

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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



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

Fighting Invasive Species in Native Landscapes
October 15, 2015

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

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



According to the World Conservation Union, invasive alien species are the second most significant threat to biodiversity, after habitat loss. As defined by an Executive Order from then President Clinton in 1999 that called for increased national attention to, and coordination of, control of invasive nonnative species, an “invasive plant” is “an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm to human health.” (Alien plants

are also sometimes referred to as exotic, nonnative, or non-indigenous species.)

This is an environmental problem that residential gardeners can do something about. Our October program will focus on the current invasive plant threats, and how to identify them and manage them in our native landscapes.

Mia Spaid is the Special Projects Manager for the Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership (NIIPP), a cooperative weed management initiative for the region. Her role is to coordinate the monitoring and management of invasive plant species, as well as provide educational workshops and materials to promote the awareness of invasives and their impacts. Her presentation will provide an overview of what invasive plants are, their impact, common species in the region, and some native alternatives that gardeners can promote as replacements. This is to encourage gardeners to think at an ecosystem level rather than a “backyard level”, and realize that their actions have an impact on the land. This impact can be a positive one when native plant species are predominant, as they provide a variety of benefits to both humans and animals that exotics cannot provide.

(continued on page 2)

Message from the Co-President Lenae Weichel

Introducing Natives

We all came to this organization in different ways, but there are likely commonalities. Perhaps you were already an avid gardener who wanted to expand your knowledge and plantings. Maybe you were someone who enjoyed seeing plants thrive in ideal conditions without extra coddling. Many of us had a friend or neighbor who was already involved who invited us to a meeting. This was my entrée into Wild Ones. I moved to Rockford into a home with traditional landscaping and I knew I wanted to begin to incorporate natives from the start. A friend with an established native yard told me about Wild Ones and suggested I attend a meeting with her. I was hooked and became a member on the spot.

Who do you know that might be interested in native plants? I have a friend whose husband was interested in planting natives in their traditional landscape but she was not sure about them. She liked her landscaping to look manicured and intentional and was not sure how the two could go together. I loaned her the book *Noah's Garden: Restoring the Ecology of our Own Backyards* by Sara Stein. In this book, now over 20 years old, Stein says she came to gardening "backwards, through the wild verges instead of through the garden gate." She realized that something was missing, being lost even, from the manicured lots of suburbia and sought to educate herself, experiment, and restore life to her landscape. The book helped my friend see another way of landscaping and helped her to embrace natives as she might not have done without it. She and her husband have also used natives in more formal groupings and beds – the best of both worlds works well in their yard!

As you know, we are not an "all or nothing" organization. I would venture to guess that not a single one of our chapter members does not have some non-natives in their landscapes, be they remnants of former owners or beloved plants or trees of our own. Who among our

friends and acquaintances could be introduced to the concepts of incorporating natives in our landscapes? We have many ways to reach out and encourage folks to understand and consider natives. Of course there are invitations that could be made to friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. to join us at a meeting, but I have noticed that many of our members utilize social media to share not only our topics but also photos and inspiration from their own backyards. Keep it up! The more people are exposed to natives, the more likely they are to accept and utilize them.



Donna VanBuecken visits with Tim Lewis, national president, at the September Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter meeting.

photo by Ron Cress

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In addition to invasive species management, Mia's ecology background includes a focus on spiders, most recently working on a project for the Florida Everglades National Park. This was to determine the spider species and analyze 40-year old trends in that ecosystem. She has also assisted with bird-banding projects in Illinois and Wisconsin. The former focused on breeding bird populations in Rollins Savanna in Grayslake, Illinois to track the success of songbird populations as the Lake County Forest Preserve restored the habitat. Other bird-banding projects occurred in Green Bay, WI to track migrating species along the Great Lakes as part of spring and fall events. These interests, along with a variety of smaller projects with other animals and native plants, contribute to an overall desire to understand how everything on earth is connected and how humans can improve their connections.

This program is free and open to the public. Call 815-627-0344 for more information.

A Thank-You to the Chapter

Dear Wild Ones,

Conklin Elementary School would like to say thank you to the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter for helping our garden grow! Last spring the students at Conklin Elementary had a vision of planting a native butterfly/pollinator garden. The Wild Ones helped to make that vision a reality by providing a flat of 32 plants for our garden through their mini-grant program.

The students started the garden by measuring out a 12X12, or 144 square foot space and marked it off with stakes and string. After the bed was tilled and prepared, the students were ready to get their hands dirty! The students were super excited to plant all of those plants. They paired up and chose which plant they wanted to plant; one of them dug the hole and the other planted the plant. The students learned all about the life cycle of plants, planted their own seeds to take home, and learned about the importance of native plants for our native butterflies and pollinators. The garden provided a unique, hands-on learning experience for our students that they will surely never forget.

The garden is now in full bloom and will continue to provide Conklin students with a valuable learning opportunity for years to come.

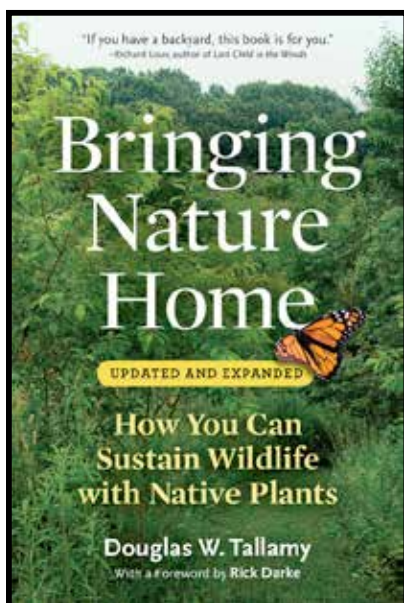
Thank you,

Conklin kids



Merchandise Must-Haves Cynthia Chmell, Merchandise Coordinator

THE Book You Must Have!



Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants by Douglas Tallamy. "Our Wild Ones mission is to 'promote environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities.' This statement could easily be mistaken as a summary of the main ideas in Tallamy's book; it validates our Wild Ones principles with sound scientific support."... "I rank this as the most important environmental gardening book I've read. It's about ecology and about gardening, but it's more than that. It's inspiring and sobering." From a review by Janet Allen, March/April 2008 *Wild Ones Journal*.

This excellent book is a must read for all Wild Ones. Prairie Moon Nursery says, "Buy, borrow, or steal this book! It is essential reading with ideas that need to become part of our understanding of how life works on this planet." In addition, this book is a good read.

Retail \$17.95, yours for only **\$15.00**



Bringing Tallamy Home DVD,

Toward Harmony with Nature 2014 presented by Doug Tallamy on January 25, 2014. You've read the book, now see the man!

\$8.00

September Meeting Recap

Cynthia Nelson

photos by Ron Cress

Native Gardens to Attract Migrating Birds



Marian Hill chats with members after the September meeting.

Marian and John Hill are volunteer stewards in the forest preserves of Cook County. At home they have brought their love of the natural world together with their love of gardening to create wildlife habitat in their yard. Although they do not have a large yard, they have documented 101 species of birds and 21 species of butterflies visiting their yard since 1992. Migrating birds are in need of protein, as are birds feeding their young. Tallamy has published lists, based on his research, that indicate which trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants are likely to attract Lepidopterans (butterflies and moths). Insects are more likely to be adapted to those plants that occur naturally in a region, as they co-evolved with these plants. For example, Tallamy lists the maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*), an alien, as supporting 5 species of Lepidopterans. In contrast, the native oak tree (*Quercus* spp.) supports over 500 species of Lepidopterans. Including larval hosts as well as plants blooming throughout the season will increase the likelihood a yard will be graced by butterflies and moths, as well as by other insects that are sought out by birds. An additional advantage of native plants is they are likely to require less water and lower maintenance because they are adapted to the local climate. Like many of us, the Hills have some nonnative plants, in many cases selected because they support wildlife in their yard. Their commitment is to bring in native plants as replacements when it becomes time to replace the nonnatives.

A bird-friendly landscape should fulfill all of a wild bird's

basic needs, including food, shelter, water, nesting sites, and perches. Different layers are important to support birds, including trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. Our speaker pointed out that every homeowner is not going to be able to provide for all habitat needs. Birds finding food in a tall white oak (*Quercus alba*) in one yard might take advantage of a hedgerow for nesting or cover in the next yard. Another neighbor might have a water feature, so that habitat for birds is provided through collective effort. Water is very important to birds, and moving water attracts birds. If space is limited, one simple and inexpensive way to provide a water source is to fill a plastic water jug with water, make a pin hole in the jug, and suspend it from a tree branch so that it drips into a clay saucer or pie tin on the ground below.

Our speaker presented photographs of their yard, some taken over the years in which they were transforming their yard from a suburban lawn to a haven for birds. Not all of their plantings were picture worthy in time for the presentation. Because of the importance of shrubs to birds, Marian and John began planting native shrubs some years ago, including nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*), elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.), and bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*). Photos of these shrubs in full flower were not possible because deer started visiting their yard to browse the shrubs. There were, however, many photos showcasing how native plants can be used to create beautiful gardens that provide habitat for wildlife.

When they planted their butterfly garden, they took into account that many of the plants that support butterflies require 6-8 hours of sun. Pictures of their butterfly garden, taken at different points in time, showed an evolving composition that always had a sense of order as well as a diverse array of plants. Plants were included based on their characteristics and ability to attract wildlife. For example, small butterflies like small flowers and large butterflies prefer large flowers. Both Joe-Pye weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*) and the cup plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*) will support large butterflies, and are also attractive to bees. Both of these plants are large and will multiply in a congenial location, so might not be for those who are faint of heart (or reluctant to thin the multiplying plants).

Coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea* and *Echinacea pallida*) are large enough for large butterflies and in addition provide seeds for goldfinches and other birds in the autumn. Numerous moth caterpillars feed on the

September Meeting Recap (cont'd)



68 attended the September 17 Wild Ones program

Helianthus species, and birds benefit from the seeds. Sawtooth sunflowers (*Helianthus grosseserratus*) grow 3-5 feet tall when in colonies, but can grow up to 12 feet tall as a single plant. Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) has long spikes of tiny white to pale blue flowers on long stems which provide a striking vertical accent to a garden.

Verbena stricta attracts butterflies and bees, and will also be visited by hummingbirds. Songbirds, including cardinals and the slate-colored junco, may eat the seeds of this plant in the winter. The leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*) can grow up to three feet tall with spike-like masses of tiny purple blossoms. It is a host plant to the silver-spotted skipper (*Epargyreus clarus*). Blazing stars are attractive to butterflies and bees when they are in bloom, and provide seeds for the birds later in the year.

Marsh blazing star (*Liatris spicata*) – which is also called dense blazing star – prefers moist soil and blooms from July through September. Rough blazing star (*Liatris aspera*), also called button blazing star, will tolerate mesic to dry soil, and may continue blooming a bit later in the season than marsh blazing star. Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), which requires a moist location, is a favorite of the ruby-throated hummingbird and also visited by large bumblebees and butterflies, including the black swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*).

Milkweed is the larval host for the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). There are several species of milkweed native to our area, each with different cultural requirements. The milkweed we are probably most familiar with is *Asclepias syriaca*, our common milkweed, which can tolerate a variety of situations and is usually easy to grow once it becomes established. A recent designation for *Asclepias incarnata* is rose milkweed. This species, which is also known as swamp milkweed, does well in mesic to moist soil. Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) does well in hot, dry areas.

Several bird species, including goldfinches, use the downy part of milkweed seed to line their nests.

Late flowering plants are important for monarchs that need to store fat for their migration. Asters provide nectar when they are in bloom, and provide seed later, so should be chosen over chrysanthemums, which are nonnative. The big-leaved aster (*Aster macrophyllus*) has basal leaves that form a dense cover that helps keep out invasive weeds. It blooms earlier than other asters, and will keep its blooms for a longer time.

The decision to replace the lawn in their front yard created the opportunity to grow woodland plants under four large shade trees. Spring native wildflowers that the Hills have in their front yard include the early meadow rue (*Thalictrum dioicum*), bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*) and the May apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*). They also have blue violets (*Viola sororia*), the host plant for fritillaries. They have *Penstemon digitalis*, which is a sun plant that can tolerate a site that is partially shaded. Spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*) thrives in partial shade and does all right in deeper shade. In the fall, Short's asters (*Symphotrichum shortii*) attract an array of pollinators, as do the *Solidago* species zigzag goldenrod (*S. flexicaulis*) and elm-leaved goldenrod (*S. ulmifolia*). Their front yard planting has been accepted by their neighbors, as well as by the birds and insects that frequent their plantings.

Our speaker encouraged us to think about how we can support habitat in our own yards, challenging some of our preconceived notions if necessary. For example, if the backyard is shady and the front yard is sunny, it can make sense to plant a butterfly garden in the front yard. The best yard may not be the tidiest yard, at least as far as wildlife is concerned. A pile of tree-branch trimmings can provide cover for butterflies that overwinter in chrysalis form; and unraked leaves can protect other insects, including lady-bird beetles, during the winter. Our speaker also suggested some resources for learning more about the benefits of planting natives for wildlife, which are included below.

Charlotte Adelman, Bernard L. Schwartz. (2011). *The Midwestern Native Garden: Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants – An Illustrated Guide*. Ohio University Press.

Nowakowski, Keith Gerald. (2004). *Native Plants in the Home Landscape: For the Upper Midwest*. Available from University of Illinois at www.pubsplus.uiuc.edu (search for C1381).

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Show Me/Help Me Claudia Fleeman, Chair

Show Me/Help Me Day – Members Only
Join Us for an Autumn Walk
Saturday, October 24, 2015 – 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Show Me/Help Me days are interesting for the novice and expert alike. During these excursions we tour the yards of chapter members who have established landscapes, as well as those who would like some ideas or advice. These tours are a great learning opportunity and a chance to share knowledge and ideas! All members and their guests are welcome on the Show Me/Help Me tours. No RSVP is required. If you have any questions or wish to carpool, please contact me, Claudia Fleeman, at 815-985-5158 or claudia@wildonesrrvc.org

Join us for the final Show Me/Help Me event for 2015 and enjoy the beautiful autumnal colors. We will visit the yard of Wild Ones member, Joe Hemlock. Following the yard tour, Joe will take us down a path that leads from his yard and through the woods of Reuben A. Aldeen Park. We will view plantings of native forbs and grasses, but the tour will focus on the trees which should be in full autumn color. Joe is a certified arborist, member of the International Arborist Association, and an Illinois Master Naturalist.

Directions: The address is 4711 Red Bluff Dr., Rockford. Traveling South on Alpine Road, take a left onto Skyline Dr. (Skyline is at a stoplight and is opposite the southern leg of Guilford Rd.). Turn right onto Blue Crest, then take a left onto Red Bluff Dr. The house is white and is centered on a cul-de-sac. Park along the cul-de-sac.



(continued from page 5)

Tallamy, Douglas W. (2009). *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants – Updated and Expanded*. Timber Press. Portland, Oregon.

Tallamy, Douglas. <http://bringingnaturehome.net> and <http://udel.edu/~dtallamy/host/index.html> include lists of plants that attract butterflies and moths.

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!

220 memberships as of September 13, 2015

Welcome our new members!

Lynn & Wally Czech, Pearl City, IL
Jim & Theresa Hart, Rockton, IL
Sue & Ed LaCerra, Rockford, IL

All 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!

68 attended the September meeting.

A big thank you to our September meeting volunteers!

Greeters: Janaan Lewis, Marilyn Heneghan, Janet Giesen
Refreshments: Anita Johnson, Cynthia Nelson
AV/Sound Equipment: Ed Foster
Meeting Recap for the Newsletter: Cynthia Nelson
Photographer: Ron Cress
Library Assistants: Karen Matz, Barbara Flores

Anniversaries

Congratulations to this month's loyal members!

15 Years

Mike & Kathy Crandall, Winnebago, IL

It is preferred that renewal memberships be sent directly to the chapter for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. Remember that your dues include membership in both National Wild Ones and our chapter. Please use the address below:

Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter
1643 N Alpine Rd Ste 104
PMB 233
Rockford, IL 61107-1464

Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter and your national *Journal* address labels. You will be mailed a renewal reminder from the chapter 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. Email or call 815-627-0343 if you have any questions about membership.

Thirty percent of all dues paid (about \$11.10 per membership) is returned to the chapter by National Wild Ones to support our chapter activities. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

Thank you for your continuing support!



2015 Chapter Programs and Events

October 15 7:00-9:00 pm	Common Invaders: How to ID and Manage Invasive Species	Cathy McGlynn Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Program, Chicago Botanic Garden	Rock Valley College Woodward Technology Center
November 19 7:00-9:00 pm	Potluck and Seed Exchange Members only: All members welcome with or without seeds. Bring a dish to share.		TBD
December	No Meeting-Happy Holidays!		

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.



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 **10/1/2015**, 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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter

Board of Directors and Chairs

Co-Presidents: Ginnie Watson 815-398-0138
ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org
Lenae Weichel 815-282-5482
lenae@wildonesrrvc.org

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Membership Chair: Shey Lowman
815-757-4456 shey@wildonesrrvc.org

Newsletter Chair: Pambi Camacho
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maryanne@wildonesrrvc.org

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Show Me/Help Me Chair:
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claudia@wildonesrrvc.org

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

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Prairie Plant Sale Coordinators:
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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.