



Rock River Valley Chapter Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 3

March 2024

*Promoting Native
Plants for Natural
Landscapes.*

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Smartphone for more
information about
Rock River Valley
Wild Ones

www.wildonesrrvc.org

All articles for the
April 2024 newsletter, must
be submitted to:

[wildonesrockrivervalley@
gmail.com](mailto:wildonesrockrivervalley@gmail.com)

by March 20, 2024.

WILDLIFE IS NOT RANDOM WITH PEGGY ANESI

Thursday, March 21, 2024

6:00 pm - Social Time | 6:30 pm - Program

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

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

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



Peggy Anesi

So you've made the decision to create a beautiful and environmentally-friendly native plant garden. Now your garden is full of wonderful pollinators such as monarch butterflies, solitary bees, and clearwing moths that dart from flower to flower like hummingbirds. There are myriad species of interesting birds like warblers and woodpeckers and vireos. Success! But you also notice some larger, mammalian creatures like squirrels, raccoons, and skunks that have taken a shine to your plantings. In her presentation, *Wildlife is Not Random*, Peggy Anesi will discuss that whether you plant cultivars, natives, or garden vegetables, you may be welcoming in more creatures to your yard. A favorite, informative, and entertaining speaker, Peggy will join us via Zoom to help us understand and deal with our wild neighbors. She explains, "If we work on coexisting rather than just coping with the wildlife around us, our lives just might experience a small bit of natural wonder without leaving our yard."

Peggy is an educator for University of Illinois Extension specializing in environmental education, human/wildlife relationships, and water quality. She holds a B.S. in zoology with a specialization in wildlife management. Peggy is interested in large predators, coyotes, and feral swine in Illinois. She also holds an M.S. in education with a specialization in outdoor teacher education/curriculum and instruction. Peggy has been teaching environmental education for over 25 years, is passionate about helping children see their role in the environment, and helping people understand wildlife as it relates to their lives.

This program is free and open to the public. Participants can attend in person at the Cherry Valley Public Library or attend via Zoom with prior registration found on our website at <http://wildonesrrvc.org/>.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT **Jerry Paulson**



Jerry Paulson

Spring arrives in just a few weeks, and soon after is our annual Native Plant Sale. The sale gets thousands of native grasses, sedges, ferns and wildflowers into yards, schools, churches, and libraries throughout

northern Illinois. It is also our biggest source of funds for the chapter!

We use the money from the plant sale to pay our speakers, publish the monthly newsletter, maintain our Zoom account and post office box, and other administrative expenses. We also use the proceeds from the sale to support other groups in our region who are working to protect and restore native plants and wildlife. This year the chapter Board of Directors has designated grants to the following groups:

[Severson Dells Nature Center](#) for its educational program on natural landscaping (see page 5)

[Sinnissippi Audubon Society](#) for its educational programs about birds

[Middle Rock Conservation Partners](#) for its efforts to preserve and restore natural areas in Ogle County

[Sand Bluff Bird Observatory](#) for its work to educate the public about migratory birds and their habitat needs

[Nature at the Confluence](#) for buying native plants for its prairie restoration and pollinator garden and to support its educational programs

[Natural Land Institute](#) for restoration of its Lind-McGeachie Preserve oak woodland.

[Friends of Nachusa Grasslands](#) for its research and restoration projects on grassland ecosystems.

[Macktown Living History Education Center](#) for purchase of native plants for its Indigenous Peoples Garden

[Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves](#) for volunteer stewardship work at Harlem Hills Nature Preserve

[Farmers Rising](#) for restoration of the oak savanna on the North Campus

[Rockford Public Library](#) for support of its wildflower seed library

[Cherry Valley Public Library](#) for maintenance of its wildflower plantings around the library

Please go to the individual organizational websites for more information about their programs and volunteer opportunities.

IN MY YARD **Jane Evans**

In yards having grass as the major feature I have often seen big bare spots under large trees or evergreens where nothing is growing. How nice it would be for those spots to be planted with shade loving woodland plants. There are so many that come to mind such as woodland sedges or ferns, Bishops cap, Bellwort, Canada anemone, Mayapples and more.

Mayapples (*Podophyllum peltatum*) might be a good choice. Growing to 18 inches it is hardy and aggressive enough to fill in bare spots in shade. The pollen feeds bumble bees and its ripe "apples" are eaten by box turtles, chipmunks and sometimes deer. It is also a host plant. Pictured is May apple, bishops cap, and white trillium. If you have big bare spots under trees, think woodland plants.



Photo by Jane Evans

FEBRUARY MEETING RECAP **Mark Luthin**

Easing Pollution and Flooding at Home: How and Why to Build a Rain Garden

As humans, we live in homes that have a roof and likely have a driveway and sidewalk that leads up to our house. Many live on streets that have curbs and gutters, or live on streets in subdivisions that have a ditch that perhaps leads to a culvert. When it rains, any water that falls on these impermeable surfaces starts flowing downhill, down the roof gutters, down the driveway, and down the street to the city sewer. Our system is designed to get rid of any stormwater quickly, carrying with it many chemicals and pollutants. In sending stormwater away as quickly as possible, existing streams, and ultimately rivers, are burdened as they receive an enormous amount of rain runoff in a short period of time. Of course, that's when they overflow their banks.

Rebecca Olson, owner of [Olson Ecological Solutions](#), gave us an inspiring presentation on what individual home owners can do to help offset these problems by creating a rain garden. Rain gardens help slow down the flow of water, which leads to better infiltration of water into the ground, which means less runs off to our overburdened streams and rivers. Using deep-rooted native plants, which are adapted to soil conditions that are wetter, allows for even more infiltration. Higher infiltration rates of water also help to replenish our groundwater aquifers. Of course, being Wild Ones members, we know that native grasses and forbs benefit wildlife and are much more aesthetically pleasing than turf grass.

A huge takeaway from the program was that careful planning when constructing a rain garden will allow for less maintenance over time and give you a better chance of achieving the desired effects. Determining the location of the inlet, of course, is important. How does the water enter the rain garden—from downspouts, from the driveway, or from the sidewalk? How does the excess water leave the rain garden? Constructing a little berm is sometimes necessary to slow the flow of water between the inlet and the outlet. What type of soil do you have? If it is clay soil, the absorption of water will be slower than if it is loamy soil. What types of plants will you have? Rebecca prefers a mixture of grasses and forbs, which makes sense aesthetically. Is your rain garden in a sunny area, which allows it to dry out more quickly, or a shady

part of your yard?

Rebecca shared many beautiful photos of projects that OES has done. Rebecca's lovely home rain garden was featured in several photos, as well as some larger scale projects that she's worked on, including in Sinnissippi Park. If you missed the program, or would like to see it again, it will be on the Wild Ones website at https://wildonesrrvc.org/Monthly_Meetings.html



Rebecca Olson

Rebecca was also kind enough to share some resources with us.

The Blue Thumb Guide to Rain Gardens

https://bluethumb.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/10/UW_how_to.pdf

EPA Bioretention Design Handbook

<https://bit.ly/3ulFviV>

I'd like to include a huge shoutout to those that make the meetings run smoothly. Being a volunteer organization, we are grateful to those that help set up the computers and Zoom links, bring cookies and treats, haul and set up the Wild Ones library, help set up and take down chairs, etc. Your efforts are appreciated.

For all of our videos, please subscribe to our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@wildonesrrvcvideos6150>

Upcoming Wild Ones Meetings

- | | |
|----------|---|
| April 18 | - Ferns of Illinois with Chris Benda |
| May 16 | - Ecological Research at Nachusa |
| June 20 | - Enjoying Summer Wildflowers |
| July 20 | - 30th Anniversary Byron Forest Preserve Picnic |

2024 NATIVE PLANT SALE Janet Giesen



Opuntia numifusa (Eastern Prickly Pear).
Photo by Alan Branhagan

We are excited to announce that this year, you will **now be able to order plants online** as well as using the traditional print version brochure. Ordering will begin in March. We've selected over 6,000 plants that are ideal for woodland and prairie locations. In addition to many of the popular species such as *Phlox divaricata* (Woodland Phlox) and *Asclepias incarnata* (Red Milkweed), we will be offering some new species this year, including *Symphytotrichum sericeum* (Silky Aster) and *Opuntia humifusa* (Eastern Prickly Pear).

There will also be over 25 additional plant species during pick-up days that will not be available for pre-order.

We encourage you to place your orders early, which will be filled on a first come, first received basis. Early birds get the best selections!

Orders due:

Friday, April 26, 2024

Members only pickup:

Thursday, May 9, 2024, 3-7 pm

Order pickup and public sale:

Friday, May 10, 2024, 3-7 pm

Order pickup and public sale: Saturday, May 11, 2024, 9 am- 2 pm

Pickup location: Paulson Farm, 4601 Paulson Road, Caledonia, IL 61011

Questions about the sale can be sent to Janet Giesen: janetgiesen@gmail.com or 815-762-5912.

Get More Involved with Your Wild Ones Chapter!

Plant Sale Volunteers Wanted!

We are looking for individuals who would like to help with the 2024 native plant sale. New volunteers will have the opportunity to work with those who have experience - it's a team effort that's lots of fun! Benefits of volunteering at the sale include being able to shop early for those plant species not listed on the brochure, get outside, build your native plant knowledge, visit with fellow Wild Ones members, and enjoy some snacks and beverages, too.

Volunteer shifts range from about two to three hours in the morning or afternoon on days before the sale and during the sale dates. You can select just one spot or sign-up for more. We will have a volunteer schedule soon and you can either sign up online (watch for an announcement) or you can contact Kim Lowman Vollmer at kimlowvol@aol.com or 815-397-6044 if you are interested in helping with the plant sale this year. We'd love to have you join us!

Duties for plant sale volunteers include:

- Unpacking plants from trucks as they are delivered
- Assisting customers as they select plants on sale dates (we'll have resources)
- Placing ID tags in each of the plant containers
- Pulling customer pre-orders and making them ready for customer pickup
- Working with customers as they pick up their pre-orders
- Watering plants and tidying up the pickup location

Looking for other ways to help our volunteer-run chapter? We are also looking for a new President, Treasurer, and Booth Coordinator. Please contact Jerry Paulson if you are interested: (815) 222.4414, paulsonjerry@aol.com





PLAN YOUR NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH

10:30AM - 12:30PM

\$15 MEMBERS \$20 NON-MEMBERS

SEVERSON DELLS NATURE CENTER

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN INCORPORATING NATIVE PLANTS INTO YOUR HOME GARDEN, BUT NOT SURE WHERE TO START? SPEND THE MORNING LEARNING ABOUT PLANTS THAT WILL DO BEST IN YOUR YARD GIVEN YOUR SPACE, SOIL TYPE, AND AMOUNT OF SHADE. WE WILL HAVE WILD ONES PLANT SALE INFORMATION SO YOU CAN ORDER YOUR PLANTS THAT DAY. (PLANTS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP FROM WILD ONES IN EARLY MAY.)

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE **Sallie Krebs, Membership Coordinator**

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

186 memberships as of February 23, 2024

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

- Brian Hale, Sycamore
- Judy Letourneau, Rockford
- Laura Sjoquist, Rockton

- Welcome to our returning member(s)!
- Rebecca Olson, Rockford

Anniversaries:

- 10 Years:
- Mira Lee & Howard Waitzkin, Loves Park
 - Marcia Speck, Aurora
- 5 Years:
- Sharon Shipp, Rockford

It is preferred that renewal memberships be submitted through the Member Center online (<https://members.wildones.org/join/>) 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

We appreciate your support!



ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Cathy Johnson
2205 S. Perryville Rd. PMB 191
Rockford, IL, 61108

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DON'T BECOME EXTINCT!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 03/01/2024, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last Wild Ones Journal until you renew your membership. National Wild Ones drops expired memberships the first week of the expiration month, so please don't be late! See the Membership Update for renewal information.



WILD ONES MISSION

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

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER MEETINGS

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

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER BOARD AND COORDINATORS

BOARD

President: Jerry Paulson
(815) 222.4414 paulsonjerry@aol.com
Vice President: Linda Tabb Ricker (217)
649.3966 greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com
Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
catiohn_22@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912
janetgiesen@gmail.com
Board members:
Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044
kimlowvol@aol.com
Carrie Meyer (301) 466.8754
Cmeyer@gmu.edu

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [open position]
Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson
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Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs
membershipworrvc@gmail.com
Mentor coordinator: Barb Kober
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Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell
(815) 969.7435 cynthiachmell@gmail.com
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Ginnie Watson (as above)
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Newsletter proofreader: Rebecca Beneditz
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Program coordinators: Lisa Johnson

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Mark Luthin (815) 543.7412
m.luthin@comcast.net
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Publicity coordinator: Dawn Skupien
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Show Me/Help Me coordinator:
Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
Social media coordinator: Jessie Crow Mermel (as to the left)
Tree & shrub sale coordinator: Brian Hale
(815) 289.2384 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)