



Rock River Valley Chapter Newsletter

Volume 17, Issue 6

June 2015

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

Inside this Issue:

Message from the Co-President	2
Spotlight on Business Member	2
May Meeting Recap	3-7
Prairie Plant Sale	7-8
Show Me/Help Me	insert
Membership	9
Chapter Calendar	9
Chapter Contact Information	10



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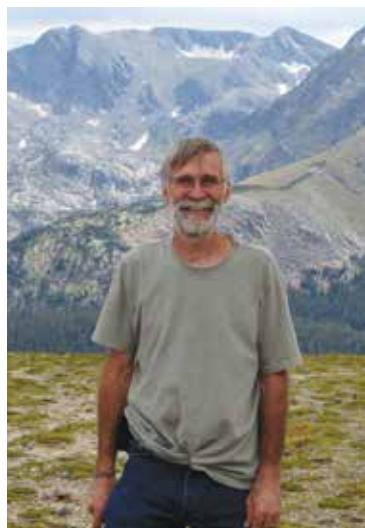


All articles for the July 2015 newsletter, must be submitted to: Constance@wildonesrrvc.org by June 23, 2015.

Propagating Conservative Native Plants Thursday, June 18, 2015

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

Time: 7:00 p.m.



Our speaker this month will be Rob Sulski, Steward of the North Branch Restoration Project and vice president of Foot Stone, Inc. He has been restoring and maintaining native prairies, wetlands, and woodlands since 1968, beginning at the Glenbrook North High School Prairie Nature Preserve in Northbrook, Illinois, and now throughout northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin. In the last nine years, Rob has developed horticultural techniques for growing conservative native plants and has grown thousands of such plants for distribution into native restoration and seed garden projects. In the last few years, he has been sharing his expertise with numerous professional, governmental, not-for-profit, and volunteer organizations, groups, and individuals involved in native restoration work. Also, since retiring from his Water Pollution Control Programs Manager position with the Illinois EPA, Rob has been professionally installing and managing hundreds of acres of native-planted open spaces, ranging in size from individual home rain gardens to large housing subdivisions. His company, Foot Stone, Inc., focuses on sustainable stormwater management.

Control Programs Manager position with the Illinois EPA, Rob has been professionally installing and managing hundreds of acres of native-planted open spaces, ranging in size from individual home rain gardens to large housing subdivisions. His company, Foot Stone, Inc., focuses on sustainable stormwater management.

Rob will share case studies and lessons learned from native seed gardener programs that are helping propagate rare native plants. This is a new model and new niche for volunteer native gardeners to help support restoration of natural remnants and landscapes by providing the rare native plants that are often missing from the plant mix. Come to learn about the potential for native gardeners to provide plants critical to achieving high quality restorations. Some of these plants are food sources for specialized insects and animals and, therefore, are essential to achieving biodiversity in restored areas.

Rob is extremely excited to attend a meeting of the Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones to share some of his experiences with the group.

The program is free and open to the public. Come early and browse the library, merchandise and refreshments tables. We welcome and appreciate new members!

Submitted by Jamie B. Johannsen, Program Chair

Message from the Co-President

We see what we've learned to observe...

Not long ago I had the opportunity to spend some time at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois. I was visiting my parents and we decided to start with lunch before our walk. While eating, my parents asked where I'd like to walk and I suggested we ask at the information desk to find out where the best show of wildflower blooms were to be found, and walk there. I assumed they would be in the know.

When asked, the volunteer said there wasn't much to see now that the crabapples and daffodils were finished, but that there would probably still be a plant or two blooming in one of the woodland gardens. I was surprised by her answer; we're not so much farther north that our woodland bloom times differ that greatly and there was plenty blooming in my woodland. We set out on one of the arboretum roads and parked near a woodland and savanna trail. Just out of the car were pleased to see swaths of woodland phlox and wild geranium.

As we headed down the shaded path and for the next hour and a half, we were greeted by dozens of native plants in bloom. Some were, admittedly, nearing the end of their run. Mayapple blossoms were wide and loose, and the large-flowered trillium were starting to wither. Others

Lenae Weichel

were just beginning. There were five or six varieties of Solomon's seal, carpets of wild ginger, carrion flower, stands of red trillium, red baneberry, multiple violets, Jacks standing proudly in their pulpits, wild strawberries, and mounds of Jacob's ladder.

There will be more in the coming weeks. The Virginia waterleaf was bursting with flower buds and the shooting stars were still sending up stalks. As we walked, we ruminated on what we were told at the information desk. Did she not mention this lovely woodland still in bloom because she didn't know where to look? Had she only done her scouting from the road – in a car moving swiftly through an area meant for slower means? Maybe she just didn't know what to look for... even a fast walker who didn't slow enough to take it all in would have missed more than half of these plants and flowers. Perhaps she had just never learned how to look.

I am thankful that I had the time that day to stroll and to stop and to learn (I had to look up the names of a few plants when I returned home). I am thankful that Wild Ones teaches all of us. Through educational meetings, Show Me/Help Me days, and plant sales, we are forever adding to our knowledge and learning how to observe and understand the natural world around us.

Spotlight on a Business Member: Pizzo Native Plant Nursery

Bob Arevalo



Pizzo Native Plant Nursery's mission is to better communities through the cultivation, promotion, and trade of native plants. They are a wholesale grower specializing in native plant plugs, and are known as an established and reputable grower with more than 25 years of ecological restoration science behind their product and services. Pizzo also has 15 habitat-specific customized seed

mixes for large scale projects and produces a nice offering of pesticide-free vegetable plants in the spring.

Their nursery encompasses 40 acres of restored wetland and prairie habitat in the heart of farm country near Leland, Illinois, providing them with ready access to local eco-type seed from a diverse number of native plant species. Their production facilities include greenhouse space to allow for extended growing and targeted, date-specific delivery. They pride themselves on strong customer relationships and deliver a superior quality product and customized service. Pizzo Nursery's live



inventory availability is listed on their website and Wild Ones members are welcome to place orders for full flat quantities. Mixed species flat options are also available. We at Wild Ones appreciate the work that Pizzo does with native plant projects, and we appreciate their business membership in our chapter. Learn more about their organization at <http://pizzonursery.com/> or contact grack@pizzonursery.com.

May Meeting Recap

Cynthia Nelson

photos by Tim Lewis

Ferns of Field and Wood: An Amateur's Guide to Northern Illinois



Ed Cope, Restoration Ecologist for the Natural Land Institute, opened his talk by describing himself as an enthusiastic amateur. Although "amateur" is often used to describe someone who is inexperienced or unskilled, the word is derived from the Latin *amātor*, meaning lover; an amateur can mean someone who engages in a pursuit because of love. And there is a lot to love

about ferns. Coming across a stand of ferns when walking in the woods can evoke images of ancient landscapes and memories of walks in the rain forest. Terms used for ferns are sometime evocative. Fern leaves are often called fronds; the uncurling new frond is called a crozier or a fiddlehead. Words used to describe ferns include lacey, arching, and graceful. Ferns were a named plant in early languages, including Old English, Proto-Germanic, Sanskrit, and Proto-Indo-European. Considering that ferns were not basic to survival, it is of interest that they had a place in the language. Why were people talking about ferns? It could be that ferns were important in belief systems and rituals; perhaps they were thought to have magical properties. According to our speaker, "We feel the same way about ferns – they capture the essence of magic and enchantment."

Ferns are ancient plants, dating back to at least 360 million years ago. The earliest land plants were probably similar to liverworts, and related to the liverworts, hornworts, and mosses present today. They were short plants without true vascular tissue, and required a wet environment to survive. Plants considered precursors of ferns, which are related to the club mosses of today, had a simple vascular system. Ferns were the first plants with two types of vascular tissue, which provided structural support so they could grow up from the ground, as well as a system for transporting water and minerals throughout the plant. At one time, fern groups proliferated in the land along with forests of large spore-bearing primitive trees and tree-like plants. Although plant life was abundant, there was not a lot of plant diversity. Ferns dominated the landscape until the rise of flowering plants about 120 million years ago. In comparison to the tiny spores of a fern, the much larger seeds of flowering plants store nutrients that dramatically increase the success of offspring. Ferns that survived the competition for resources did so because they lived in sparse habitats. Ferns are often found in

areas where most flowering plants cannot thrive, such as cliffs, rock crevices, and bogs. Ferns are found on sandy soils, salty soils, and acidic soils. Some novel forms of ferns have resulted from adaptations to these extreme environments.

Ferns reproduce by spores. The sorus (plural: sori) is a structure in some ferns that contains clusters of sporangia in which spores are produced. Unlike plants that grow to maturity from a seed, ferns have an intermediate stage in their life cycle. A spore produced by a mature plant can germinate into a small, heart-shaped plant called a gametophyte. Although the spore is haploid and can only reproduce by cell division, the gametophyte is diploid, which means it has twice the number the chromosomes as the spore. The gametophyte has both sperm and egg cells and can fertilize itself if it is in a moist place. After fertilization, the gametophyte becomes a sporophyte and begins growing. Plants can be divided at the sporophyte stage. To do this, select a robust plant in early spring, and cut it so that a good amount of root is on each division. Ferns can also be propagated from spores. Cut a frond with sori from a fern, put it on paper, and press it in a book. After a couple of days, tap the spores off the paper, and mix them with sand. You can mix an all-purpose growing medium for ferns using 2 parts compost to 1 part peat, with some vermiculite added. You can modify the mix for a specific fern if you learn about its preferred habitat. After planting the spores, keep the soil moist. The first fronds will appear after several weeks, although the time to germination can vary with the species. Keep the fronds misted. When the plant is about 6 inches tall, harden it off before planting it outdoors.

There are 28 native species of ferns in Winnebago County, many of which are quite rare. Ferns can be found in many of our natural areas in the county. It is important to obtain the proper permission or permit if you are interested in taking a fern leaf in order to collect the spores. It is, of course, a violation of the conservation ethic to dig wild ferns, and – as the Illinois Nature Preserve sign says – "Everything is protected by law." Anyone finding a rare species should note its location and report the finding to the area natural resources manager or restoration specialist.

There is ongoing research on the classification of ferns, including the study of morphology (which may refer to the fossil record, as well as to extant plants) and molecular evolutionary genetics analysis. There are many challenges to classification. There may be subtle or overlapping characteristics, as well as questions about whether a particular characteristic evolved from a common ancestor or as a result of parallel evolution. There can also be issues in classification due to regional

May Meeting Recap (cont'd)



Ed Cope answers questions from Lisa Johnson & Mary Anne Mathwich.

variations in the stature, leaf shape, and leaf dentation in a species. Which is to say, the classification of ferns is a work in progress; any listing of taxa will reflect the understanding of the relationships among the plants at a given point in time.

The following is a listing, provided by our speaker, of ferns native to Winnebago County. There is information for each species about habitat and rarity in our area. The wetland status and the floristic quality index are provided, when available, in parentheses with the binomial for the species.

Class Psilotopsida

Order Ophioglossale

Family Ophioglossum

(Adder's Tongue or Succulent Fern Family)

Northern adder's tongue fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum* FACW C=9) is rare and may be gone from the county. If present, it will be found in early July in wet-mesic prairies and wet sedge meadows. It is an unusual-looking fern and, as such, might not be noticed by a casual fern-seeker. It has a single sterile leaf that is without teeth, lobes, or dissections. There is also a sporophore, a spore-bearing modified leaf, that extends upward on the stalk of the plant and contains the sporangia.

Cut-leaf grapefern (*Botrychium dissectum* FAC C=6) has a single sterile frond and, when present, a fertile sporophore with distinctive sporangia that open to release the tiny spores to the wind. This fern, which is rare in our area, can be found in dry woodlands with loam or sandy loam soil. As the gametophytes of the *Botrychium* species do not have chlorophyll, they are

considered to be dependent on mychorrhizal fungi for obtaining nutrients, and are difficult to cultivate.

Daisy-leaved grapefern (*Botrychium matricariaefolium* FACU C=10) prefers dry or sandy soils in both shade and sun. It may be found in woodlands or woodland edges, and grows 4-6 inches tall. It produces a single sterile frond each year with leaflets that resemble chamomile leaves (*Matricaria* is the genus for chamomile), and a sporophore with branched clusters of sporangia. This rare fern is on the Illinois state endangered list.

Leathery grapefern (*Botrychium multifidum* FACU C=10) may be found in some sunny sites, such as forest clearings or forest edges. This species tends to be larger than the other grapeferns. As the name suggests, the fronds tend to be leathery. This fern is very rare, and is on the Illinois state endangered list.

Dwarf grapefern (*Botrychium simplex* FAC C=10) is the smallest of the grapeferns, growing 3-5 inches tall, and is often scattered and inconspicuous. It has a single-leaf sterile frond and a single fertile frond on the pale green succulent stalk with prominent sporangia. It is found in open habitats, including prairies, sandy areas, and along the edges of lakes or streams. Places where it grows are usually at least temporarily wet; it may also grow in wetlands and fens. It is not certain this very rare diminutive species can still be found in the county. It is on the Illinois state endangered list.

Rattlesnake fern (*Botrychium virginianum* FACU C=6) has been found in every county in Illinois. It prefers mesic to mesic-dry woodlands, often those dominated by oaks (*Quercus* spp.) and hickories (*Carya* spp.). There is a single sterile frond near the ground. If there is a fertile frond, it extends above the sterile frond and has rows of yellow sporangia. This plant is one of most common ferns. It is easy to find and grows readily from spores.

Class Polypodiopsida

Order Osmundales

Family Osmundaceae (Royal Fern Family)

Cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea* FACW C=7) may occupy springs, bogs, wet woods, and peaty habitats. It is an attractive fern, with sterile fronds that may be 2-4 feet tall. The fertile fronds emerge from the middle of the plant as erect, contracted leaves with reddish brown sporangia. This fern is more common farther north and is rare in our area.

May Meeting Recap (cont'd)

Interrupted fern (*Osmunda claytoniana* FAC+ C=9) is as tall as the cinnamon fern. It prefers bogs, low or sloping woods, and occasionally occupies open, wet areas. Fertile fronds are covered with white or brown hair in the spring. Later in the season, the middle leaflets are dark because of the sporangia. When these middle leaflets wither away, the fertile fronds are interrupted. Although this fern is rare in our area, it can be found in Hartley Memorial Nature Preserve near Durand.

Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis* OBL C=8) grows 3-5 feet tall, and may be widely spreading. The sub-leaflets on the leaflets appear smooth along the margins. The plant has leaflets that are sterile, as well as leaflets that are partially sterile and partially fertile. The fertile leaflets extend upward, and are covered with sporangia which vary in color from pale yellow to brown. This fern may tolerate more sun than many as long as it has adequate moisture. It will tolerate standing water, and is found in bogs, springs, and wet woodlands. This fern is rare in our area, but there are records that indicate it may be more likely to be present than the other *Osmunda* species.

Order Polypodiales

Family Pteridaceae (Brake Family)

Slender cliff-brake (*Cryptogramma stelleri* FACU C=10) is about 7 inches tall, with short, sterile fronds that look a bit like (Italian) parsley, and so another common name is parsley fern. The fertile fronds are taller and stiffer than the sterile fronds, with edges rolled inward to cover the sori. This fern can be found in moist, shady limestone outcrops, often in the rock crevices. It is ephemeral, dying back by mid-June. It is uncommon in our area.

Purple cliff-brake (*Pellaea glabella* C=10) lives on dolomite cliffs and exposed limestone (including bridges and quarries). It is a short fern (2-4 inches tall) that grows as an irregular clump, at times in rock crevices. The fertile fronds are similar to the sterile fronds, except they roll inward to protect the sori. It is uncommon in our area, but may be locally abundant in its habitat.

Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum* FAC C=10) grows in rich mesic or sandy woods. It can tolerate a location with more sunlight if it is kept moist. It has a delicate appearance, and the dark stipes (stems) can make the leaflets appear to be floating. The sori are found on the notched edges on the underside of leaflets which produce an indusium that folds over to protect the sori. This plant is easy to propagate and easy to grow, although it is slow to spread and form colonies on its own. It is uncommon in our area.

Family Dennstaedtiaceae (Hay-scented Fern Family)

Bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum* FACU C=5) grows up to 3 feet tall. It grows in light shade or sun, and thrives in

sandy woodlands, as well as sandy open areas and black oak savannahs. This fern is widely distributed across the world, and is considered invasive in some locales. It is common and occasionally weedy in our area.

Family Cystopteridaceae (Bladder Fern Family)

Western oak fern (*Gymnocarpium dryopteris* UPL) is a short fern with greenish-gold fronds. It is a plant of dry-mesic oak woods and sandy or rocky soil. It is probably extirpated in the county, which is on the south edge of its range. It is on the state endangered list.

Bulblet fern (*Cystopteris bulbifera* FACW C=8) prefers shady ravines and limestone outcrops. It has long tapered fronds that arch gracefully down. Bulblets that form on the underside of the fronds can take root in the ground and produce fronds of their own when mature. This fern is uncommon, although it is abundant in its habitat.

MacKay's fragile fern (*Cystopteris fragilis* var. *mackyii* FACU C=10) can be found in ravines and on limestone cliffs in soil that is firm and dry. Its fronds grow to about 16 inches. The lower pinnae (leaflets) of a frond bend forward and are more-or-less perpendicular to the rachis (the stem of the leaflet). This fern is distinguishable from the *C. fragilis* var. *protusa* by veins mainly terminating in the marginal sinuses. It is uncommon in our area.

Fragile fern (*Cystopteris fragilis* var. *protrusa* FACU C=6) prefers the same habitat as *fragilis* var. *mackyii* and looks very similar to the other species. Its distinguishing characteristic is veins that mainly terminate in the teeth rather than in marginal sinuses. It is common in our area.

Family Aspleniaceae (Spleenwort family)

Ebony spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron* FACU C=4) prefers shady areas with sandy or acidic soils. This fern can be found with a single frond or a small cluster of fronds. Fronds are 12-16 inches long and 1-2 inches wide. Fronds extend up, with fertile fronds somewhat more erect than sterile fronds. The stipe (or petiole, which is the leaf stalk of the frond) and the rachis (the stem of a leaflet) are dark purplish-brown. It is common in our area, and apparently more abundant than it was historically.

Walking fern (*Asplenium rhizophyllum* UPL C=10) is often found on moist, shaded limestone cliffs and outcrops. This fern forms a cluster of simple lanceolate leaves that are long (2-12 inches) and slender (0.5-2 inches wide). Fertile leaves are similar to infertile leaves, although they tend to be somewhat longer. If the tip of a leaf touches the ground, it can take root and establish a new plant. This capability for vegetative reproduction is the basis for the common name of this plant. This fern is

May Meeting Recap (cont'd)

rare in our area.

Family Dryopteridaceae (Shield fern family)

Sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis* FACW C=8) grows in marshes and fens, mesic to wet woodlands, and shaded ponds. It has a few fronds that develop directly from the root. Both the fertile and infertile fronds grow upwards, with more of the taller infertile fronds (which grow up to 3 feet) than fertile fronds. This fern is common in our area.

Crested woodfern (*Dryopteris cristata* OBL C=10) grows in wet woodlands and open wetlands, with fronds reaching about 20 inches in height. Fertile fronds are taller than the sterile fronds, and have pinnae (leaflets) twisted so they are perpendicular to the plane of the frond. This fern is uncommon in our area.

Evergreen wood fern (*Dryopteris intermedia* FAC C=8) prefers rich, mesic woods. The sterile fronds and fertile fronds do not differ in form. The fronds can reach up to 30 inches in length, reaching up and out from the center to form a lovely clump of a fern. This fern can be distinguished from *D. spinulosa* because the lowest pinnules (sub-leaflets) on the lowest pinnae (leaflets) are the same length or shorter than the second-lowest pinnules. It is uncommon in our area.

Spinulose shield fern (*Dryopteris spinulosa* FACW C=8), which has also been classified as *D. carthusiana*, prefers moist woods and ravines. It is very similar to *D. intermedia*, but can be distinguished because the lowest pinnules (sub-leaflets) on the lowest pinnae (leaflets) are larger than the second-lowest pinnules and twice as long as the upper pinnules at the tip of the leaflet. This fern is common in our area.

Marsh shield fern (*Dryopteris thelypteris* OBL C=6), which is also found classified as *Thelypteris palustris*, prefers open

• • • • • References and Resources

A fern glossary to aid in reading descriptions of fern species: <http://ontarioferns.com/id/glossary/index.php#spores>

An article from Annals of Botany, available online, refers to the history of fern classification and discusses changes in classification resulting from discoveries, advances in methodology, and conceptual change.

Maarten J. M. Christenhusz and Mark W. Chase. (2014) Trends and Concepts in Fern Classification. *Annals of Botany* (113) 571-594, available at <http://aob.oxfordjournals.org/content/113/4/571.full.pdf+html>.

bogs, marshes, and moist sand. There are sterile fronds and fertile fronds that are similar in form. This fern is common in our area.

Blunt-lobed cliff fern (*Woodsia obtusa* UPL C=10) prefers sandy ravines and limestone cliffs. This fern is rare in our area.

Lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina* FAC C=8) is one of our most common ferns, and can be found in mesic woods and wet open places. The fern is fairly large (leaves are 2.5-3 feet long) and is colony-forming.

Silvery spleenwort (*Athyrium thelypteroides* FAC C=10) prefers wet or mesic woods and shaded swampy areas. It gets its common name because the juvenile sori lend a silvery sheen to the fronds. This fern is very rare in our area.

Ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris* FACW C=10) prefers moist, often calcareous woodlands. This fern is a good candidate for growing in your home landscape. It does well in light shade as long as it has adequate moisture. It has both sterile and fertile leaves; in heavy shade it may fail to produce fertile leaves. A native population is quite rare in our area, although those growing in Kishwaukee Gorge are assuredly native.

Family Polypodiaceae (Polypody family)

Rock polypody (*Polypodium virginianum* UPL C=9) is an evergreen fern that is usually found in moist, shady areas, often on sandstone or limestone rock formations that are coated with moss and organic matter. It can be found in Kishwaukee Gorge. The plant is easy to grow from spores in the home garden in average, well-drained soil and partial to full shade.



Barbara Flores helps people select woodland plants.

May Meeting Recap (cont'd)

eFloras.org. Flora of North America V. 2 has descriptions of the characteristics of fern families, available at http://www.efloras.org/volume_page.aspx?volume_id=1002&flora_id=1.

The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) has a searchable gallery with photos and information on Illinois plants, available at <http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/find>.

The INHS also provides a link to an article describing the protocol for assigning an integer from 0 to 10 as a coefficient of conservatism (C). John B. Taft, Gerould S. Wilhelm, Douglas M. Ladd, and Linda A. Masters. *Floristic Quality Assessment for Vegetation in Illinois*, available at http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/files/5413/4021/3268/Wilhelm_Illinois_FQA.pdf.

Illinois Wildflowers website has photographs and information on many of the fern species of Illinois, available at <http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info>.

USDA Wetland Indicator Status, available at <http://plants.usda.gov/wetinfo.html>.

Table of Indicator Categories

Indicator Code	Indicator Status	Comment
OBL	Obligate Wetland	Almost always occur in wetlands
FACW	Facultative Wetland	Usually occur in wetlands, but may occur in non-wetlands
FAC	Facultative	Occur in wetlands and non-wetlands
FACU	Facultative Upland	Usually occur in non-wetlands, but may occur in wetlands
UPL	Obligate Upland	Almost never occur in wetlands

Thank You, Prairie Plant Sale Volunteers!

Rick Freiman, Prairie Plant Sale Coordinator

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped get almost 4,000 more prairie plants out there this year: Joe Hemlock, Ginnie Watson, Olga Bechtol, Kim Lowman Vollmer, Claudia Fortucci-Fleeman, Ed Kletecka, Ellwyn Englof, Nancy Olson, Cathy Johnson, Mary Anne Mathwich, Diane Stenerson, Bob Arevalo, Kim Risley, Janet Giesen, Guy Smith, Tim Lewis, and Jerry Paulson.



Bob Arevalo and Diane Stenerson help assemble 92 customer plant orders.



Ellwyn Englof and Nancy Olson place 4,000 plant ID tags preparing for order pullers.



Guy Smith and Janet Giesen deliver customer orders at plant pick-up.



Diane Stenerson and Janet Giesen answer questions for customers at the Prairie Plant Sale.

Springtime Bird Activity

Kim Lowman Vollmer, Youth Education and Grant Chair

What a magnificent spring! I have never seen as many brilliant birds and prolific plants as I have this year. Is it because this is the first spring I have not worked in over 30 years or is it truly beautiful outside my windows? I believe some of my natives are growing before my eyes, and are so strong and healthy. The birds all have different personalities and levels of confidence. For the first time we have red-winged blackbirds, and I do not like them! When I was young and out riding my horse, they would chase me, and I would run because I saw the movie *The Birds*. They seem to be the bullies at the feeders this year.

My friend posted on Facebook that her hummingbirds were back, so I rushed to prepare for the onslaught. I cooked my nectar (4 parts of water and 1 part of sugar), remembering that I had learned at a Wild Ones meeting that the red dye gives them kidney cancer. On our Baltimore oriole feeder, we put oranges and grape jelly. Both types of feeders were hung in anticipation of the orioles' arrival. The first thing to be spotted was the male Baltimore oriole drinking nectar from the hummingbird feeder – very exciting. Since that day in early May, we have had hummingbirds whizzing in and out daily at their feeder. We saw the male Baltimore oriole eating the jelly, and today I finally sighted the female. I wasn't quite sure, so out came one of my many bird field guides to confirm my identification. The Orioles are shy, and I hated to disturb them to run out to the feeder and put more jelly in the cups.

Then with their stunning black, white, and red, there are the male rose-breasted grosbeaks. Last week, the female was at the feeding station. Not having seen one before, I grabbed my bird books to confirm my guess. They look like large sparrows to me, and they love our sunflower

seeds. While attending Bird Fest at Colored Sands Forest Preserve, I learned that the grosbeaks have a wicked bite – worse than the grasp of talons.

While writing this, I moved my laptop computer to a location where I could observe our birds. This is the first day of viewing the male indigo bunting – how brilliant and thrilling! He feasts from the feeder filled with mixed seeds. He also appears to be timid and makes few visits to the feeder.

Several years ago, my daughter built a red barn bird house and it was finally time to hang it outside on the shepherd's hook by our kitchen window. One day Carly spotted a little brown bird going in and out while flicking its cute tail, in the hole and out the front door of the barn, with twigs. We had to look at several books before we confirmed the little guy's identity: a northern house wren. We were curious about his nest, so we grabbed our Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Birds' Nests. The northern house wren likes cavities, so I guess the mini-barn qualifies. The male arrives first, begins building the nest, and hopes that the female will accept his preselected site. She did, as a few days later they were both active in the building process. We are eager to watch their life cycle.

There are many other birds that we all enjoy: cardinals, red-bellied woodpeckers, downy woodpeckers, black capped chickadees, robins, white-breasted nuthatches, goldfinches, sparrows (someday I will learn to differentiate them), wrens, house finches, great horned owls, hawks, and more. My bird identification skills will continue to grow. I know that planting over 100 species of native plants has helped to bring these travelers onto our property and enhances their lives – and ours!

Membership Update Shey Lowman, Membership Co-Chair

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. Go ahead and rack up your rewards points and we all win. We appreciate your support!

NOTICE

Members, please be aware that membership renewal processing will be a bit delayed the last two weeks of May and the first two-three weeks of July so that the Membership Chair can do a family visit and get a knee replaced. Your patience is greatly appreciated!

223 memberships as of May 15, 2015

Be sure to welcome our new members!

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

87 people attended the May meeting, including 19 guests.

A big thank you to our May meeting volunteers!

Greeters: Janaan Lewis and Janet Giesen

Refreshments: Anita Johnson and Cynthia Nelson

AV/Sound Equipment: Bob Arevalo

Meeting Recap for the Newsletter: Cynthia Nelson

Photographer: Tim Lewis

Library Assistants: Cathy Johnson and Karen Matz

Anniversaries

Congratulations to this month's loyal members!

15 Years

Steve & Sue Symes, Belvidere, IL
Lenae Weichel & Kevin Holdmann, Rockford, IL

10 Years

Dan & Pambi Camacho, Cherry Valley, IL
Colleen McDonald, Rockford, IL

5 Years

Joanne Webster, Cherry Valley, IL

2015 Chapter Programs and Events

June 18
7:00-9:00 p.m. Propagating Conservative Natives to Support Restoration

Rob Sulski
Stewardship Educator

Rock Valley College
Woodward Technology Center

July 16
7:00-9:00 p.m. Members only Summer Evening Social & Potluck
Tour of Native Landscaping

Home of Claudia Fleeman

4411 Dorset Dr.
Rockford, IL 61114

August 20
7:00-9:00 p.m. Permaculture for Native Gardeners

Judy Speer
Small Waters Education Center

Rock Valley College
Woodward Technology Center

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.
Please contact Jamie Johannsen 815-494-6977 for more information.



Thank you for your continuing support!



NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Pambi Camacho
1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104
PMB 233
Rockford, IL 61107

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is **6/1/2015**, 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
1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104
PMB 233
Rockford, IL 61107

Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter Board of Directors and Chairs

Co-Presidents: Ginnie Watson 815-398-0138

ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org

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lenae@wildonesrrvc.org

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Newsletter Chair: Pambi Camacho

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Plant Rescues & Seed Collection Chair:

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Program Chair: Jamie Johannsen

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Show Me/Help Me Chair:

Claudia Fleeman 815-985-5158

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Youth Education & Grants Chair:

Kim Lowman Vollmer 815-397-6044

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Appointed Coordinators

Woodland Plant Sale Coordinator:

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Prairie Plant Sale Coordinators:

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Deb Freiman 815-871-7424

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Volunteer Coordinator: Cynthia Nelson

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Website Coordinator: Shey Lowman

815-757-4456 shey@wildonesrrvc.org

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. 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 Memberships: Household \$37, Associate (limited income/full-time student) \$20, Affiliate Non-Profit Organization or Educator \$90, Business \$250. Your entire membership contribution is tax deductible. Contact Membership Co-Chairs for additional information or to join.

815-627-0344 • Join online with any major credit card 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.