

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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www.wildonesrrvc.org



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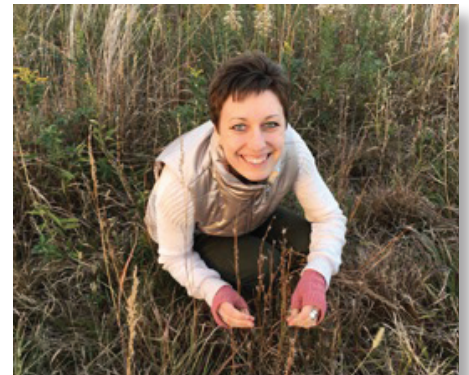
All articles for the April 2022 newsletter, must be submitted to: Jerry Paulson at paulsonjerry@aol.com by March 21, 2022

Shade Gardens: Native Plants and Ecological Benefits

Thursday, March 17, 2022

**Time: 7:00 p.m.
via Zoom**

You may have heard about the benefits of planting native plants in your home landscape – but what about in that shady spot in your yard? Are there native plants well suited to a shade garden? Learn the ecological benefits of planting natives underneath trees and explore your options when it comes to choosing shade tolerant native plants.



Erin Garrett

About Erin Garrett:

Erin Garrett is the Natural Resources, Environment, and Energy Extension Educator for University of Illinois Extension in the southernmost five counties in Illinois - Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski and Union counties. In this role, Erin develops and delivers high impact programming to local and statewide audiences to help them develop an appreciation for natural resources and to empower them to make small changes to positively impact the environment. Erin earned her Master's degree in Plant Biology from Southern Illinois University in 2017, where her research focused on the interactions of an invasive legume with native forbs, grasses, and legumes. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from the College of Saint Benedict in 2015.

The program is presented by the Wild Ones Rock River Valley chapter. The [zoom link](#) will also be posted on the WORRV chapter website, (www.wildonesrrvc.org) and on Facebook. The program is free and open to the public. For information contact Jerry Paulson, 815-222-4414.

Message from the President Jerry Paulson



Jerry Paulson

Ed Cope's presentation about Gravel Prairies in northern Illinois put the fate of the rare species found at Bell Bowl Prairie on the Greater Rockford Airport property in sharp focus. For those of you who have not been following the fight to save the prairie from a planned access road linked to the expansion of air cargo facilities on the airport, below is some information

from the Save Bell Bowl Prairie website, <https://www.savebellbowlprairie.org>.

During the presentation, which was seen by more than 150 people, I asked for donations to the GoFundMe page set-up by the Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves to help off-set the legal costs of defending Bell Bowl Prairie from the bulldozers. You can donate to the legal fight at: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/kt3ne-save-bell-bowl-prairie>.

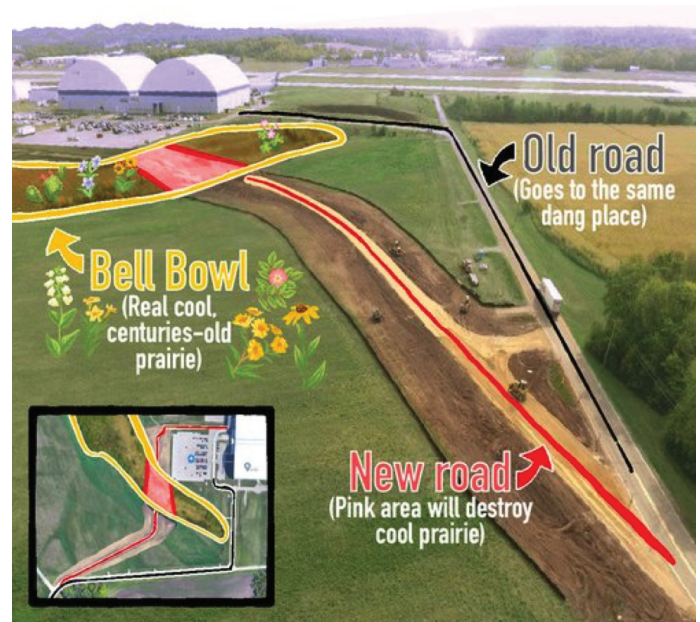
The fate of this rare, gravel prairie will be decided in the next few weeks. Please help by making a donation...the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Board has donated \$1,000 to the fight to save the prairie. Join Us!

Expansion at the Chicago Rockford International Airport can be done responsibly and in ways that do not negatively impact the Bell Bowl Prairie or its rare plants and animals. Feasible, alternative plans exist and can be implemented to benefit the prairie and the Rockford community.



Leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*) with bumble bee (*Bombus* sp.), rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*) photo by Clay Bolt, prairie gentian (*Gentiana puberulenta*).

Photo by cassi saari



One of the last remaining prairies in Illinois, Bell Bowl Prairie, is slated for destruction as part of the expansion of the Chicago Rockford International Airport. Rare, threatened, and endangered species will be destroyed.

If Bell Bowl Prairie is new to you, read more about the campaign to Save Bell Bowl Prairie and why the prairie is important [here](#). You can also view the [timeline of events](#) around Save Bell Bowl Prairie efforts.

What's at stake

Bell Bowl Prairie is a Category I Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site, a designation granted by state biologists that reflects the site's very high ecological quality. State-recognized natural areas such as this can and should be protected with conservation easements and dedicated nature preserve status. Several state and federally Threatened and Endangered species occur at Bell Bowl Prairie.

A federally Endangered rusty patched [Bombus affinis bumble bee](#) was found at Bell Bowl Prairie in 2021. The site also supports habitat and contains many plants that co-occur with the federally Threatened prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*), which is known to occur in the region. As of the November 2019 Environmental Assessment, no search for this rare species had been conducted. A more complete list of Threatened and Endangered species seen at Bell Bowl Prairie can be found [here](#).

Native Plant Sale News

With our plant sale in full swing, it's time to start thinking about adding native plants to your landscapes. With over 70 species to choose from, our native plant sale is perfect for both new and experienced native plant gardeners. There are plants for sunny, partly sunny, shady, dry, average, and moist areas.

Below are some highlights about a few of the new species offered this year. The numbers following the names refer to the order in which the plants appear in the [brochure](#).

***Aralia racemosa* (Spikenard) (#8)** This 3-4 foot plant makes a handsome statement in your partial shade garden. It is pollinated by tiny insects and grows drupes of berries in fall, which are eaten by birds. It dies to the ground for the winter.

***Asclepias purpurascens* (Purple Milkweed) (#10)** Said to like partial shade the best, this milkweed draws many pollinators and is a host plant for several moths and the monarch butterfly. It needs to cross pollinate to set seed so plant several and protect them from more aggressive plants.

***Carex sprengelii* (Long-beaked Sedge) (#22)** This plant likes light shade and is a host plant for several butterflies and moths.

***Desmodium canadense* (Showy Tick Trefoil) (#27)** This plant is most attractive when planted in drifts and attracts bees, butterflies, skippers, and more. The seeds are eaten by quail, turkeys, and small mammals.

***Gentianopsis crinita* (Fringed Gentian) (#32)** This biennial seeds itself, likes a more sandy soil, and is visited by bumblebees. It does not like to be crowded by more aggressive plants.

***Liatris cylindracea* (Cylindrical Blazingstar) (#40)** This shorter blazingstar attracts many insects and is a host plant for certain moths. It does not compete well with larger plants and its corms should be protected in winter from being eaten by voles.

***Lupinus perennis* (Wild Lupine) (#44)** This lovely flower needs a more acidic sandy location and will be long-lived in the right location. It provides only pollen for insects and is a host plant for several moths and butterflies.

***Oenothera pilosella* (Prairie Sundrops) (#48)** This sun-loving plant needs a somewhat moist soil and

attracts bees, butterflies, and skippers with its fragrant yellow flowers.

***Trillium recurvatum* (Prairie Trillium) (#72)** The name is deceiving because this plant likes medium shade. It carries only pollen for its visitors and is a host plant for two moth species.

***Uvalaria grandiflora* (Large-flowered Bellwort) (#73)** This woodland plant loves dappled shade, leafy mulch, and offers nectar and pollen to

early spring bees.



***Uvalaria grandiflora* (Large-flowered Bellwort)**
Image courtesy of Janet Giesen

Volunteer at Our Plant Sale This Year!

Rock River Valley is the second largest and most active Wild Ones chapters because of its wonderful volunteers; why not join us as a volunteer this year at our annual native plant sale? It's not necessary to have native plant knowledge to help at the sale and new volunteers are warmly welcomed. New volunteers are paired with seasoned volunteers to help sort plants and set up for the sale. We have two shifts per day - choose a time that works for you - a few hours for one day or more. Shifts are flexible - volunteer as your schedule allows. We'd love for you to join us!

Date	First Shift	Second Shift
Tuesday, May 3	9 am-12 pm	12-3 pm
Wednesday, May 4	9 am-12 pm	12-3 pm
Thursday, May 5	2-5 pm	5-7 pm
Friday, May 6	2-5 pm	5-7 pm
Saturday, May 7	8-11 am	11 am-2 p

Contact Kim Lowman Vollmer to volunteer to help at the plant sale: kimlowvol@aol.com, 815-397-6044.

February Program Recap Mark Luthin



Ed Cope

According to Ed Cope, gravel is the “secret sauce” that makes a gravel prairie unique among other similar ecosystems. Water drains rapidly through gravel and washes out key nutrients such as nitrogen so, the plants that live there have to be uniquely adapted in order to survive. Last Chance to See: The Vanishing Flora and Fauna of Gravel Prairies on February 17 was an enlightening program about how gravel prairies, such as Bell Bowl Prairie, form and the importance of preserving these vanishing ecosystems. Over 90 people attended the Zoom presentation, with an additional 60 people watching remotely from the IACD conference. If you missed it, you can find it at <https://youtu.be/JSzfPUTIzas>. You’ll not be disappointed.

Gravel deposits are sporadic and unevenly spaced on our landscape. During the last ice age, the continental glaciers that covered northern Illinois brought with them all the rock and material that they scooped up from Canada and Wisconsin. As the last glaciers receded 15,000 years ago, like a bulldozer that backs up mid scrape, piles of gravel and rock were left in landscape features called moraines. As the climate warmed, different ecosystems would have naturally formed, transitioning from spruce forests ultimately to prairie.

Between 3000 and 7000 years ago, what Ed refers to as the Hypsithermal Period, our climate would have been much warmer and drier, creating similar conditions to the great prairies to our west. As our local climate cooled, the plants that were adapted to the warmer, drier conditions were gradually replaced by the more common prairie plants that we are familiar with. However, due to the unique soil structure of gravel prairies, the plants that live there were not replaced, preserving the plants adapted to drier soils.

So, a gravel prairie is a surviving relict from the past, and because there are so few of them remaining, these plants live on land-locked islands, which Ed referred to as archipelagos. Because they live on “islands”, there is no interaction with other prairies. Gravel prairies contain many rare and endangered species due to their remoteness, and because “nothing matches these remnant conditions”, are virtually impossible to replace.

Included in Ed’s presentation were a number of species of plants and animals that are unique to gravel prairies, some rare in Winnebago County, and some completely extirpated. Because Bell Bowl Prairie at the Chicago-Rockford Airport is threatened to be bulldozed for expansion purposes, Ed highlighted three endangered species that can be found there. Most might be familiar with *Bombus affinus*, the Rusty-patched bumblebee, but the Prairie dandelion (*Nothocalais cuspidata*) and the Large-flowering penstemon (*Penstemon grandiflorus*) can also be found there. Interestingly, the latter may have been brought in with horse feed during World War I as Camp Grant used what is now Bell Bowl Prairie as a remount station. There are roughly 20 species of plants which are unusual in northern Illinois but can be found at Bell Bowl Prairie which may have also been accidentally transported east during this time.

Last Chance to See: The Vanishing Flora and Fauna of Gravel Prairies by Ed Cope was an informative, enlightening and timely program. Many thanks to Ed Cope for providing us with the history and ecology of gravel prairies.

Membership Updates 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!

199 memberships as of February 23, 2022

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

Megan Whelass, DeKalb

Welcome to our new members!

Judy Boisen, Woodstock
Gene St. Louis, DeKalb
Megan Whelass, DeKalb
Laura Wild, Rockford

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:

10 Years:
Cynthia Chmell, Rockford
5 Years:
Linda Ricker, Pecatonica

It is preferred that renewal memberships be submitted through the Member Center online rather than by check for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. To renew your Wild Ones membership [Log in](#) or contact support@wildones.org for more information. Your expiration date is on your chapter

newsletter above your name on the label. You will receive several emails from the Wild Ones national organization prior to your expiration date. If you want to join Wild Ones as a new member go to the [Member Center](#). Remember that your dues include membership in both National Wild Ones and our chapter. If you need to mail a check, please use the address below:

WILD ONES
ATTN: MEMBERSHIP
2285 BUTTE DES MORTS BEACH RD
NEENAH, WI 54912-1274

A portion of all dues paid is returned to the chapter by National Wild Ones to support our chapter activities. National Wild Ones provides liability insurance for our meetings and events. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

Please send address and email address changes to the Membership Coordinator: Sallie Krebs Email: membershipworrvc@gmail.com or call (815) 540-4730 if you have any questions about membership.

Wild Ones Annual Memberships:

Household \$40,
Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$25,
Affiliate Non-Profit Organization \$90,
Business \$250

Thank you for your continuing support!

Upcoming Programs & Events

March 17 - Erin Garrett; Planting a Shade Garden

April 21 - Peggy Doty: The World of Owls

April 23 - Pollinator Palooza at Severson Dells

May 5 - 7 - Wild Ones Plant Sale

May 19 - Travis Cleveland; Native Tree Identification Using Dichotomous Keys

June 16 - TBD

July 23—Members Picnic and Tour; Leaf River Farm

August 18 - Jim Kleinwachter; Creating Eco-friendly Yards

September 15 - TBD

October 20 - P. J. Liesch; Beetles Abound: An Up-close Look at the Beetles of the Midwest

November 17 - Annual Membership Meeting & Seed Exchange



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

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 03/1/2021, 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.

Mail your renewal to:

WILD ONES

ATTN: MEMBERSHIP
2285 BUTTE DES MORTS BEACH RD
NEENAH, WI 54912-1274

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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

Due to COVID 19 restrictions on gatherings of more than 50 people we are not holding our regular meetings on the third Thursday of the month at Rock Valley College. Instead, we are meeting over ZOOM or posting videos on YouTube of the program. 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
(815) 222.4414 paulsonjerry@aol.com
Vice President: Linda Tabb Ricker (217)
649.3966 greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com
Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
catjohn_22@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912
janetgiesen@gmail.com
Board members:
Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044
kimlowvol@aol.com
Ed Foster (815) 654-3441 thistletwo@aol.com

Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson
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Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs
(as to the left)
Mentor coordinator: [open position]
Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell
(815) 969.7435 cynthiachmell@gmail.com
Native plant sale coordinators: Janet Giesen
(as to the left)
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Plant rescue/seeds coordinator: Mary Anne
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Program coordinators: Lisa Johnson
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Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
Publicity coordinator: Dawn Skupien
(815) 262.7864 dawnskupien@gmail.com
Show Me/Help Me coordinator:
Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
Tree & shrub sale coordinator: Brian Hale
(815) 289.2384 treeandshrubsale@gmail.com
Volunteer coordinator: [open position]
Website coordinator: Janet Giesen (as to the left)
Youth education & grants coordinator: Kim
Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [open position]
Facebook coordinator: Sallie Krebs (815)
540.4730 membershipworrvc@gmail.com