

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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www.wildonesrrvc.org



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All articles for the July 2018 newsletter, must be submitted to:

Constance@wildonesrrvc.org
by June 23, 2018.

Designing Your Backyard Habitat
Thursday, June 21, 2018

Location: Rock Valley College
Physical Education Center PEC0110 (lower level)
3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, 61114

Time: 7:00 p.m.



Creating an ideal habitat for wildlife in your backyard does not need to be complicated. It's all about planning before you plant. Andrea Rundblade, owner and designer at Green Key Landscape Design in Cherry Valley, will discuss how to create a natural outdoor oasis that is inviting for both humans and wildlife. She will show you how to be a responsible steward of the earth, one beautiful garden at a time.

Andrea has a degree in ornamental horticulture with an emphasis in landscape construction. Her primary goal in developing a landscape design is always to consider the environmental impact it will have and how it will blend into the

surrounding area.

Prior to Andrea's presentation we will hear from Laura Sjoquist about the Natural Land Institute's Conservation@Home and Conservation@Work programs (see below). Laura is an artist, naturalist, and educator who works as the Community Conservation Coordinator at the Natural Land Institute in Rockford. Laura also volunteers as a University of Illinois Extension Master Naturalist.

This program is free and open to the public.
For more information, call (779) 537.8939.

Conservation@Home



Over 40 million acres of the United States are dedicated to turf grass lawns. Every year it takes billions of gallons of water, and pesticides and \$29 billion to maintain our yards. Turf grass lawns require a lot of resources and time

(continued on page 2)

Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy
photo by Tim Lewis

More Thoughts on Jumping Worms

If you weren't able to make it to our May educational program, you really missed a good one. Fear not, you can read the recap in this newsletter for all the details, including online resources for learning more about this troubling invader. The University of Illinois Home Yard & Garden Pest Newsletter

notes that these worms reach maturity in 60 days, so populations double during the growing season. And although the worms themselves can't survive our winters, their eggs can and do.

Sam Burbach at the Winnebago county office of the University of Illinois Extension was kind enough to share information on our May program with Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners (our programs count as continuing education hours for them). She also shared information on what to do if you think that you might have these invaders on your property. (Indeed, one of our chapter members already has found them in her

yard in Winnebago county.) Counties in which the presence of jumping worms has been confirmed include Cook, DuPage, McHenry, and Williamson. Jumping worms are also confirmed to be present in Wisconsin and Indiana.

The University of Illinois Plant Clinic, in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Natural History Survey, and University of Illinois Extension, is trying to identify where these worms are in Illinois. If you suspect you have jumping worms, please contact the University of Illinois Plant Clinic at (217) 333.0519 before sending samples, as there are special handling instructions. They have found that the worms are very sensitive to heat and cold and so far, no live samples have survived being sent via mail. Samples preserved in ethanol allow the Clinic to observe physical characteristics, but discoloration of the tissue can occur, thereby complicating identification. Pictures of suspect worms can be sent to plantclinic@illinois.edu for preliminary identification.

In addition to doing our best to prevent the spread of these worms, we can also contribute to the monitoring and reporting of their presence in our area. Fingers crossed, their spread will not be a fast one and our landscapes will be spared the destructive effects of these menaces for as long as possible.

NLI Summer Lecture Series

The Natural Land Institute education committee, in partnership with Prairie Street Brewing Company, will present three lectures this year to inform the public about the importance of native plants, pollinators, and water conservation, and how these things tie into what we like to eat and drink. The presenters will also share information about NLI's new Conservation@Home and @Work programs. The lectures will be held at Prairie Street Brewhouse, 200 Prairie St., Rockford. Cost is \$6 per person (includes one beer/selected wine/soda). Pre-registration requested online at www.naturalland.org or call (815) 964-6666.

Wed., June 27: Water: Liquid, Solid, Gas, Beer, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Speaker: Laura Sjoquist, Community Conservation Coordinator, Natural Land Institute (and Wild Ones member!).

Wed., August 29: Foraging: Eat Local, Drink Local, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Speaker: Josh Tourville, sous chef, Prairie Street Brewing Co.

(continued from page 1)

to maintain, but provide little diversity in habitat or food for local wildlife. Replacing turf grass with native flowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees can help increase habitat for native wildlife.

The Natural Land Institute's Conservation@Home and Conservation@Work programs are designed to encourage private landowners, local businesses, churches, and schools to become actively involved in community conservation efforts. Whether you are starting from a turf grass lawn, have already planted some natives, or have an established natural area, NLI can help assist you in your efforts. For information about the programs, contact Laura Sjoquist at (815) 964.6666 or via e-mail at lsjoquist@Naturalland.org.

Educator Workshop: Monarch Mania

On August 25, 2018 at the Torstenson Youth Education Center in Pecatonica, an educator workshop will be offered, Monarch Mania. The workshop will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Learn about the life history and conservation status of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). You will take part in many hands-on activities and will receive supplemental educational resources to help you meet several Next Generation Science Standards with your students. The session will provide options for actions that you, your students, and the community can take to help monarchs, too. Although targeted to teachers of grades pre-kindergarten through 5, educators of all grade levels are welcome to register for the workshop but may need to adapt the materials and information. Professional Development Hours are available. This workshop is part of the ENTICE (Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education) program from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Register at <https://www.enticeworkshops.com/Registration.asp?WorkshopID=1229>



Wildflower Walkabouts

We are once again fortunate this year that Severson Dells and the Natural Land Institute are organizing a series of wildflower walks in natural areas across northern Illinois (Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago counties). All walks begin at 6:00 p.m. and are free to attend. Membership in either or both organizations is encouraged. Registration is requested at www.SeversonDells.com. For questions, call Severson Dells at (815) 335.2915 or NLI at (815) 964.6666. The remaining schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, June 13 Flora Prairie Nature Preserve

This 9.7-acre prairie is owned by the Boone County Conservation District. Aaron Minson, BCCD restoration technician, will lead us through the dry dolomite prairie, through a small wooded ravine, and near several large, spreading bur oaks. The state endangered woolly milkweed was collected here in 1946 by Egbert Fell. Easy hiking.

Tuesday, June 19 Harlem Hills Prairie Nature Preserve

Gary Anderson and Jerry Paulson will offer their guidance on this visit to Harlem Hills Prairie. If the season is progressing typically, the hills should be pink/purple with thousands of Pale Purple Coneflowers. Always a great place to see a sunset. Meet on Flora Dr. in Loves Park. Easy hiking.

Wednesday, June 27 Deer Run Forest Preserve

Mike Groves of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County will lead us on this walk through Deer Run Forest Preserve. We will enter between two prairie restorations undertaken in 2000 and will compare a burned with unburned prairie (one side is slated to be burned in early spring). Spiderwort should be in full bloom; white wild indigos, pale purple coneflowers, and butterfly weed will be starting to develop flower stalks and heads. June grass will be flowering and setting seed. We will then hike along the Kishwaukee River trail through the floodplain forest. We should hear frogs and migrating birds. Located 3 miles southeast of Rockford on River Rd. at 5691 River Rd., Cherry Valley.

May Meeting Recap Ellen Rathbone



Brad Herrick

photo by Tim Lewis

Invasive Jumping Worms

When I read the 2018 line-up of speakers for Wild Ones, I just knew I had to attend the presentation about invasive jumping worms. How could one NOT want to find out more? And while the images in my mind were a lot more exciting and impressive than the actual worms (I have a very active

imagination), the reality of these “new” invaders is still pretty impressive.

Our speaker and jumping worm expert was Brad Herrick of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum. He has been studying the jumping worms for the last few years, and what he shared was indeed enlightening.

The evening’s program started with an overview of basic worm biology, and then segued into the invasive jumping worms – what they are, how they affect the environment, and what can be done about them.

Worms 101

In a nutshell, earthworms are pretty simple creatures. They feed on soil and organic matter (leaf litter), and are promiscuous, polygamous, hermaphroditic (have both male and female reproductive organs on the same individual), and some even parthenogenic (females are able to reproduce without any contribution from males – producing all female offspring).

Earthworms fall into three basic categories: *epigeic* (live in the leaf litter), *endogeic* (live in the topsoil), or *aneic* (live in the subsoil – nightcrawlers fall into this category).

Earthworms change the nature of their environment to suit their survival. And here I was thinking only humans and beavers did that! Ah, but I must remember, we have discovered so much more about the natural world than was known when I first went to college. Indeed, it shouldn’t really come as a surprise that earthworms change

their environment. An interesting fact that you may not have known: healthy soils in this part of the world have no native earthworms. After the last pass of glaciers through our region, the soils were left devoid of any worms. Thus, the plants and other organisms that did recolonize these lands made a perfectly good life for themselves sans worms.

In our landscape, healthy soils exhibit high plant diversity; a healthy layer of leaf litter; a thick, spongy layer of organic matter; and undisturbed soil layers. Soils that are infested with earthworms, on the other hand, have few species of plants; exposed tree roots; very little leaf litter; compacted soils; no organic layer (and thus a loss of nutrients); and the mineral soils are the new “topsoil.” When there are earthworms, other invasive species, such as garlic mustard and buckthorn, can easily move in.

In other words, earthworms change the physical, chemical, and biological properties of the soil thanks to their burrowing, their casts (excrement), their feeding behaviors, the mucus they secrete, and even when they die and decompose. And here we all thought worms were the gardener’s friend!

Invasive Asian jumping worms

Back in Asia, jumping worms are commonly found in grasslands, primarily in the Korean peninsula and in Japan. The first reported sighting of jumping worms in Wisconsin was in 2013, and so far they have not been found in any of our grasslands. To date, they seem to be restricted to gardens, urban landscapes, and woodlands. More on how they spread in a moment. First, consider the worms themselves.

There are three species that have been discovered so far in the Upper Midwest: *Amythas tokioensis*, *A. agrestis*, and *Metaphire hilgendorfi*. *A. agrestis* is the smallest, coming in at around 3-4” in length, while *M. hilgendorfi* can be a whopping 9” long! These guys can dwarf even the most robust nightcrawlers.

How can you tell if the worm in your garden is a common garden-variety European earthworm or one of these new invaders? Color will be one of the first things you notice. The bog-standard earthworm is a uniform pinkish color, with a raised pink or red clitellum located partway down its back and which only goes part of the way around the body, making it look like a saddle. The jumping

May Meeting Recap (cont'd)

worms are darker dorsally, lighter ventrally, slightly rigid, and the clitellum is smooth, milky white, and goes all the way around the worm.

An invasive jumping worm in the hand also reacts differently than an earthworm does. First, they are much more wiggly; their wiggleness is actually described as being snake-like in the actual way they move. Secondly, when they feel threatened, or are handled roughly, the jumping worms lose their tails. Brad showed a video clip of this, and you can actually watch as a constriction forms on the tail and then the end drops off. Fascinating!

The quality of the soil where the worms are living also helps to determine whether you have jumping worms or earthworms. The casts of the jumping worms make the surface of the soil look like it is covered with coffee grounds. The granules are all quite uniform in size and distribution. Earthworm casts, on the other hand, are more dispersed and simply do not look like coffee grounds, nor are they as uniform.

But aren't worms good for my garden?

The generic earthworm can be beneficial to a garden in certain circumstances. If the soil is highly compacted, earthworms will help break it up, distribute nutrients, and aerate it. Their casts are high in organic matter, and the worms help decompose materials (think compost).

The jumping worms, however, do not provide these benefits. This is partly because they do not burrow like earthworms do; they live in the top few centimeters of the soil. Their activity produces too much aeration, which dries out the soil. They loosen up the topsoil to such an extent that it becomes highly erodible. The soil becomes too loose for plants to establish roots, and/or causes established plants to decline in health. Their activity turns over nutrients too quickly, creating a situation similar to adding quick-release fertilizer: nutrients are leached from the soil before the plants can use them. This nutrient release is at its greatest in August/September, when the worms are at their greatest numbers (they only live for one year, but their eggs survive the winter), but this is also when plants are starting to shut down and get ready for winter. Finally, jumping worm



May 2018 Meeting Audience

photo by Tim Lewis

activity can also destroy turf grass.

How are these worms spreading and what can we do about it?

As with so many invasive species, the spread of jumping worms is caused, inadvertently, by people. The cocoons are moved via our cars and shoes; cocoons and adults are both schlepped from one location to another in mulch (hardwood and leaf), as well as in compost. Some of the biggest culprits are municipal leaf pickups; plant sales/trades/sharing; greenhouses and landscape companies; tools, boots etc.; and fishing!

We can all start by first learning how to identify the presence of these invaders. Next, we can diligently wash and sterilize our gardening gear (tools, boots, etc.). Make sure any compost you use has been heated to 130 degrees Fahrenheit for 3-10 days (this will kill off any worms and cocoons). Practice the mantra "Arrive clean and leave clean" (remove soils and debris from vehicles, tools, clothing, shoes, etc.).

Brad gave a recipe for an easy method to determine if you have jumping worms. Fill a container with a gallon of water and add 1/3 cup dry mustard powder. Mix well. Choose a one-foot square section of soil to test, brush aside leaves and other organic matter, exposing the soil. Pour half the solution on the bare spot, wait a few minutes, and then pour on the rest of the solution. This potion is a skin irritant and the worms do not like it - they will come rushing up to the surface to escape, and you can collect them for analysis. Apparently, this can be used to rid a small area of a jumping worm infestation, but you will still have your work cut out for you.

May Meeting Recap (cont'd)



**Ginnie Watson, Brad Herrick,
Kim Lowman Vollmer**

photo by Sallie Krebs

Another possible partial solution is an organic fertilizer called Early Bird. A study conducted at the Arboretum showed nearly 100% mortality of jumping worms when applied at high doses. It doesn't seem to affect the cocoons at all, however. They are still working on determining the minimum dosage required for this application to work, and what other impacts using this fertilizer will have on the soil, etc. Also, the fertilizer is quite expensive and might not be practical for home use.

A product called BioChar has shown some promise, too. Its fine particles are apparently quite sharp and when eaten by European earthworms, the worms become damaged internally and die. Studies are currently underway to determine which size of BioChar is the most effective and if it will work on jumping worms as well as earthworms.

Gardeners can also try using different types of mulch in lieu of hardwood mulch. Be sure to purchase mulch from a reliable source, and perhaps experiment with pine needles, marsh hay (which has its own drawbacks), or native grass mulch (like big blue stem).

If there is no organic matter/leaf layer to eat, the jumping worms won't show up.

Finally, Brad provided some online resources for further information:

<http://greatlakeswormwatch.org>

<https://arboretum.sisc.edu/>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives/fact/jumpingworm/index.html>

Invasive jumping worms are real, they are here, and we must all add them to the list of things to watch for as we try to establish natives in our landscapes.



Bobbie Lambiotte and Jane Evans

photo by Tim Lewis

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. We appreciate your support!!

224 memberships as of May 23, 2018

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

Randy & Sylvia Downing, Stockton
Phil & Carolyn Fulkerson, Rockford
Dan Loescher, Belvidere
Marianne Miller, Belvidere

Welcome to our new members!

Gayle Hammer, 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!

60 attended the May meeting, including at least 7 guests

A big thank you to our April meeting volunteers!

Greeters: Fiona Fordyce
Refreshments: Khrista Miskell, Fiona Fordyce
AV/Sound Equipment: Ed Kletecka
Meeting Recap: Ellen Rathbone
Photographer: Tim Lewis, Sallie Krebs
Library Assistants: Marcia DeClerk
Merchandise: Cynthia Chmell

A special thank you for bringing plants to sell:

Cynthia Chmell, Bobbie Lambiotte
Jane, Jay and Paula Evans, and Jerry Paulson

Anniversaries:

15 Years:

Marcia DeClerk, Machesney Park

In Memoriam

In memory of our former
Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter member
Norman Meyer – member 1994-2018

It is preferred that membership renewals 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:

Sallie Krebs
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
7492 Renfro Rd., Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter above your name on the label. 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.

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: membership@wildonesrrvc.org 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!



2018 Chapter Programs and Events

June 21
7:00 p.m.

Designing Your Backyard
Habitat

Andrea Rundblade
Green Key Landscape Design

Rock Valley College
PE Ed Center

July 19
6:00 p.m.

Member Potluck and Yard Tour!

Marlowe & Nancy Holstrum

August 16
7:00 p.m.

Parasitic Plants

Zach & Melissa Grycan
Naturalists

Rock Valley College
PE Ed Center

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.
For more information, contact Lisa Johnson at (779) 537.8939



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 6/1/2018, 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:

Sallie Krebs
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
7492 Renfro Rd.
Cherry Valley, IL 61016

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

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Rock Valley College, Physical Education Center PEC0110 (lower level), 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, 61114.

Special meetings, outings, and events are scheduled periodically and sometimes replace the regular meeting. Contact any officer to confirm information about our next meeting.

Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators

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