained about his dad's war on dandelions.

"Why can't you let them live?" asked the little environmentalist.

"Well, Stuart, that's a beautiful thought," the dad replied. "But, what can I say? I hate them."

Personally, I kind of like dandelions. But I rip them ruthlessly from my wild gardens, so as not to offend good neighbors like Malcom.

My neighbors do see my yard as something quite different from "let it go." Indeed, in my 20-year-old wild gardens, planted with diverse local seed, neighbors are impressed by how much time I spend in them, with great tenderness, mostly ripping plants out.

I've subtracted hundreds of beautiful and endangered forked asters (*Eurybia furcata*). They started shading out yellow pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*) and threatened small sundrops (*Oenothera perennis*), both of which we need seed from. My wild-ish patches meet many needs – and one of them is rare seed for "permanently protected" "under restoration" woodland and prairie ecosystems. Having already populated huge forest preserve areas with forked aster, we now need more seed of the pimpernel than the aster.

I love wildness. Many people rate my garden as one of the richest nature gardens they've ever seen. At last count it had 207 species, many of them now very rare, thriving in dense tangles, fostered by my ongoing "subtractions." People marvel at the numbers of yellow star grass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*), dwarf skullcap (*Scutellaria nana*), prairie lily (*Lilium philadelphicum*), slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*) and awnless graceful sedge (*Carex gracillima*). The plots look like nature. But they'd all be



The Packard front yard is relatively neat and compact in May. Neighbors get used to it gradually as it grows woolier and wilder over the summer. When walked, their dogs just can't keep their noses off its edges.

reduced to a few dominant species if I weren't hard at work pulling out fine plants like golden alexanders (*Zizia aurea*), purple Joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*), sweet black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*) and others that had become "thugs." Yes, I once tended those now-thuggish species tenderly too, and I rejoiced in their ample seed production. Restoration steward partners gratefully accepted grocery bags full of rare seed. But in time, seed from those species dropped in priority, and rarer or more-needed companions required the space. Even as a gardener, I did not want to see a few species out-compete most others.

True diversity is beautiful to me in both nature and gardens. I first imagined that the best way to get that diversity in my yard garden was to kill the grass (which I did with leaf mulch) and then plant rich mixes of

desired prairie or woodlands species (according to whether that part of the yard was sunny or shaded). The approach led to some successes, but in the longer run it tended toward less and less diversity, as the more dominant species took over. So I weeded. In time there was less Joe-pye weed, tall coreopsis (*Coreopsis tripteris*) and New England aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*) – but more glade mallow (*Napaea dioica*) and yellow pimpernel.

In the last few years, I've experimented with more refined approaches. Many prized species do best in a competitive turf. So I just planted seeds or plugs in my patchy lawn and weeded grass, violets, and such. Many species that had failed or been iffy in previous yard attempts now did well, including prairie gentian (*Gentiana puberulenta*), prairie lily (*Lilium philadelphicum*) and beard-



Fire pink (*Silene virginica*) seeds. As beautiful and precious as any flower, and all the more so as they represent the more diverse future in some oak woods ecosystem. Packard says when they start to gather seeds, some flowers are still in bloom, and he sometimes hears the hum of a hummingbird in his ear as he focuses on finding those ripe seeds. "Doesn't happen often," he says, "but it's a favorite lifetime experience when it does."

ed wheatgrass (*Elymus caninus*), for some prairie examples. Among the savanna/woodland species that liked this approach were cream vetchling (*Lathyrus ochroleucus*), woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) and robin plantain (*Erigeron pulchellus*). These had previously survived for a while

in planted free-for-alls, but under the conditions in our yard, they would gradually fade out.

These days, volunteer Eriko Kojima (and others she recruits) help tend these seed-production wild gardens. We now devote some former lawn areas to mixes of small species like dwarf skullcap, violet wood sorrel (*Oxalis violacea*), yellow star grass, and, in shadier places, rue anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*), dog violet (*Viola conspersa*) and grove sandwort (*Moehringia lateriflora*). In these areas we may put a few fire pinks, two-flowered cynthias (*Krigia biflora*), and others that we have trouble maintaining among the larger rough-and-tumble species. It's a great pleasure to watch how such cameo ecosystems evolve over the years.

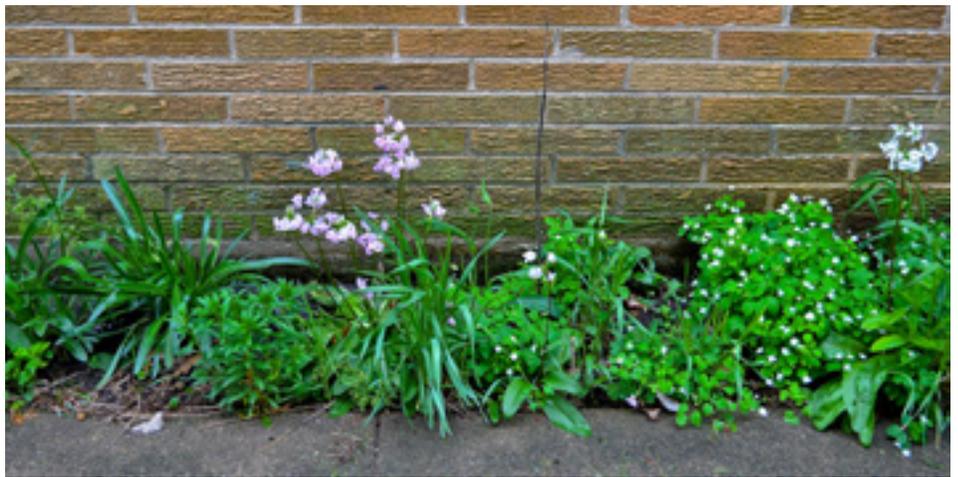
How ruthless is this weeding we commit? Rarely do we pull out anything by its roots. We just "graze" the tops, perhaps once or twice in a growing season. Many such weeded species then just fade out. Others become minor. Sometimes I use an "Old Father Time" scythe, sometimes clippers, but often just my fingers. Indeed, fingers often have worked best, until they start to rebel from stress. If I had more time and stronger fingers, I'd do more of that finger grazing.

Some of the species we most prize for restoration have seeds that pop or blow away as soon as ripe. That's why they're hard to harvest from the wild. We've learned to pick some of them by recognizing what the seed heads look like just before it's too late. There's way too much to do. Eriko has been creating a calendar of what is a priority when. So we weed, admire and notice fresh each year – while we also pay attention to a "calendar of reminders" – that helps us relax and be in the minute, comfortably, believe it or not.

These gardens in former lawn are to me beautiful and precious in themselves. And they're also my existential connection with nature conservation in our local wildernesses. Hundreds of acres of preserve



In a "lawn weeded of grass," grow wild geranium, robin plantain (*Erigeron pulchellus*), bastard toadflax (*Coccydium umbellata*), yellow star grass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*), shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*), cream vetchling (*Lathyrus ochroleucus*), wood betony (*Stachys betonica*) and more. Over time they may or may not coalesce as a community or ecosystem that will mostly sustain itself. Below: In June, this weeded nursery strip will be red with fire pinks (*Silene virginica*). But it celebrates May with shooting stars (*Dodecatheon meadia*), rue anemones (*Thalictrum thalictroides*) and other native plants.



lands now thrive with biodiversity, in part because my yard has been a waystation for refugee plants. As the cream vetchlings, savanna blazing stars, and prairie lilies from my yard proliferate on protected conservation lands, I feel the kind of immortality I see in children and students I have tried to help. I don't dwell on that part a lot, but I suspect it contributes to how good I feel every time I walk through Somme's prairies, savannas, woods and wetlands. "From gardens to nature" is a fine turnaround.

Stephen Packard is a Wild Ones honorary director and founding director of Audubon Chicago Region. He has worked to develop the practice and popular understanding of ecological restoration and biodiversity conservation. In addition, he initiated and helped to design and implement many of Illinois' larger ecological restoration projects including Nachusa Grasslands (4,000 acres), Bartel Grassland (750 acres) and Orland Grassland (960 acres).

Rearing monarchs:



Photo by Barbara A. Schmitz

A monarch butterfly nectars on *Asclepias incarnate*.

Rearing and conservation

In the face of monarch population declines, passionate conservationists are fighting to save this winged icon. Rearing monarchs in classrooms and homes has been a valuable educational tool for teachers and for citizen science. Unlike many wildlife species, monarchs are easily reared and offer an up-close look at metamorphosis. As monarch populations have declined, some people have promoted rearing and releasing, and even purchasing, monarchs on a large scale as an attempt to boost wild populations.

While captive rearing and release has been an important con-

Why or why not?

servation strategy for some species, releasing reared monarchs is not likely to be an effective monarch conservation strategy and could have negative effects. Potential risks include releasing monarchs that are adapted to captive conditions, increasing parasites and disease in wild monarch populations, and making it more difficult to understand natural monarch distributions.

There is a lack of scientific evidence that monarch rearing actually results in overall population increases, and it is known to carry risks.

Many experts do not support large-scale captive rearing for conservation purposes. Recommended strategies that do support monarch populations in the long-term include creating or improving habitat, minimizing monarch and habitat exposure to pesticides, and participating in citizen science or other research. However, there is little risk in responsibly raising a few monarchs for enjoyment, education, or citizen science, which can lead to stronger human connections with and better understanding of this amazing species.

Disease concerns

Captive rearing often involves raising monarchs at higher densities than they occur in the wild, and repeated re-use of the same containers. Monarchs did not evolve under high density conditions, and thus caterpillars reared in close proximity to one another are highly susceptible to disease transmission. Re-use of the same rearing materials can allow parasites, such as OE, and pathogens to accumulate over time. If unhealthy monarchs survive rearing and are released into the wild, they could transmit diseases or parasites to wild monarchs, risking adverse effects on an already vulnerable population. Unhealthy monarchs may also experience lower survival, reproduction and migration success relative to healthy butterflies.

Natural distribution concerns

Effective conservation requires understanding population distributions. If monarchs are seen in unusual

places or times, we can learn about their movement patterns and habitat use. However, if the observer doesn't know if an unusual sighting involves a captive-reared monarch, our ability to understand natural population distributions is compromised.

Genetic concerns

Species bred in captivity can adapt to captive settings in just a few generations. Differences in temperature, food, predation and density between wild and captive settings can favor different traits related to development rate, body size, feeding behavior, and defenses. Research suggests these genetic adaptations are overwhelmingly harmful when offspring of multiple generations of captive breeding are returned to the wild.

Republished, with permission, from Monarch Joint Venture (www.monarchjointventure.org).

Coming in our summer issue: How to raise monarchs responsibly

What is OE?

Ophryocystis elektroscirrha (OE) is a debilitating protozoan parasite that infects monarchs. Infected adult monarchs harbor thousands or millions of microscopic OE spores on the outside of their bodies. When dormant spores are scattered onto eggs or milkweed leaves by infected adults, monarch larvae consume the spores, and these parasites then replicate inside the larvae and pupae. Monarchs with severe OE infections can fail to emerge successfully from their pupal stage, either because they become stuck or they are too weak to fully expand their wings. Monarchs with mild OE infections can appear normal, but will live shorter lives and cannot fly as well as healthy monarchs.



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Wild Ones awards 10 Seeds for Education grants

Since 1997, the Wild Ones Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education grant program for native gardens and habitats has been connecting thousands of children with nature. Through 2018, 253 grants have funded native plants and seeds for hands-on outdoor learning sites for preschool-12th graders. We greatly appreciate our members and chapters who have generously given to this worthwhile Wild Ones program!

This year, Wild Ones awarded 10 Seeds for Education grants out of 46 applications received from 18 states.

Applications were individually scored by three judges. Those recommended for funding were determined by how well the educational projects were planned, student involvement, judge's comments, and the potential for sustainability.

Congratulations to the 2019 winning SFE projects:

California

Native Plant Arboretum Restoration, Pacific Union Elementary and Middle School students, Arcata, CA

Connecticut

Meadow Restoration for Pollinators, Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center with area students, Mystic, CT (Mountain Laurel Chapter)

Illinois

Ephemeral Pond and Prairie Restoration, Douglas-Hart Nature Center with Charleston Middle School students and volunteers, Mattoon, IL (PAL)

Louisiana

SE Louisiana Native Garden, Homer Plessy Community School PreK-7th graders, New Orleans, LA

Michigan

Native Teaching Wetland Garden, Mattawan Elementary students, Mattawan, MI (Kalamazoo Area Chapter)

Native Pollinator Habitat for Experiential Learning, Kazoo School preK-8th graders, Kalamazoo, MI (Kalamazoo Area Chapter)

New Mexico

Water Harvesting Native Garden, Inez Elementary Students and Science & Garden Club, Albuquerque, NM

Pennsylvania

Native Plant & Pollinator Meadow Restoration, Audubon Beechwood Farms Preserve with Fox Chapel HS students and youth groups, Pittsburgh, PA

Tennessee

Native Plant Rain Garden and Preschool Garden, Girl Scout Gold Award Project, Franklin, TN (Tennessee Valley Chapter)

Texas

Habitat Garden for Science and Nature Observation, Winn School preK-5th graders and school garden club, Austin, TX

We also wish to thank the 31 Wild Ones judges who volunteered significant time and expertise to evaluate the 2019 SFE applications:

Marti Agler, Tennessee

Mike Brondino, Wisconsin

Pat Brust, Wisconsin

Cindy Carnicom, Ohio

Melanie Coulter, Ohio

Ann Curry, Ohio

Wanda DeWaard, Tennessee

Diane DeYonker, Ohio

Cathy Downs, Texas

Ellen Folts, New York

Jamie Forbush, Ohio

Denise Gehring, Chair, Ohio

Julia Gehring, Michigan

Susan Hall, West Virginia

Janice Hand, Montana

Jan Hunter, Indiana

Laura Klemm, Wisconsin

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Lisa Lemza, Tennessee

Michael LeValley, Michigan

Kate Mason-Wolf, Ohio

Lydia Pan, Connecticut

Dan Parratt, Ohio

Matt Ross, Pennsylvania

Janis Solomon, Connecticut

Karen Syverson, Wisconsin

Rita Ulrich, Minnesota

Donna VanBuecken, Wisconsin

Kim Lowman Vollmer, Illinois

Rick Webb, Pennsylvania



Your actions can help limit the spread of oak wilt

— a deadly disease of oaks

Photo by Linda Williams

By Linda Williams

Oak wilt (*Bretziella fagacearum*), previously named *Ceratocystis fagacearum*, is a deadly fungal disease that can affect oak trees. If oak wilt is present in your state, hopefully you're already aware that you should avoid pruning, wounding or harvesting oak trees in the spring to prevent beetles from bringing the oak wilt fungus to your tree. But what if your tree does get oak wilt? How would you know? And what can you do to prevent it?

Oaks are found in many landscapes and are highly valued for lumber, as shade trees, and for mast production and benefits to wildlife, so knowing about oak wilt and taking steps to prevent new infections is important.

Where is oak wilt and what trees does it impact?

Oak wilt was first identified in the United States in 1944. The current range of oak wilt extends from Minnesota to Texas, and east to Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Oak wilt is somewhat common in some states, while other states, or portions of other states, may have very little oak wilt. According to the "Field Guide to Native Oak Species of Eastern North America," there are 50 native species of oak in eastern North America. The oak species most heavily impacted, which can die in a single growing season, include live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), as well as those in the red oak group (with pointed leaves) such as Northern red

Oak wilt can spread underground through grafted root systems to kill neighboring trees.

oak (*Q. rubra*), Northern pin oak (*Q. ellipsoidalis*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), scarlet oak (*Q. coccinea*), shingle oak (*Q. imbricaria*), Southern red oak/Spanish oak (*Q. falcata*), Shumard oak (*Q. shumardii*), and black-jack oak (*Q. marilandica*), among others. Trees in the white oak group (with rounded leaves) can be infected as well, although impacts are often more moderate.

How to protect your trees from oak wilt

To minimize the chances of your tree getting oak wilt, do not prune, wound or damage oak trees during the high-risk period, which for many

states is April through July, although some states have slightly different dates so be sure to check with your local extension office for recommendations. (For instance, the high-risk period in Texas begins in February.) If your trees are wounded during the high-risk period, paint the wounds within minutes of damage to prevent infection, using wound paint or a latex based paint. This can reduce visits by sap beetles (*Nitidulidae*) and bark beetles (*Scolytidae*) that can spread the oak wilt spores from infected trees to healthy trees. If you are conducting a timber sale, verify when cutting will be allowed with a forester or other professional.

Common tree injuries to be aware of during the high-risk period:

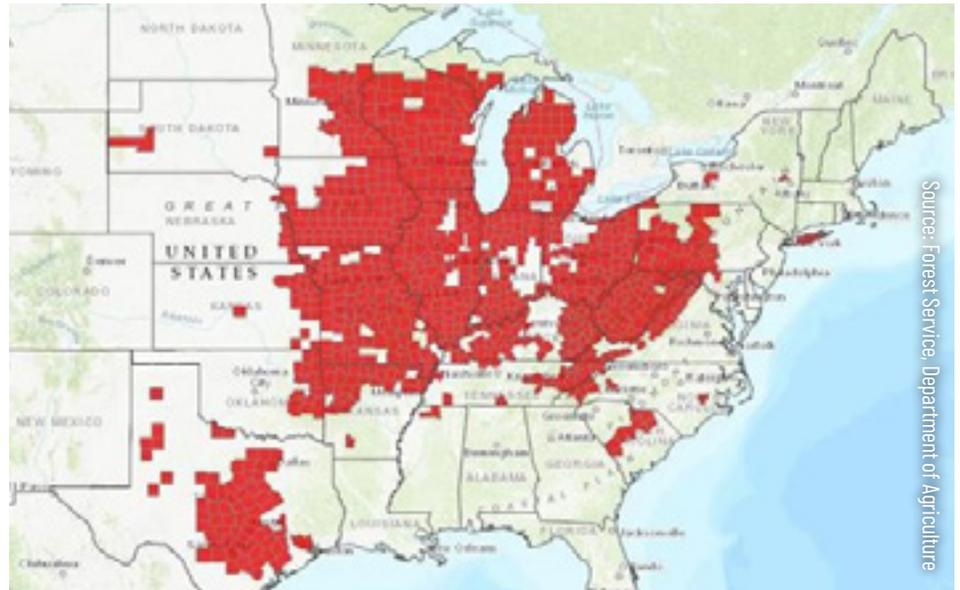
- pruning cuts
- broken branches from wind, ice or heavy rains
- mechanical injuries, such as bark damage from a vehicle or lawn mower
- broken branches from neighboring trees
- wounds resulting from climbing a tree using tree spikes

Don't move firewood long distances

Transporting firewood long distances can move diseases such as oak wilt, as well as insects like emerald ash borer and gypsy moth. For trees killed by oak wilt, the fungus is present in the wood for a full year after the tree dies and moving the wood could unknowingly transport the fungus to other areas of the state. After the tree has been dead for a full year, or if the bark is loose on the tree, then the wood is no longer harboring the fungus.

Signs of oak wilt

Oak wilt is a fungus that invades the water-conducting cells of the tree and blocks the flow of water within the tree, causing the tree to wilt. The rapid drop in mid-summer of green leaves, some with dry brown mottled tips, are probable signs of oak wilt. Check with your state extension or forestry office about oak wilt testing. A tree in the red oak group that is wounded in the spring and infected



with oak wilt will be dead by August or September of that same year.

Nearby oak trees, with root systems connected to the diseased tree, can be killed in the coming years as the fungus spreads underground through the root systems.

A look-a-like

Two-lined chestnut borer (*Agrilus bilineatus*) is a native beetle that attacks oaks and can create symptoms that look like oak wilt. While oak wilt kills the whole tree quickly, two-lined chestnut borer often attacks and kills branches in the upper portions of the tree first, and the remainder of the tree may be killed in subsequent years. Trees that are under stress are more likely to be attacked by two-lined chestnut borer, while oak wilt can infect any tree once it is wounded, if a spore-carrying beetle is present.

Managing oak wilt once you have it

If oak wilt is identified in your property there are management options available, but these can be expensive. To stop an oak wilt pocket from spreading you must do something about the interconnected root systems. Cutting the infected tree, or a few trees around the dying tree, will *not* stop the fungus from moving underground through connected root systems. To disrupt root graft connections with neighboring healthy trees, use a vibratory plow blade, trencher or rock saw. Additional control

Map of oak wilt counties throughout U.S.

options such as uprooting or using herbicides to kill the root systems are currently being evaluated. Contact a forester or forest health professional for more information on controlling oak wilt.

If trees in urban areas get oak wilt, management and control can be more complicated. Trenching can be impractical in areas where underground cable, phone and electric lines are present. Contact a certified arborist to discuss management options, including the possibility of using fungicide injections to protect individual oaks.

The future of oak wilt

In areas where oak wilt is killing oak trees, the fungus does not remain active on the site forever. Oaks can grow from seed or be planted in that same area, and not be infected with oak wilt. Oak is an important part of many native communities and maintaining it as part of your property can support a variety of wildlife and ecosystem functions. Oak wilt has been in the U.S. for many years, but prevention and management can help slow the introduction and spread in our urban and rural woodlands and maintain oak as a portion of forests into the future.

Linda Williams is a forest health specialist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

An aster but not an *Aster*: *Doellingeria umbellata* (flat-top aster).

Why do plant names keep changing?

By Mary Ann Feist

There are more than 2,700 plant species in the state of Wisconsin and not a single *Aster*! “What?!” you might say, “but there is flat-top aster, big-leaf aster, stiff aster, upland white aster, panicked aster and many more!”

I would have to correct you and say, “But those are the common names, and none of these species belong in the genus *Aster* anymore. They are now *Doellingeria umbellata*, *Eurybia macrophylla*, *Ionactis linearifolia*, *Solidago ptarmicoides* and *Symphyotrichum lanceolatum*.”

“Symphyo-whatum!” you might retort. “But why? Why do the names keep changing?”

It is true, plant names do keep changing. Scientific names as we know them today have been changing ever since Carl Linnaeus first



Photo by Aaron Carlson

started using binomials to describe species in the 1700s. I want to convince you that this is a good thing. Of course, it can be challenging to keep up sometimes, and we do become attached to certain names. I have to admit, even though it had been suggested that most North American *Asters* belonged in this genus since as early as 1994, I have only recently begun to warm up to the genus name *Symphyotrichum*.

OK, scratch that. I still don't like the name *Symphyotrichum*. *Aster* is so much easier to pronounce and it just sounds nicer. But unfortunately, those are not valid reasons to keep species grouped together in the same genus.

The grouping of plants today is based on the field of systematics, a broad term that includes nomenclature, taxonomy, classification and

phylogenetics. Phylogenetics is the study of the evolutionary relationships of taxa and it is our increasing knowledge of the evolutionary history of plants that is responsible for most of the name changes these days.

As a plant systematist, I am someone who is guilty of having changed a name or two myself. I've split two genera into four, resurrected a species that had been lumped with another species, and demoted a species to a subspecies. For example, you may be familiar with the species *Oxypolis rigidior* (stiff cowbane), a wetland plant with showy white umbels that occurs primarily in the southern half of Wisconsin. The genus *Oxypolis* once had seven species in it, but I split this already small genus into two genera — *Oxypolis* and *Tiedemanina*.

Why would I do such a thing? Well the answer to that question is the most common reason why plant names change — research. Plant names are often changed because our knowledge of those plants and their evolutionary relationships to other plants has increased. Taking a very close look at the species



Photos by Mary Ann Feist and Derek Anderson.

Similar but different: *Oxypolis rigidior* and *Tiedemannia filiformis*.

that previously made up the genus *Oxypolis*, I determined that they didn't all belong together. I based my decision on both molecular and morphological data and inferences I made from this data regarding the evolutionary relationships of these species. The species had all been put into the genus *Oxypolis* due to their fruit morphology. Their fruits do look very similar, but it turns out that fruit morphology is subject to convergent evolution. Ecological forces acting on evolution can cause certain morphological characters to look very similar even though the species they occur in are not very closely related. This was the case with *Oxypolis* and *Tiedemannia* and their fruits. In the case of *Oxypolis*, the DNA told me that some of the species (the ones I moved into the genus *Tiedemannia*) were not closely related evolutionarily. They did not form a monophyletic group with the remaining *Oxypolis* species. A group of species is monophyletic if they all share a most recent common ancestor, and the general thinking these days is that a genus should be monophyletic.

The splitting up of the genus *Aster* came about in a similar way.

The North American species of *Aster* were found *not* to be closely related to the Eurasian species of *Aster*. In a 1994 study of asters worldwide, the structure of chromosomes and achenes indicated that the Eurasian *Aster* species stand apart from North American species. A DNA study also confirmed this. The name *Aster* stayed with the Eurasian species because one of those species, *Aster amellus*, native to Europe and Asia, was named first and so had priority for the name over the other species in the genus.

The most common type of name change in plants is that a plant is moved into another genus. For example, *Oxypolis canbyi* became *Tiedemannia canbyi* and *Aster lanceolatus* was moved into the genus *Symphotrichum* and became *Symphotrichum lanceolatum*. Other changes come about as a result of lumping or splitting. In most cases, when two species are lumped, the species name with priority is kept and the other name becomes a synonym of it. The name with priority is the one that was published first. This "rule of priority" is one of the many rules for naming plants that can be found in

the *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants*, the set of rules and recommendations that govern the scientific naming of these type of organisms. The second most common reason for plant names to change is that they do not conform to the rules of the ICN. If a mistake was made when naming a plant, its name may be changed to correct this error.

While it may be irritating to learn a new plant name, it's a good thing when a species name changes. It may represent an increase in our knowledge of that species and a better understanding of its evolutionary history, or it may be a correction of a past mistake that allows the names to conform to the rules of botanical nomenclature as dictated by the ICN. Although I still don't like the name *Symphotrichum* and am not totally sure how to pronounce it, I will concede that it is more accurate for the genus *Aster* to have been split up than for all of those species to remain in one genus.

Mary Ann Feist is a senior academic curator for the Wisconsin State Herbarium.

Mark Your Calendar

MARCH

March 12

National Plant a Flower Day

Make it a native!

March 14

National Learn about Butterflies Day

You probably already know about monarchs, but with over 20,000 types of butterflies world-wide, it's likely that there are a few species you could learn about.

March 15-16

Tennessee Valley's Symposium Plant Natives

2019! Partnering With Nature

University Center, University of Chattanooga

APRIL

National Garden Month

April 22

Earth Day

It's a great time to protect lakes and streams by planning (and planting) a rain garden!

MAY

Lyme Disease Awareness Month

May 3

National Garden Meditation Day

May 16

National Love a Tree Day

Tire swing is optional.

Will your chapter host the National Board meeting?

Would you like to show off your local eco-system, the beauty of your town and the members who make your chapter one-of-a-kind?

Wild Ones National Board would like to get out and meet our members so it is seeking a chapter willing to host the 2019 Wild Ones annual meeting and face-to-face board meeting in August or October. Possible meeting sites could include your local nature center or park, library or university.

This would be a great opportunity to schedule a site visit or garden tour to show us what you love about your region. The host chapter would be asked to help make arrangements for a meeting facility for a small group of National Board members and staff for two days of meetings. During this time, the Annual Meeting will be broadcast via the internet. We typically have a group dinner together and would love to use that time as an opportunity to meet your chapter members.

If you think your chapter might be interested in hosting the National Board for the Annual Meeting, please contact National Board Secretary Susan Hall via email at secretary@wildones.org.

CHAPTER ANNIVERSARIES

| | |
|--|----------|
| Green Bay, Wisconsin | 28 years |
| Milwaukee-Southwest-Wehr, Wisconsin | 27 years |
| Fox Valley Area, Wisconsin | 25 years |
| Lake-to-Prairie, Illinois | 23 years |
| North Park Village Nature Center, Illinois | 21 years |
| Kalamazoo Area, Michigan | 20 years |
| Mid-Missouri, Missouri | 19 years |
| St. Croix Oak Savanna, Minnesota | 16 years |
| Northern Kane County, Illinois | 10 years |
| North Oakland, Michigan | 9 years |
| Illinois Prairie, Illinois | 9 years |
| Prairie Edge, Minnesota | 5 years |
| Big River Big Woods, Minnesota | 4 years |

NEW LIFETIME MEMBER

Patricia Duke

Central Arkansas (Seedling) Chapter

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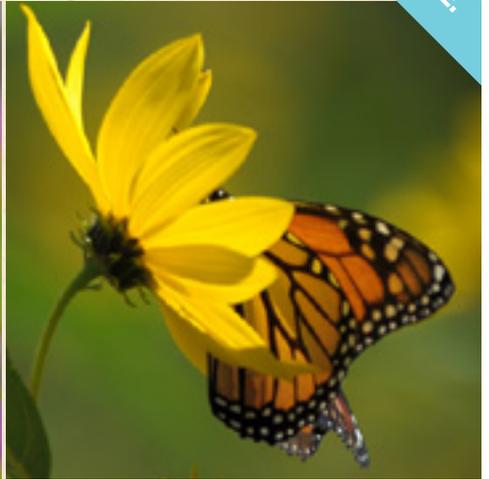
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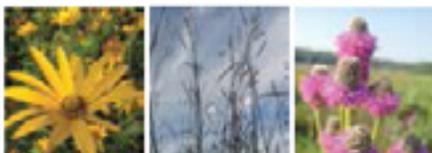
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