

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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All articles for the August 2023 newsletter, must be submitted to: serendipitree@gmail.com by July 21, 2023.

Wild Ones Member Picnic and Tour of the Oak Savanna Restoration at Old Goat Farm

Saturday, July 22, 2023

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

9369 Belvidere Rd., Roscoe, IL

RSVP Required:

<http://wildonesrvc.org/>



Our annual member's picnic and tour will be on Saturday, July 22nd at Old Goat Farm in Roscoe. Greg and Karen Ruffner purchased the historic farm several years ago and began to restore the beautiful old oak savanna on the property with help from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pheasants Forever. They received a grant from the F&WS to buy seeds of native species that are favored by the federally endangered Rusty-patched Bumblebee and were assisted by Pheasants Forever (PF) to prepare the soil for seeding the area during the winter, a technique known as "frost seeding". Jared Trickey from PF will explain the whole process as we tour the savanna. This will be followed by a picnic lunch provided by the WORRV chapter. Reservations for the tour and picnic are needed so we know how many people to plan for. The tour and picnic are open to WORRV Chapter members and their guests only. **PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN LAWN CHAIR.**

Meet Jared Trickey

Jared Trickey is the Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist for Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, Lee, and DeKalb Counties. He works in partnership with local Pheasants Forever chapters, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and County Soil & Water Conservation Districts. His position is to provide technical assistance for landowners on conservation practices and habitat improvement projects. His primary goal is to teach/guide private landowners on habitat improvement and to create more stewards on the landscape. Originally from Northern New York, he found his way to Illinois five years ago and now calls Illinois home. Read more information about the oak savanna restoration on our website: <http://wildonesrvc.org/>

Need for New Chapter Leadership **Kim Lowman Vollmer**



Kim Lowman Vollmer

The Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones has an elite status. We are the second largest chapter. We are a role model for other chapters. Our newsletter ranks right at the top of chapter publications. Many of our activities are now carried on by many other chapters. Our plant sales allow us to have outstanding programs and to support other like-minded organizations.

We should be proud of our chapter and all its accomplishment!

The reality right now is that we only have a small group of members who are doing most of the work, with these positions being filled by the same folks for several years or decades. This is not a sustainable practice. We have to face some difficult decisions if we cannot get other members to take various positions that make this chapter work well. Some of the positions are president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer,



membership coordinator, mentor coordinator, Facebook coordinator, plant sale coordinator, program coordinator, publicity coordinator, volunteer coordinator, grant coordinator, board member-at-large, newsletter assistant, library assistant, website manager, and more. This is more than a dozen positions and some require 2-3 people. Mathematically that means that if you took a position for one year, it would take 7 years for everyone to take a turn before we would have to start over. Some of these positions can be done on off hours and at home. Some could be done with Zoom meetings or phone calls. There is a variety of aptitudes and various levels of talent needed for each position, so there is something for everyone.

The Board hopes you will take this plea seriously and contact us to let us know what position you would be interested in taking. Our contact information is listed on the back of this newsletter. We are great mentors and wish to keep this chapter successful and thriving.

Thank you!

Kim Lowman Vollmer is a Board-member at-large.

In My Yard **Jane Evans**

This spring season has seemed to be excellent for native plants. They have come back and filled in with abandonment. Several people asked about the Maidenhair ferns we had at the plant sale and said that they had tried to grow them and had failed. It was the same way in my yard; tried and failed. But then one day I read that Maidenhair ferns don't like wind and I rethought their living quarters. They now reside under lilac bushes that were here when we moved in and are situated behind a convenient log where they can peek over it, in rich soil where the leaves are left each fall. They love to be cuddled and are thriving. So, to pun the words of the Irishman on TV, "Cuddle your ferns; cuddle them!"



Fern photo by Jane Evans

Habitat Corridors: Tying Home Landscapes to Greenways

June Meeting Recap by Mark Luthin

Joel Neylon emphasized the benefits of native plantings to attract wildlife such as bees and birds. However, it's equally important to look beyond our home habitats and keep in mind the larger habitats that may be nearby, and try to incorporate similar plants that are found there. Joel shared with us a 5-point plan, realizing that many Wild Ones members already do numbers 1 and 2.



Joel Neylon

1. Plant native plants specific to northern Illinois. Many pollinators rely exclusively on one species of plant, so it's important to offer them the food or nectar source that they require.
2. Plant for the entire season. With careful planning, homeowners can have blooming plants from April-October (or November)
3. Try to expand off of the bigger nearby natural areas. Organisms that are already utilizing the larger areas will then move easily into your home landscape.
4. Favor specialists. As mentioned, many pollinators rely on one plant species. Planting with the specialists

in mind will also attract the generalists, such as bumble bees.

5. Document your findings. Using phone apps such as iNaturalist and eBird will add to a huge database of all types of wildlife. These apps can be used to see what species might be in the area, so the amateur naturalist can keep an eye out for them.

Joel, being an avid birder, also discussed the benefits of building nest boxes and including them in the home landscape. People that live in cities tend to remove dead trees, which happen to be ideal habitats for cavity-nesting birds. Placing birdhouses around the lot can replace those lost habitats. Even bluebirds will nest in town.

Unfortunately, we do not have a Zoom recording of Joel's presentation. However, a video using a cell phone was started towards the end of Joel's presentation. Click the link below to watch.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/qcBegZNw28Vc9Vs4A>

Wild Ones 2023 Photo Contest

It's time for Wild Ones' 2023 Photo Contest! Wild Ones mission is all about educating and inspiring people to cultivate community and together take action to heal our environment through landscaping with native plants. We count on the photos you submit to the contest to help us inspire others to make this critical shift in their landscaping practices! One photo is said to be worth a thousand words, but perhaps one photo could be much more valuable than that and instead help restore a thousand acres!

This year's photo contest seeks to emphasize the joy, the connections, the journey, the beauty, and the healing experienced by both the people and the land through the native landscaping movement. We hope you share your valuable photos with us, especially of your home and



Photo by Rob Clark

local landscapes and the community that has been cultivated around those projects. You needn't be an experienced photographer, you just need to follow the 2023 Photo Contest Rules and Guidelines, snap some good shots, and submit your entries: <https://wildones.org/photo-contest-info/>

Entries will be accepted from 12:00 a.m. CT on Saturday, July 1st through 11:59 p.m. CT on Thursday, August 31st, 2023.

After the contest, members will be able to view the entries online and vote for the people's choice award. Additionally, winning photographs will be published in the Wild Ones Journal and published on social media for everyone to view them.

Collecting Seeds of Native Plants **Kim Lowman Vollmer**

Collecting seeds from native plants can be very rewarding and educational, and can assist in preserving native species. Here is some helpful information so you can collect seeds from your native plants.

People collect seeds for many reasons. Many of us like to preserve native species so they don't become extinct. Sometimes I pick the seeds of aggressive or non-native plants so they don't multiply. Collecting seeds to plant saves you money as plants can be expensive. You also might wish to share your seeds with others, as we do at our annual November potluck and seed exchange program.

The window for seed collection of any particular species can vary and may range from only a few days to several weeks or longer. The seed head may produce hundreds of seeds or just a couple. Sometimes identifying the part of the seed head that is actually the seed can be tricky. Seed collection methods will vary depending on the species. It requires you to plan ahead and monitor for maturity. Remember, it is illegal to pick, or collect plants/seeds from parks, forest preserves, and other such lands.

You will need a variety of tools for seed collecting: gloves, garden scissors, hand nippers, markers, brown lunch bags, brown grocery bags, buckets, canvas totes or whatever works for you. Some folks tie a bucket or bag to their belt so that their hands are free to do the work. Use paper and not plastic bags if you will be storing them for any amount of time as plastic does not breath and the seeds could mold. Collection methods will vary depending on the size of the plant, stem hardness, size, if you collect the entire seed head or remove the viable seed parts in the field, weather, and more. Grass is often harvested by stripping (with your hand) or simply pulling the seeds off. Some plants are dry and brittle, so you can break off the seed heads. Experimentation will reveal the best method for you and the plants you work with.

It's important to store the seeds correctly or they will not be viable. Most people store each seed species separately. The containers should be labeled with common name, scientific name, date collected, and location collected. Overheating can kill seeds, and temperature fluctuation should be avoided if possible. High moisture content can cause mold and destroy the seeds. Prairie Moon Nursery states, "A good rule is the 100 rule of thumb, where the sum of temperature (degrees F) and relative humidity (%) does not exceed 100." Prairie Moon Nursery

is an excellent source of education to learn how to germinate seeds over the winter. They differentiate a dozen different ways to germinate seeds, from the hot water treatment to a cold, damp period. Google Prairie Moon Nursery and look up each plant on their web site to find its germination code. Using that germination code and the germination information they provide, you will know how to treat each species.

Below are species you can typically collect in July, along with any other species that appear ready.

Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
 Hairy Puccoon (*Lithospermum carolinense*)
 Jacob's Ladder (*Polemonium reptans*)
 Lead Plant (*Amorpha canescens*)
 May Apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)
 Prairie Larkspur (*Delphinium verexcens*)
 Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon meadia*)
 Wild Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricate*)
 Wild Garlic (*Allium canadense*)
 Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
 Wild Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)

Additional Resources and References:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/Native_Plant_Materials/developing/collecting.shtml

One book I found very helpful with this topic was, *The Prairie in Seed: Identifying Seed-Bearing Prairie Plants in the Upper Midwest*, by Dave Williams, 2016, University of Iowa Press.

Have fun and stay tuned for additional postings in upcoming newsletters!



Shooting star photo by Jessie Crow Mermel

Upcoming Events

Special Members-only Event

July 22 | 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. | Old Goat Farm Restoration Tour and Picnic



Monthly Meetings at Cherry Valley Library and via Zoom

August 17 | 6:30 p.m. | Denise Sandoval: Gardening with Natives Through the Seasons

September 21 | 6:30 p.m. | Stephanie Schmidt: Cranes Over Illinois

October 19 | 6:30 p.m. | Boone County Conservation District 60th Anniversary History

November 11 | Annual Meeting - Details TBD

Membership Update **Sallie Krebs, Membership Coordinator**

A membership e-form and our membership brochure describing the benefits of membership are both available on the chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org). Click on Join/Renew under the Membership tab. You can renew (or join) with any major credit card through PayPal (no PayPal account required) by using our website. We appreciate your support!

187 memberships as of June 23, 2023

Special thanks to our members who made contributions above the basic \$40 dues!

Randy & Sylvia Downing, Stockton

Ginnie Watson, Rockford

Ann Whitney, Pecatonica

New members are identified with a green ribbon on their meeting name badges. Please introduce yourself to them and help us welcome all new members to our great chapter!

Anniversaries:

25 Years:

Chris Nelson, Beloit

10 Years:

Fiona & Graham Fordyce, Rockford

Thank you for your continuing support!

Get more involved with your Wild Ones Chapter!
We are looking for people to offer their talents and time with the following positions:

President (in 2024)
Treasurer
Booth Coordinator



Mentor Coordinator
Board Member-at-Large
Volunteers

Contact Jerry Paulson to learn more and get involved: (815) 222.4414, paulsonjerry@aol.com



NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Sallie Krebs

1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104

PMB 233

Rockford, IL 61107

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 07/01/2023, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last Wild Ones Journal until you renew your membership. National Wild Ones drops expired memberships the first week of the expiration month, so please don't be late! See the Membership Update for renewal information.



Wild Ones Mission

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

Rock River Valley Chapter Meetings

Our regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month. We are live streaming the programs over ZOOM and posting recordings on YouTube. Links to the meetings and programs are posted on our website and our Facebook page, and sent to members via email the week of the meeting. If you want to receive the link send an email to: janetgiesen@gmail.com.

Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators

BOARD

President: Jerry Paulson

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Vice President: Linda Tabb Ricker (217)

649.3966 greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com

Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865

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Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912

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Board members:

Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044

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APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [open position]

Facebook coordinator: Dawn Skupien

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Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson

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Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs

membershipworrvc@gmail.com

Mentor coordinator: [open position]

Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell

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Native plant sale coordinators: Janet Giesen (as to the left)

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Ginnie Watson (as above)

Cynthia Nelson cnelson18@niu.edu

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Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)

Publicity coordinator: Dawn Skupien (as to the left)

Show Me/Help Me coordinator:

Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)

Tree & shrub sale coordinator: Brian Hale

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Volunteer coordinator: Cynthia Nelson (as to the left)

Website coordinator: Janet Giesen (as to the left)

Youth education & grants coordinator: Kim Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)