

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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Scan with your Smartphone for more information about Rock River Valley Wild Ones



Articles for the March 2014 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Chair, at: Pambi@wildonesrrvc.org February 23, 2014.

Managing Weeds Without Using Chemicals
Thursday, February 20, 2014

NEW LOCATION: Rock Valley College/Woodward Technology Center, WTC
3301 North Mulford Road,
Rockford, IL 61114

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm



Join us February 20, 2014 – please remember to come to our new location at Rock Valley College! Managing natural areas without using pesticides presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities that need planning, hard work and determination....qualities that certainly describe Mary Blackmore!

To avoid herbicides and their negative effects, one must focus on the target species' biology. This includes the strategic timing of physical processes such as cutting or burning, as well as the encouragement of native species best-suited to outcompete the invasive vegetation. Mary's discussion will also cover why people are your greatest asset and how your own expectations can be your greatest liability.

Mary Blackmore has been involved in various aspects of natural areas management in northwestern Illinois for over 30 years. Over that time she has worked as a volunteer for several local non-profit organizations, focusing on herbicide-free methods and volunteer recruitment and retention. In 1992 she began studying the efficacy of using goats to control woody vegetation in small prairie tracts, using her own herd. Currently she is the stewardship volunteer coordinator at two preserves in Ogle County which are owned and managed by the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society.

Confused about the terms "pesticides" and "herbicides"? This program will answer questions about managing native landscaping in a non-harmful way. The program is free, and open to the public.

Come early and browse the library, merchandise tables, chapter information booth, and refreshments table. We welcome new members! Call 815-627-0344.

Submitted by Lynda and Lee Johnson, Co-Chairs/Program

Message from the Co-President Bob Arevalo



Photo by Tim Lewis

As much as the winter can be a little dreary at times, I do enjoy getting out on a crisp day to enjoy the outdoors. With the extreme cold of this winter, my outdoor excursions have unfortunately been somewhat limited. I do enjoy looking out the windows of my home at what is going on in spite of the weather. The native plants in my prairie provide year long visual interest.

The birds that overwinter here in the Rock River Valley have to scrounge for food and shelter to survive. I am happy that some of them have found refuge in my prairie. It seems everyday I have around twenty sparrows and juncos feeding off of the seeds that are provided by the native plants in the prairie. They seem to move together as a group, seeking out the choicest morsels of seeds. Their movement from plant to plant reminds me of my honeybees moving from blossom to blossom. They are a joy to watch.

These creatures have learned over thousands of years to survive along with the native plants that have been here also for thousands of years. Unfortunately since the arrival of Europeans to the new world, this balance of creatures and the native flora that support them has been affected. With more and more of our land being converted to development, there has been a reduction of our native plant resources. Non native, exotic, or alien species are food deserts for the many creatures

that depend upon native species for survival. Home landscapes that do not consider natives are denying insects their specific and natural food source and in turn are also denying the birds that feed on these insects their natural food source. Most of you Wild Ones members already know this very well so I am preaching to the choir, but have you gotten the word out to friends and neighbors about this important relationship? If not, rather than trying to explain this to them, instead invite them to one of our meetings at our new location at Rock Valley College.

We need to promote a "land ethic" as Aldo Leopold described in "A Sand County Almanac." And as Doug Tallamy put it in his book "Bringing Nature Home": "We can no longer hope to coexist with other animals if we continue to wage war on their homes and food supplies." Finally, Tim Lewis' excellent presentation at our January meeting explained very well about "Why Natives?" Further presentations during the year will shed more light on this and other topics.

While you are bundled up in your warm homes this winter, start planning on what native plants you might add to your home landscape. Watch for our woodland and prairie plant sale information in the newsletter. This is a wonderful source of quality native plants. Start thinking spring. It is just around the corner!

Native Woodland Plant Sale Begins

Barbara Flores, Native Woodland Plant Sale Coordinator

Included with this newsletter is the 2014 Native Woodland Plant Sale brochure. Also in this issue is a recap of the excellent presentation from the January meeting by longtime chapter member, and now the national president of Wild Ones, Tim Lewis. Please read these two items together. The talk asked and answered the question "Why Natives" and the brochure offers native woodland plants for your yard.

And why should we plant natives? It's for the birds really and for a cleaner, more natural way of gardening. Birds must find protein rich insects to feed their nestlings and even the adult birds, especially the hummingbird, need insects for a complete and healthful diet. When we plant native plants, the insects that evolved with them over the millennia will find the food they need, whether it is nectar, pollen or vegetation.. And yes, we want those

insects in our yard, caterpillars and little flies, gnats and bees. If we use pesticides and destroy these insects, we destroy the food which the birds need.

Please enjoy reading about the woodland plants being offered this year. Every year the brochure contains a couple of new plants but this year there are ten new ones. Be advised, some may sell out very quickly. In addition to the species in the brochure there are more than 20 additional species which will be available at pickup. Please go to the Wild Ones website www.WildOnesrrvc.org for a complete list of these pickup plants. And do not hesitate to contact the sale coordinator with any questions, comments or special requests.

Barbara@WildOnesrrvc.org or 815-289-8602

Attention Educators and Others

Kim Lowman Vollmer

The Illinois DNR is a wealth of environmental information, resources and teaching ideas. They have lessons written to correlate with the Common Core State Standards. There are videos you can play to your students or children on a variety of topics, such as Fur Bearing Animals, Illinois Mammals, Frogs and Toads and so much more. They have education trucks stuffed full of educational materials and lessons that you can check out. The following link will take you to Kids and Education <http://dnr.state.il.us/education>. On this same page you will find the link to Video Podcasts, to play for your student, children and some just for educators. There are numerous workshops offered from Winter Ecology, Illinois Urban Wildlife, Schoolyard Wildlife Habitat Development, Pollinators and the Prairie, etc. which you can find under WORKSHOPS or at this link <https://www.enticeworkshops.com/>. You don't have to be a teacher to attend the workshop. Have fun cruising around the Illinois DNR website and learning more about nature and our environment.



Signage on
Bob Arevalo's property

January Meeting Recap Jerry Paulson

Tim Lewis, our own past chapter President, was the first speaker at our new monthly meeting location at Rock Valley College. Tim presented an introduction to using native wildflowers in local landscapes and why natives are better for the environment. His program was geared for gardeners just starting to incorporate native plants into their yards and businesses.

He started with a definition for **“Natural Landscaping:” It is the design, construction and maintenance of landscapes that provide a healthy ecosystem that once existed in our area, that emphasize the use of native plants that have occurred here naturally prior to European settlement.**

Natural landscaping contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing energy use, providing habitat for beneficial insects, birds and animals, and enhancing personal relationships with the natural world.

Why Natives?

Native plants have evolved with the climate of northern Illinois, and the soil and water conditions in our area, making them part of the local ecosystem. The Rock River valley is part of The Nature Conservancy's Eco-Region #46, an area of northwest Illinois and southwest Wisconsin that has similar climate, soils and “ecotypes” of prairie, savanna, and woodlands.

Prairies need more than six hours of sunshine a day, while savanna species can survive in partial shade. Woodland understory plants can tolerate less than four hours of sunlight during the growing season. All three ecotypes can range from wet to dry soil conditions.

Native plants in our Eco-region have evolved with other plants, animals and insects. The animals and insects depend on the plants for food, and the plants depend on the animals and insects to pollinate them and disperse their seeds. Some insects, like the Monarch butterfly, rely on specific plants to survive.

Plants are dependent on the decaying organic matter of other plants, worms, insects and animals. Plants sustain life by transforming solar energy into food and fruit. Insects eat the plants and worms, small mammals and birds eat the insects, and other animals eat them. About 96% of all young birds are raised on insects. Other insects are pollinators of fruits, berries and nuts eaten by people.



The diversity of life is closely linked to the diversity of plants. If you alter any of these, you upset the balance of nature.

The Perfect Lawn

Tim then presented a short history of the American love affair with the perfect lawn. Large expanses of close-cropped grass lawns started in the 1700s on European estates. Only the wealthy could afford to maintain lawns, so they became a status symbol. The lawn was brought to America and became smaller and more affordable, until now everyone has one. The lawn care industry realized the potential for selling a lot of products to help maintain the perfect lawn, and promoted weed control chemicals, bigger and better mowers, irrigation systems and fertilizers. Today turf grass is the 4th largest “crop” by acreage in the United States---32 to 40 million acres of mowed grass! The lawn care industry is worth \$2 Billion a year.

What’s wrong with a beautiful green lawn? Besides all the time and money it takes to maintain, lawns use an enormous amount of fuel, fertilizer and pesticides (all made from fossil fuel energy), and consume vast amounts of water. Lawns are not good at absorbing rainfall either. Rain that falls on a mowed lawn is more likely to runoff into nearby storm sewers and streams than to soak into the ground.

Gasoline powered lawn mowers pollute the air. The US EPA says that lawn mowers emit 10 times the air pollution of a new car for each hour of operation. Lawn grass roots are what Japanese Beetle larvae feed on before the beetles emerge to feed on your garden plants and trees.

January Meeting Recap (cont'd)



Benefits of Native Plants

Native prairie plants have deep root systems, with some like Prairie dock reaching 15 feet long. The deep roots help the plants survive prolonged drought and fire, and allow rain to infiltrate into the ground rather than running off into streams.

Once established native plants do not require much maintenance:

- Require no watering, fertilizer or pesticides
- Reduce maintenance costs
- Reduce pollution and runoff
- Trap carbon dioxide
- Control soil erosion
- Provide food and shelter for wildlife
- Reconnect people with nature

When you put in a natural landscape you create a healthy habitat that benefits the world beyond your yard. You restore nature and help the local environment.

How To Deal With Common Concerns About Natural Yards

Native yards look weedy – Some native plants can look weedy. Put them into borders or beds so they look intentionally planned.

Native plants are invasive - Try to put the right species in the right place. If a plant becomes weedy or invasive, remove or move it to its preferred habitat.

Native plants attract mosquitos – Mosquito eggs need standing water for 7-14 days to hatch. Prairies and woodlands absorb water, and natural landscapes attract predators that eat insects. Make sure there is no standing water in your yard and you will not breed mosquitos.

Native plants aggravate allergies –

Native grasses, shrubs and trees produce wind-blown pollen that can cause allergies, but most showy wildflowers, including goldenrod, produce sticky pollen that is transported by insects not wind. Goldenrod gets blamed for allergies because it blooms at the same time as ragweed.

Native plants violate weed ordinances

– Municipal weed ordinances set arbitrary height limits to force homeowners to keep up their yards. Plant native plants in beds and borders and register your yard with the city or village to avoid being cited.

Where to begin

Tim then gave some good advice for blending native plants into your yard. Transitioning from traditional garden plants to natives requires an understanding of the needs of each species. Start by incorporating some showy native plants into your flower beds or borders then slowly increase the number of species. Widen existing borders and use formal garden designs. Include some annual flowers for color the first year until the native plants get established. Put native plants in clusters to get a big splash of color when they bloom.

Native plants will provide year-long visual interest, with seasonal color, texture and shadow. He shared photos of some examples of natural landscapes including in his own yard. He finished by saying that if you plant an inviting native habitat, insects, birds and other wildlife will come to it. Native landscapes evolved over the years, so you will want to plan for that. Do not take on more than you can manage.

Tim then gave a list of steps that you can take to promote the use of native plants:

- Grow native plants in your own yard
- Educate yourself about native plants
- Attend Wild Ones meetings and yard tours
- Spread the word about native plants

Tim said that resource lists and mail order catalogs are available at Wild Ones meetings that tell you where to get native plants, and gave us this advice:

- Order plants from local nurseries and Wild Ones sales
- Use mail order companies in the region
- Do not use “Wildflowers in a Can” – they are not native species
- Do Not Dig Native Plants From the Wild!

Meet the Board

Periodically, we will introduce you to members of the Board of Directors of the Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones so that you may meet the hardworking people who keep this chapter on the cutting edge. They are all volunteers who give of their time and energy to make this chapter the benchmark for chapters just starting up.



Rick Freiman - Prairie Plant Sale Co-Coordinator

Rick discovered Wild Ones through news media promoting a presentation by Douglas Tallamy on his book "*Bringing Nature Home*" in 2011. He had already been trying to reduce the amount of lawn he had to mow, and also wanted to attract birds to his backyard. Tallamy's message of how to sustain wildlife with native plants drew Rick to the program. He attended a few more monthly meetings, then joined in 2012 to stay connected with the interesting programs offered by the Rock River Valley Chapter.

Rick is controller for Progressive Steel Treating in Loves Park. Previously he was controller

for American Pfauter Machine Tools and cost accounting manager for Ingersoll Milling Machine Company.

His volunteer experience includes serving as President of the Rockford chapter of the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA), Treasurer of the Rockford Air Show, member of the Rockford Business Advisory Board, and member of his church council.

Rick also enjoys running and playing guitar, and lives in Rockford with his wife Debby.

Debby Freiman - Prairie Plant Sale Co-Coordinator

Deb discovered Wild Ones after her husband Rick started attending monthly programs offered by the Rock River Valley Chapter. She liked gardening and the idea of sustaining wildlife with native plants, and began attending meetings with Rick. She then joined in 2013.

Debby was executive administrative assistant for the Vice President of Business Development at Ace Hardware Corporation in Oak Brook, and most recently, business development director for 1st Step Chiropractic.

Her volunteer experience includes serving as a youth program director for her church, member of the Womanspace membership committee, and membership promotion for the Writers Guild.

Deb grew up in Michigan and enjoys gardening, singing, painting, and spending time with the grandkids.



Membership Update Shey Lowman, Membership Co-Chair

We need your help to achieve our 2014 goal to grow to 200 members! This is our 20th anniversary as a chapter and we want you to become involved by helping us recruit members. A membership e-form is available on the chapter website at:

http://www.wildonesrrvc.org/Documents/Membership/WildOnes_RRVC_Membership_Application_eForm.pdf

And our beautiful membership brochure describing the benefits of membership can be downloaded at:

http://www.wildonesrrvc.org/Documents/Membership/WildOnes_RRVC_Membership_Brochure.pdf

Thank you in advance for helping us reach our goal!

177 memberships on January 15, 2014

Special Thanks to Recent Rock River Valley Chapter Donors

(any amount above the \$37 basic dues)

Karla McGrail, Cedar Rapids, IA

Carol Womack, Lindenwood, IL

Welcome to new members!

Jeanne Bergstrom, Rockford, IL

Ryan Stahl, Janesville, WI

Anniversaries

Congratulations to this month's loyal members!

15 Years

Josh & Mollie Krecklow, Leaf River, IL

5 Years

Audrey S. Jansen, Rockford, IL

47 attended the January meeting.

A big thank you to our January meeting volunteers!

Refreshments- Anita Johnson and Janet Giesen

Sound Equipment- Bob Arevalo

Library Assistants- Marcia DeClerk and Cathy Johnson

Greeter- John Peterson

Meeting Recap for the Newsletter- Jerry Paulson

It is preferred that renewal memberships be sent directly to the chapter for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. Please use the address below:

Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter

5411 E. State Street #340

Rockford, IL 61108-2907

Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter and your national Journal address labels. You will be mailed a renewal reminder two months prior to your expiration date with a completed membership form and return envelope for your convenience.

Please send address and email address changes to Shey Lowman at shey@wildonesrrvc.org.

2014 Chapter Programs and Events

Feb-April	Woodland Plant Sale Orders?	Barbara Flores	arbara@wildonesrrvc.org 815-289-8602
February 20 7:00-9:00 pm	Managing Weeds Without Using Chemicals	Mary Blackmore Naturalist, Educator, and Lover of Native Plants	RVC/Woodward Technology Center, WTC 3301 North Mulford Road Rockford, IL 61114
March 20 7:00-9:00 pm	Planting Natives for Pollinators	Molly Fifield Murray UW Madison – Arboretum	RVC/Woodward Technology Center, WTC 3301 North Mulford Road Rockford, IL 61114
April 17 7:00-9:00 pm	Benefits of Native Landscaping for Private Landowners, Subdivision Developers, and Businesses	Corinne Daniels Applied Ecological Services	RVC/Woodward Technology Center, WTC 3301 North Mulford Road Rockford, IL 61114
April 21	Woodland Plant Sale Orders Due	Barbara Flores	barbara@wildonesrrvc.org 815-289-8602
April 28	Last day prairie plant orders will be accepted	Rick & Deb Freiman	815-871-7424
April 25 3-7:30 pm April 26, 9-12 noon	Pick Up Woodland Plant Orders See brochure for full details	Barbara Flores	15813 Anderson Rd. Durand, IL 61024

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change. Please contact Lynda and Lee Johnson at (815) 629-2781 for more information.



NATIVE PLANTS. NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Pambi Camacho
6680 Hartwig Drive
Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is **2/1/2014**, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last *Wild Ones Journal* until you activate your membership

You may receive a renewal notice from both the National organization and your chapter. Your membership information will be updated quicker if you renew through your chapter so you won't miss an issue of the chapter newsletter.

Mail your renewal:
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
5411 E. State Street #340
Rockford, IL 61108

Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter

Board of Directors and Chairs

Co-Presidents: Bob Arevalo 815-332-3343
Bob@wildonesrrvc.org

Ginnie Watson 815-398-0138
Ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org

Vice President: Jerry Paulson 815-222-4414
jerry@wildonesrrvc.org

Program Co-Chairs: Lynda and Lee Johnson
815-629-2781 lyndaLee@wildonesrrvc.org

Secretary: Cathy Johnson 815-978-0865
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Treasurer: Janet Giesen 815-899-6139
janet@wildonesrrvc.org

Membership Co-Chairs: Marilyn Heneghan
815-389-7869 marilyn@wildonesrrvc.org
Shey Lowman 815-757-4456
shey@wildonesrrvc.org

Newsletter Chair: Pambi Camacho
815-332-7637 pambi@wildonesrrvc.org

Plant Rescues/Seed Collection Chair:
John Peterson 815-979-8539
john@wildonesrrvc.org

Show Me/Help Me Co-Chairs:
Mary Anne Mathwich 815-624-6301
maryanne@wildonesrrvc.org
Anita Johnson 815-226-1606
anita@wildonesrrvc.org

Youth Education & Grants Chair:
Kim Lowman Vollmer 815-397-6044|
kim@wildonesrrvc.org

Prairie Plant Sale Coordinators:
Rick Freiman 815-871-7424 rick@
wildonesrrvc.org
Deb Freiman 815-871-7424
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Woodland Plant Sale Coordinator:
Barbara Flores 815-289-8602
barbara@wildonesrrvc.org

Tree & Shrub Sale Coordinator: John Peterson
815-979-8539 john@wildonesrrvc.org

Booth Coordinator, FREC Representative:
Tim Lewis 815-874-3468
tim@wildonesrrvc.org

Library Coordinator: Ginnie Watson
815-398-0138 ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org

Mentor Coordinator: Melanie Costello
815-645-8430 melanie@wildonesrrvc.org

Merchandise/Website Coordinator:
Shey Lowman 815-757-4456|shey@
wildonesrrvc.org

Volunteer Coordinator: Cynthia Nelson
815-758-8978 cynthia@wildonesrrvc.org

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at Rock Valley College/Woodward Technology Center, WTC, 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114
Special meetings, outings, and events are scheduled periodically and sometimes replace the regular meeting time/place. Contact any officer to confirm information about our next meeting.

Wild Ones Annual Membership: Household \$37, Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$20, Business \$250
Entire membership contribution is tax deductible. Contact Membership Chair for additional information or to join.

815-627-0344 • Visit our Web site at www.WildOnesRRVC.org

Wild Ones Mission

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