

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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All articles for the November 2018 newsletter, must be submitted to: Constance@wildonesrrvc.org by October 23, 2018.

The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction
Thursday, October 18, 2018

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

Time: 7:00 p.m.



Photo by Jeff Crosby

What makes a prairie special? Why should we care about prairie in Illinois? Based on her new book, *The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction*, Cindy Crosby will present a brief history of prairie, the different ways people have viewed prairie over time, and some of the key prairie plants and their uses by native people and early settlers. She will also suggest ways to develop a closer relationship with the outdoors - especially that landscape which gives Illinois its nickname, The Prairie State.

Cindy Crosby is the author, compiler, or contributor to more than 20 books, including the recently released *The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction* (Northwestern University Press) and *Tallgrass Conversations: In Search of the Prairie Spirit* with Thomas Dean. She is a

prairie steward at Nachusa Grasslands and a prairie steward supervisor at The Morton Arboretum, where she teaches natural history classes for adults. Cindy is a master gardener, and Certified Interpretive Trainer for naturalists. She also coordinates dragonfly monitoring programs at both sites. Visit her website at www.cindycrosby.com for more information.

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

Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy
photo by Tim Lewis

On Being a Messy Gardener

Our home landscapes can be havens for wildlife—even at the end of the growing season. Overgrown grassy reeds, dried flower stalks, and shrubby fruit-laden branches provide food, cover, and protection in the fall and winter for animals big and small.

There are several ways to opt in favor of a messy garden for the benefit of wildlife:

- allow dried flower heads to remain standing in your garden;
- leave tree snags (dead trees) on your property (as long as they are not endangering people or property);
- let your grasses grow tall and set seed;
- skip the chemicals;
- leave the fallen leaves on your property, using them for compost or mulch;
- build a brush pile with fallen branches instead of removing, chipping, or burning them; and
- delay garden clean-up until spring, after several 50° days, allowing overwintering pollinators to move on.

Vital pollinators, such as native bees, might overwinter in a messy garden. Consider keeping a part of your yard as bare ground to provide nesting habitat for native bees.

Update on Open Positions

More details will be coming later, but we have had a good response to our call for folks to fill numerous open positions (at the board and coordinator levels) for 2019. However, we are still looking for folks (or a pair, if two people would like to be co-coordinators) for the following positions:

Volunteer coordinator: This person uses the results from our annual membership survey to line up volunteers for chapter events (plant sale, events where our chapter's booth will be set up, monthly meetings, and the tree sale), based on the need for volunteers specified by the various event coordinators. Volunteers are lined up by reaching out via phone and/or email.

Mentors coordinator: Using the information garnered from the annual membership survey, this person will pair up folks who are seeking a mentor, with folks who are volunteering to be a mentor. Again, there are detailed instructions for this role, including already-written newsletter articles. The activity for this coordinator is mainly in the spring, with some follow-up at year end.

Booth coordinator: Tim Lewis, the current coordinator, would like someone to be a co-coordinator with

Cellophane bees, including the vernal plasterer bee (*Colletes inaequalis*), will create burrows in the ground to reproduce and ride-out the cold winter months. According to Habitat Network, there are over 4,000 native bee species in North America, and unlike the familiar honey bee (*Apis mellifera*), many of these native bees nest underground. Many species of native bumble bees, mason bees, leafcutter bees, etc. use garden spaces to overwinter. Depending on the species, bees will take winter refuge under a pile of bark or dried leaves, or nest in cavities in hollowed out stems and decomposing logs.

There are approximately 12,000 different kinds of moths and 865 butterfly species in North America. Many of these lepidoptera, such as the mourning cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*), also might take refuge in your messy garden to overwinter. In addition, the question mark (*Polygonia interrogationis*) and eastern comma (*Polygonia comma*) will, amazingly, overwinter as adults. They find thick piles of leaf litter, a chunk of tree bark, or other cavity to nestle into. When you leave your gardens messy, including ignoring the dried leaves on plants, this helps to encourage a rich population of native butterflies and moths in the following spring and summer.

It is easy to become so focused on all the planting that we can do to create native landscapes at our homes and businesses, that we lose sight of the smaller gardening decisions that can have an impact on the wildlife that live around us. And I think it's even more appealing that most of these suggestions will actually ease your yardwork load this fall. A win-win, indeed!

Update on Open Positions (cont'd)

him in 2019. This coordinator is responsible for letting the volunteer coordinator know about staffing needs at the various events where our chapter's booth is to be displayed, and for coordinating the set-up and take-down of the booth at these events. Tim has been doing this task for many years and has a detailed description of what is involved. Educational materials are also brought to our monthly programs at Rock Valley College. Between two people, this is a very manageable task.

If you are interested in any of these positions, or would like to recommend someone in the chapter who you think would be a good fit, please contact Constance McCarthy, chapter president (contact information on back page of this newsletter). Many hands make light work!

September Meeting Recap

Lynda Johnson

photo by Sallie Krebs



her environmental impact, she even uses a push mower and does not use any other powered lawn equipment!

Her neighbors have backyards that are almost entirely asphalt and concrete. Her backyard is 50' x 100', taking out space for the garage. In that space is a 2,500 gallon water feature which recirculates the water and includes a 60' stream with waterfall and pond. The water feature remains in use year-round (it is not turned off during the winter). She uses no commercial fertilizers, only homegrown compost and local renewable mulch.

In creating this beautiful oasis, she plans for different plants for different feeding habits, different layers from high to ground level, and different seasons, including winter. We are located in the midst of the Mississippi flyway, a north-south migration path for birds that ranges from Canada to the area surrounding the Gulf of Mexico. About

Pam Carlson, an artist, photographer, gardener, birder, and wildlife rehabber, gave an excellent presentation on the birds in her garden, concentrating on building a four-season oasis with different habitats of plants and water features to attract migrating and resident birds, as well as insects. She lives in a city neighborhood in Chicago just north of the Kennedy expressway and directly under an O'Hare runway flight path. To minimize

424 bird species have been tallied in Chicago, approximately 300 of which are migrating. She has seen 114 species in her yard and spends a lot of patience and time photographing birds and insects and the native plants they use. Her photographs were awesome! Some photos depicted the wide variety of beaks that birds have, based on their manner of consuming food, including conical, thin/

August Meeting Recap (cont'd)



flat, needle, chisel, probing, tearing, filtering, and spearing beaks.

There is a significant decline in the numbers of certain kinds of birds. Part of this decline can be traced to human-related causes such as cat predation (3.7 billion birds per year; she pleads for folks to keep their cats indoors), window strikes (988 million birds per year), and wind turbines and cell towers. Thus, any steps we can take to support birds will help to mitigate against these losses.

Consider plants that have cupped leaves, which will hold water (from rain or dew) for the birds. An obvious native is the cup plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*) Other recommended flowers include flowering spurge, salvia, shrimp plant (a non-native annual, but loved by hummingbirds), obedient plant, ironweed, and woodland asters. She also mentioned a goldenrod cultivar ('Fireworks') that still attracts butterflies and pollinators, but is not nearly as aggressive as some other goldenrods.

Among her recommended trees and shrubs are serviceberry, maples, honey locust, hawthorn (*Crataegus viridis* 'Winter King', although this is a mainly spineless cultivar), and evergreens and conifers (the sap attracts some birds).

She has had hummingbirds in her yard as late as mid-November. Thus, she keeps her hummingbird

feeders up much later than most folks might, allowing these beauties a chance to get as much fuel as possible before they begin their long migration southward.

She stressed not to forget birds and insects that seek food on the ground in leaf litter and dead sticks, which she collects on walks around her neighborhood and adds to her yard. Her pond also attracts dragonflies and nymphs, which eat mosquitoes. She emphasized keeping the ground litter because that is where the insects live, and they attract many birds! For example, plants like wild ginger provide cover for birds, and also attract ants that some ground-feeding birds like to eat.

For people who think of feeding birds only with a seed feeder and suet feeder, her talk was a really great eye-opener. It also showed that if we want to attract birds and insects with our native plants, a so-called "normal" yard with mostly short lawn perfectly mowed, and few native bushes and trees, will not do the job to attract native birds and insects!

Other ways to get involved include the Great Backyard Bird count (every February) and Project Feeder Watch (November through April).

Thanks go to Pam for her excellent talk and photographs. It was very inspiring to us all.

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!!

218 memberships as of September 23, 2018

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

- Shawn Choinard, Rockford
- Ellwyn Englof, Rockford
- Donna Gable, DeKalb
- Jeff Stack & Kathy Mielke, Roscoe
- Jim & Karen Timble, Franklin Grove
- Christopher & Sandy Wrate, Rockford

Welcome to our returning member!

- Shawn Choinard, Rockford
- Betsy Kelly, Rockford
- Barbara & John McNamara, 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!

- Greeters:* John & Joyce Mori
- Refreshments:* Anita Johnson, Betsy Hoelting
- AV/Sound Equipment:* Bob Arevalo
- Meeting Recap:* Lynda Johnson
- Photographer:* Sallie Krebs
- Library Assistants:* Cathy Johnson, Karen Matz
- Merchandise:* Cynthia Chmell

A special thank you for his donation for refreshments:

Ron Hendrickson, Rockford

Anniversaries: 5 Years::

Oran Wilder, Polo

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

October 18 7:00 p.m.	The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction	Cindy Crosby Morton Arboretum	Rock Valley College PE Ed Center
November 15 6:00 p.m.	Member Pot Luck, Seed Exchange & Annual Meeting Members only Church of Rockford		Unitarian Universalist 4848 Turner Street Rockford, IL 61107
December	No Meeting-Happy Holidays!		

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 10/1/2018, 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

Board

President: Constance McCarthy
(815) 282.0316 constance@wildonesrrvc.org

Vice President: Jerry Paulson
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daheneghan@gmail.com

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(815) 399.3787 rrvc.woodland@gmail.com

Prairie Plant Sale: Cynthia Chmell & Bobbie Lambiotte, (815) 969.7435 & (815) 398.6257

Tree & Shrub Sale: Brian Hale, (815) 289.2384,
moyogi2@gmail.com; Jerry Paulson (as to the left)

Plant Rescues & Seed Collection:
Mary Anne Mathwich (815) 721.5187
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