

*Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.*

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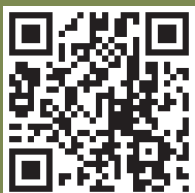
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Scan with your Smartphone for more information about Rock River Valley Wild Ones

[www.wildonesrrvc.org](http://www.wildonesrrvc.org)

All articles for the January 2024 newsletter, must be submitted to: [serendipitree@gmail.com](mailto:serendipitree@gmail.com) by December 1, 2023.

## *The Seed of an Idea: Starting a Seed Library at the Rockford Public Library & Seed Exchange*

**Thursday, November 16, 2023, 6:00 p.m.**

**Cherry Valley Library  
755 East State Street,  
Cherry Valley, IL**

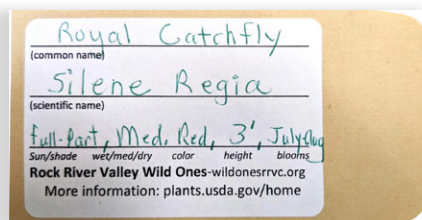
**Zoom: <http://wildonesrrvc.org/>**

***Pre-registration for Zoom now required. See website for details.***



The annual meeting of WORRV chapter will be held at the Cherry Valley Public Library on Thursday, November 16th starting at 6:00 p.m. We will have reports from our officers and a special program about starting a native seed library at the Rockford Public Library. We will also have our seed exchange starting at 6:00 p.m. Information about preparing and packaging your seeds is on page 5. Snacks will be provided.

The Rockford Public Library Hart Branch opened its free Seed Library in May of this year. The library is looking to further expand its offerings to include more native seeds. As you prepare your seeds this fall, please consider setting some aside for the RPL Seed Library. Easy-to-grow natives are particularly desired---good options include milkweed varieties, Joe-pye weed, echinacea, and wild bergamot.



If you have seeds you'd like to share with the RPL Seed Library, you can fill a coin envelope with 10-20 seeds (one variety per envelope, please). Label the envelope with the common name, scientific name, and any other pertinent information (plant height, sun requirements, etc.).

There will be coin envelopes available at the meeting for this purpose.

We often have lots of seeds so if you are new to this and don't have any seeds to share, you are still welcome to join us and take seeds home. Sharing seeds increases the opportunity for more native plants to grow in our communities. Come help us celebrate another successful year of native landscaping!

# Message from the President Jerry Paulson



Jerry Paulson

As we look ahead to the holiday season and the new year, our Board and coordinators are busy making plans for programs and events in 2024. The Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones was formed thirty years ago next year. We are planning

a series of special programs and events to celebrate our anniversary, starting on Thursday, January 18th with a program about using native plants in your home landscape. The presenter for this program is Alan Branhagen, the new Executive Director of the Natural Land Institute, and author of two books on native plants: *The Midwest Native Plant Primer* and *Native Plants of the Midwest*. You can order your copy of the books from NLI (see order form below) and pick them up that night. Alan will be available to sign the books before and after his program.

Alan has published an article about the importance of native oaks in our landscape on the NLI website. You can read it at: <https://bit.ly/oaktober2023>.

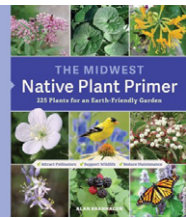
There will be some changes in the Board next year, and we are looking for people with new ideas, time and energy to serve as **President, Secretary** and **Treasurer**. We're also looking for someone to maintain our Facebook page and to help with marketing our chapter. If you are interested in knowing more about any of these positions, call me at 815-222-4414 or email me at [paulsonjerry@aol.com](mailto:paulsonjerry@aol.com). Happy Holidays and I'll see you in 2024.



## Book Order Form



**Alan Branhagen**, Executive Director of Natural Land Institute, and author of the books, *The Midwest Native Plant Primer* and *Native Plants of the Midwest*, will be the guest speaker at the January 18, 2024, Wild Ones of Rock River Valley Chapter meeting. Order one or both of his books ahead of time and pick it/them up at the meeting to be held at the Cherry Valley Public Library. Alan will be available to sign books that evening starting at 6:00 p.m.



Indicate the quantity for each book below.

- The Midwest Native Plant Primer # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Native Plants of the Midwest # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$40 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Options: (check one)

Make Check payable to Natural Land Institute

Please charge my credit card in the amount of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

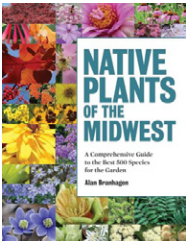
Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_\_ 3 digit Sec # \_\_\_\_\_

Visa, Mastercard, Discover accepted

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_



**Mail filled out form to:** Natural Land Institute, 320 S. Third St., Rockford, IL 61104. Or call the NLI office at 815/964-6666 to order with a credit card.





## October Meeting Recap: Celebrating 60 Years of BCCD **Mark Luthin**

Founded in November of 1964, the Boone County Conservation District is getting ready to celebrate their 60th anniversary. Josh Sage, Executive Director of the district, gave an entertaining and informative history of the first conservation district in Illinois. Sharing archived photos, including several of George Fell and Roger Gustafson, as well as gleaned information from minutes of early meetings, Josh was able to enlighten the audience on the colorful history of BCCD. Since Josh has been with the district for over 1/3 of its history, he was also able to impress the audience with the role of BCCD, which is primarily natural land protection and management. Protecting land for aesthetic values, recreation, teaching models, flood water storage, ground water recharge, slowing surface water runoff and creating refuges for threatened and endangered species keeps the small but dedicated stewardship staff busy on the 4200 acres owned.



**Josh Sage**

Reliance on volunteers is key, and BCCD utilizes a number of volunteers, as well as Americorp and seasonal staff.

The Boone County Conservation District has a variety of habitats worth exploring, including 2 Illinois Nature Preserves at Flora Prairie and Kinnickinnick Creek Conservation Area. Spring blooms are a sight worth seeing at Kinnickinnick and Spencer. Visiting Piskasaw Fen, Distillery

or Flora during the summer prairie blooms are never disappointing. There are other newer areas that are works in progress, which will be interesting to watch their progress.

Unfortunately, Josh's program was not recorded in its entirety. However, you can watch some of the program at [www.wildonesrrvc.org](http://www.wildonesrrvc.org). Josh was also nice enough to share his PowerPoint which is also posted on the website.

## *In My Yard* **Jane Evans**

Several years ago we noticed that one of our non-native evergreens was dying from the bottom up and, not wanting to take it down, we decided to plant a couple of Virginia creepers at the bottom and train them to grow up the dying tree. As we have found out since, Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) provides food for a great many insects and 35 species of birds including thrushes and woodpeckers. And best of all, it is the preferred host plant for caterpillars of several sphinx moths whose cocoons overwinter on the plant. As it creeps along, we must keep this vine trimmed and trained to do its job of climbing our dead tree so that it doesn't revert to more aggressive tendencies. So far, so good, and we are enjoying its beautiful fall colors!



**Photo by Jane Evans**



## Bees and Pollinators Like Linda's Garden Mark Luthin



Wild Ones of Rock River Valley Chapter's Vice-president Linda Ricker's yard became a certified Conservation@Home site in August when Mark Luthin, Natural Land Institute Trustee (and WORRVC Program Coordinator) visited and went through the checklist criteria with her.

Linda Ricker loves to garden. Having a degree in Ornamental Horticulture, being a Master Naturalist, and her involvement in our local Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter, one could conclude that Linda loves to spend time in her yard. But, reality doesn't set in until you actually see the multiple gardens that take up the vast majority of her property. Linda Ricker loves to garden. The large numbers of bees and butterflies that were seen on the flowers appreciate that Linda loves to garden.

As Linda showed off her various flower beds, she was quick to point out not only the obvious native species that she has planted, but the more subtle ones that might be a little more hidden in late August. Linda has pollinator friendly plants starting with the early spring blooms such as prairie smoke and lupine, through late autumn with the goldenrods, Liatris and asters. Linda pointed out at least 3 species of goldenrod that are in bloom, including stiff and zig zag. The number of bees found on the wild quinine, stiff goldenrod and wild onion was astonishing. Likely, they were equally as plentiful on the mountain mint and spotted Joe-pye weed, among others, that have finished blooming. Lobelia and one cardinal flower were still hanging on to their blooms, but the butterfly weed and well-chewed common milkweed were ready for their seed dispersal.

A variety of trees, shrubs and fruit-bearing plants are incorporated throughout Linda's yard which include a beautiful Chinquapin oak, blue beech, Viburnum and two types of dogwood, a red twig dogwood,

and a fine looking Pogoda dogwood. Add to this her currants, raspberries and a huge variety of annual and perennial flowers such as zinnias and Russian sage, and her yard becomes an oasis for bees, birds and butterflies in the quaint village of Pecatonica.

*This article appeared in Natural Land Institute's blog. Editor's note: Beautifying your yard while conserving water and creating habitat for wildlife can be easy and rewarding.*

*You can save money, mow less, see more birds and butterflies and enjoy a functioning yard with less effort.*

*The focus of our Conservation@Home program is to encourage the use of native plants and to promote good water resource practices in residential yards and gardens. At the core of environmentally friendly landscapes is the use of native plants.*

*To learn more about Conservation@Home and Work programs visit here: <https://www.naturalland.org/conservationatprograms/>*



**Chinquapin oak**



**Photos by Mark Luthin**

## *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](http://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!

### 183 memberships as of October 25, 2023

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

Barbara & Daniel Williams, Rockford

### Anniversaries:

5 Years:

Alice Fox & Ron Holm, Rockford

*Thank you for your continuing support!*

## *Seed Exchange Instructions*

Collect seeds from native plants in your yard or landscape project. If possible, separate the seeds/seed heads from the excess plant material and put single-species seeds in their own envelopes, baggies, or paper bags (lunch bags work great). Add a label with both the common name and scientific name (check online or in a seed catalog), place of origin (e.g. Winnebago County, Wild Ones plant sale, or another source), and your name (in case anyone has questions, such as "how does the plant grow?").



Common milkweed photo by Jessie Crow Mermel

*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](mailto: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 11/01/2023, 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](mailto:janetgiesen@gmail.com).

## *Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators*

### **BOARD**

*President:* Jerry Paulson

(815) 222.4414 [paulsonjerry@aol.com](mailto:paulsonjerry@aol.com)

*Vice President:* Linda Tabb Ricker (217)

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*Secretary:* Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865

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*Board members:*

Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044

[kimlowvol@aol.com](mailto:kimlowvol@aol.com)

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### **APPOINTED COORDINATORS**

*Booth coordinator:* [open position]

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*Membership coordinator:* Sallie Krebs

[membershipworrvc@gmail.com](mailto: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)

Gloria Powell [glrpowell610@yahoo.com](mailto:glrpowell610@yahoo.com)

Ginnie Watson (as above)

Cynthia Nelson [cnelson18@niu.edu](mailto:cnelson18@niu.edu)

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to the left)

*Newsletter editor and production:*

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*Plant rescue/seeds coordinator:* Mary Anne

Mathwich (815) 721.5187 [mprairiedock@aol.com](mailto:mprairiedock@aol.com)

*Program coordinators:* Lisa Johnson

(779) 537.8939

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Mark Luthin (815) 543.7412

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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

(815) 289.2384 [treeandshrubsale@gmail.com](mailto:treeandshrubsale@gmail.com)

*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)