

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

Inside this Issue:

Message from the President	2
October Presentation Recap	2-4
Board Members & Survey	5
Membership	5
Chapter Calendar	5
Chapter Contact Information	6

www.wildonesrrvc.org



www.facebook.com/wildonesrockrivervalley



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



All articles for the January 2021 newsletter, must be submitted to:
Constance@wildonesrrvc.org
by December 7, 2020.

*Rock River Valley Chapter:
Annual Meeting and Virtual Yard Tour
Thursday, November 19, 2020*

Time: 7:00 p.m.
via online Zoom program

While this is normally the month during which the chapter hosts its much-anticipated annual potluck and seed exchange, this year we will be holding our annual meeting online (details to be distributed via Constant Contact email prior to the event). While covid circumstances mean that we are unable to gather in our preferred way, this year's annual meeting will still be one to look forward to.

In addition to a recap of the chapter's activities and accomplishments in 2020, a video of photos submitted by our members of native plants growing in their yards will be shown. The chapter's program committee has asked members to submit photos from the our plant sales, programs (when we were still meeting in person), and other events.

Photos in Jpeg format are to be submitted to Charles Johannsen at charlesjohannsen3@gmail.com by November 8 along with a caption that names the plants along with the name of the photographer. As many as five photos may be submitted per yard or event. These will be compiled into a video that will be presented at the annual meeting and posted on our website,

As we could not visit our members' natural landscapes and yards in person this summer and fall, this will be a chance to show off all those native plants that you've grown with such care, and to inspire other members to do the same.

If you have any questions, contact Jerry Paulson at paulsonjerry@aol.com or (815) 222.4414.

We look forward to our members having fun showing us their beautiful yards!

Tree and Shrub Sale a Success

By Brian Hale, sale coordinator

The fall native tree and shrub sale was a big success again this year. Thanks to everyone who purchased native trees and shrubs to plant in our area. Here are the statistics: 152 trees and shrubs were sold to a total of 39 customers, and the chapter

gained one new family membership. About one third of the orders came from non-members.

I would like to thank Steve Stiles and Mark Luthin for helping out, and Jerry Paulson for hosting the pick-up location at his farm.

Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy

photo by Tim Lewis

Passing the Baton

While it is only November, this is effectively the end of the year for the chapter (as we don't have a monthly educational program in December). Normally, this is the time for me to look back on the year's accomplishments. But first, I'd like to let you know that I am passing the baton as chapter president to Jerry Paulson, our current vice president.

When I first became chapter president (at the beginning of my 2008-2012 stint), Tim Lewis emphasized how important it was for the chapter to have turnover in leadership positions from time to time. New folks bring with them new ideas, new approaches, new energy, new perspectives. But it can be challenging to find someone willing to take on the task of being chapter president. Earlier this year, I announced to the board that I would be willing to serve another year if no one else was willing to accept the baton, but that I would also be very happy to pass the baton if anyone wanted to take it. I started this second stretch as president in 2016, and after five years, it would be a boost to the chapter to have a fresh person in this role.

I could not have been happier when Jerry stepped up and said he would be pleased to be our chapter's next president. No one responded to the call for nominations for elected board positions, so all of those positions are running unopposed for 2021. Barring a stealth write-in candidate, we can

say with confidence who our board members will be for 2021.

I agreed to effectively swap roles with Jerry and thus assume the role of vice president for 2021. I will also continue to send out the chapter's Constant Contact emails, edit newsletter articles, and help with the annual spring native plant sale. This second five-year spell (2016-2020) as president began and ended under very different circumstances. Where we once met in person every month at Rock Valley College, we are now forced by the covid situation to offer our educational programs via YouTube or Zoom meetings. I'm so proud of how everyone has adapted to these challenges with flexibility, creativity, and a positive attitude. It has been an adjustment not only for the board and coordinators, but also for our members and the general public.

I am highly confident that Jerry will do an amazing job as our new president. We are in good hands with his years of experience running the Natural Land Institute, deep network of contacts in the environmental world, and exceptional knowledge about native plants. I look forward to continuing to work with Jerry, the rest of the board, and our chapter's hard-working coordinators as we carry out the Wild Ones mission: education and promotion of the use of natives in our landscapes.

On a related note: the ballots and annual survey will be sent to all chapter members by postal mail this month (November). Watch your mailbox for this important mailing, as your participation in this process (including giving us your feedback) is critical for the growth and improvement of the chapter.

Recap of October Presentation

Midwest Spiders: Basic Biology and Common Species By PJ Liesch

On October 15, 2020, PJ Liesch, director of the University of Wisconsin Insect Diagnostic Lab since 2014 and Extension entomologist, brought us an informative and engaging program on our local spiders. This was our chapter's second Zoom program and it went much smoother than the first.

PJ began by debunking some widely held myths and misconceptions about spiders. Many people fear them - they are so different, they move fast,

Lisa Johnson

look scary, and people think they might bite. Actually, most spiders are harmless, they don't want to bite us, and they are very beneficial predators. It is estimated that spiders eat 400-800 million tons of prey annually. If all spiders died out globally, we'd have a lot more insects and pests. Most spiders can't survive in our indoor environments, as it's too dry for them; they would desiccate and die.

There are over 40,000 species of spiders known worldwide, with most of the diversity in the tropics. Over 500 species are found in the

Recap of October Presentation (cont'd)

Midwest, with Illinois having at least 750 species. Spiders are arthropods; they have many jointed legs and a hard exoskeleton. Insects are also arthropods, but they differ from spiders in that they have three body parts, while spiders have two (a cephalothorax and abdomen). Insects have six legs, while spiders have eight. Spiders don't have wings or antennae, but they do have pedipalps (often referred to as palps). They also have silk glands, fangs, and venom. Most spider venom poses little risk to humans. Daddy long legs or harvestmen are often confused with spiders. They are closely related, but they only have one body part and so are placed in their own group. There is an urban myth that they have strong poison, but lack strong enough fangs to bite humans. The truth is that they don't have dangerous venom, and they are scavengers rather than predators.

PJ noted that it can be difficult to identify spiders, as many of the features used to ID them are hard to see and may require a strong magnifying glass or microscope. One diagnostic feature is the number and placement of the eyes. Different spider groups have different eye arrangements; there may be 8, 6, or none (as in the case of blind cave spiders). PJ showed a diagram depicting the eye placement for the various spider groups. (Such charts can be found in many spider ID books, as well as online.) Many spiders exhibit sexual dimorphism, with females and males being very different in color, pattern, and size; also, juveniles may look different from adults and even adults can show color variations within a species. The palps, which may look like an extra pair of legs near the fangs, are used for reproduction. If a spider looks like it is wearing boxing gloves, it is a male.

Some spiders are active hunters, while web builders are ambush predators. Life cycles vary by species; some overwinter as adults, others as juveniles or eggs. Spiders live in a variety of environments. All have silk glands, but not all spin webs for catching prey; some use silk to create safe retreats, and bolas spiders spin a glob of sticky silk that they twirl to capture prey. Silk is also used as draglines, for ballooning, and for reproduction. Scientists used to think that ballooning spiders could not control their flight, but were dependent on the wind. But they discovered that spiders can fly on very calm days. An experiment placed spiders in a closed box, and when an electrical field was created in the box, the spiders could fly with no air movement.

Spiders can be found year round. PJ showed a video of a spider walking across snow in Wisconsin in January.

Spider bites are very rare. They may bite for defense, but we are not a good food source for them; they would rather run away. PJ recommended a blog article by Chris Buddle: "Spiders Don't Bite" in *Arthropod Ecology*. He noted that the medical community often misdiagnoses wounds as brown recluse spider bites. Necrotic wounds are more likely caused by bacterial infections. We are not in the range of the brown recluse, as it is more commonly found in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Kansas. He noted a Kansas family that had brown recluses in their house for many years with no bites. Indeed, they don't like to bite. If people want more info, he recommended a Wired article: "Don't Fear Brown Recluses."

Some of PJ favorite book resources include: *Common Spiders of North America* by Richard Bradley (\$70.00), as well as *Spiders of the North Woods* by Larry Weber (around \$20.00). He also noted a free online field guide, *Common Spiders of Ohio*, which can be downloaded as a PDF.

PJ continued with a photo survey of common local spiders, starting with the hunting spiders.

Wolf spiders (*Lycosidae*). They can vary greatly in size, but include some of our larger spiders. The largest species can measure over 2" across, including legs. They have good vision and don't make a web. Some species may make a burrow in the ground. The female carries her egg sack under her body; when the babies emerge, she carries the spiderlings on her back. They often have a pale band down the middle of their body. They are outdoor spiders and don't survive long in the house.

Fishing spiders (*Dolomedes*). Our largest spider, may be over 3" including legs. We have five or six species locally. They are mottled brown and usually found near water where they hang out along the shore. They touch the water surface with their legs; when they feel the vibrations of a nearby fish, they lunge and grab it. They can walk on the water and even glide by holding their abdomen up and letting the wind push them. One particular species, *D. tenebrosus*, will often wander away from the water and can sometimes be found quite far from a water source. Although they look big and scary, they are not aggressive and pose little risk to humans.

Recap of October Presentation (cont'd)

Sac spiders (*Cheiracanthium*). Usually pale in color, these spiders can be found indoors. Their eyes are surrounded by black and they make a webbed retreat.

Nursery web spiders (*Pisauridae*). They can be up to 1.5", with a pale body that has a dark stripe down the middle bordered by a white line. They often hold their front two legs on each side together. They use silk to create a nursery web by tying together plant parts; the spiderlings live inside the webbing.

Woodlouse hunter (*Dysderidae*). A specialized spider that is adapted to eat pillbugs and sowbugs. It has long fangs that can pierce the tough isopod exoskeletons. It can sometimes be found in homes. It has a red cephalothorax and fangs, a beige abdomen, and only 6 eyes. It's only about 3/4" long.

Jumping spiders (*Salticidae*) A very common and diverse group. The largest ones can be " long, they are often brightly colored and have good eyesight - they may even be able to see planets and constellations. The males have to dance to woo females. PJ suggested googling dancing peacock spiders. These are a very brightly colored tropical species. Jumping spiders are very agile and hard to catch; you have to have someone distract them while you try to capture them.

Eastern parson spider (*Herpyllus ecclesiasticus*). About 3/4" long, they have a white band on the abdomen and brown legs, and can sometimes be found indoors.

Bull-headed sac spiders. They like warm/dry habitats, have a dark red brown cephalothorax and a gray abdomen, and one pair of their legs is red. They are robust spiders which make an underground shelter to overwinter.

Crab spiders (*Thomisidae*). They are called this because of the way their legs curl forward. They use color to blend into flowers and are ambush predators. Can be up to 1/2".

Web-building spiders. They hang out in webs and usually have scrawny legs.

Cellar spiders (*Pholcidae*). Common indoors and out, they are found year round. They resemble daddy long legs with tiny bodies and long legs. They make tangled webs - cobwebs - in corners.

Orb-weaver spiders (*Araneidae*). These spiders make the typical oval spiral-shaped web. They have plump bodies with conspicuous coloration and patterns and long legs. They find indoor environments too dry, so are usually found outside. They reach maturity in late summer. The most easily recognizable are the garden spiders, with their yellow and black patterned abdomens, the banded and black and yellow argiopes.

Grass spiders (*Agelenopsis*). Common outdoors in summer and fall, they can reach 1" long. They are similar to wolf spiders, but have two long spinnerets on their abdomen. They make a long funnel web which is used to catch insects.

Barn funnel weaver. Common at northern latitudes worldwide. This spider makes a funnel web with a flat sheet web in front. It has a reddish brown cephalothorax with a yellow patterned abdomen.

Northern house spider. Dark and glossy with a whitish T-shape on the abdomen and a round body. It makes a tangled web.

Black widow. There are two species, the northern widow and southern widow, both of which are rare in our area. They can be 3/4" long and make a messy, tangled web. They have a black body with the red hourglass shape on the underside of the abdomen. For the Northern widow, the hourglass is two separate triangles, while for the southern widow, the triangles are connected. It is fairly common in Door County, Wisconsin.

Brown recluse. Very rare in our area, as its range is farther south. They are sometimes brought here in shipments. They can be the size of a quarter and have a brown body with a fiddle shape on the cephalothorax. PJ recommends reading the book *The Brown Recluse Spider* by Richard Vetter for more information. He notes that it is an easy, entertaining read which is informative and dispels many myths related to this spider.

PJ showed us that spiders are a very diverse, highly adapted, and beneficial group of arthropods. Once he completed his presentation, he fielded some questions and comments from the audience. His presentation garnered several thumbs-up and applause icons from the group. We hope to have him come back with a program on our local beetles - also a very large and diverse group.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89140533990?pwd=bkV6WHVqSHVHUElNeCtvei8vNklzZz09>

Meeting ID: 891 4053 3990

Passcode: 747634

2021 Elected Board Members and Annual Survey

No one responded to the call for nominations for our elected board positions for 2021. At press time, the slate of board members that you will see on the 2021 ballot will be as follows:

- president: Jerry Paulson
- vice president: Constance McCarthy
- treasurer: Janet Giesen
- secretary: Cathy Johnson
- at-large board member: Kim Lowman Vollmer
- at-large board member: Ken Kielsmeier

Write-ins are allowed when voting.

The annual survey will look a little different this year, as many of our normal activities and tasks

have been significantly modified due to covid circumstances. Nevertheless, there are still loads of ways that you can get involved in the chapter and its activities. The annual survey is one of the main ways for you to let us know how you'd like to be involved. It's also an easy way for you to give us feedback on the programs and activities that we have been offering, as well as to offer suggestions on how we can improve. The chapter functions best when it serves the needs of its members and the community.

Watch your postal mailbox for this mailing in November. We look forward to hearing from you!

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!!

192 memberships as of October 23, 2020

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

Melanie Costello, Stillman Valley
Joe Hemlock, Rockford

Welcome to our new member(s)!

Andrew Williams & Rebecca Christoffel, Madison

Anniversaries:

15 Years:

Kent & Kathy Lawrence, Oregon

In Memoriam

John Francis McNamara - Member 2018-2019

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 to the right:

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: membershipworrvc@gmail.com 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!

2020 Chapter Programs and Events

November 19 Rock River Valley Chapter: Annual Meeting and Virtual Yard Tour **Zoom**
7:00 pm

December 17 No Meeting

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



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 11/1/2020, 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 kublai Khan@mac.com

Vice president: Jerry Paulson
(815) 222.4414 paulsonjerry@aol.com

Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
catjohn_22@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912
janetgiesen@gmail.com

Board member at-large:
Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044
kimlowvol@aol.com

Board member at-large: Ken Kielsmeier
(815) 289.2812 jodikiels@gmail.com

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell
(815) 969.7435 cynthiachmell@gmail.com

Native Plant Sale: Constance McCarthy & Jerry Paulson (as above)

External plant sale event coordinators:

Constance McCarthy (as to the left) & Jane Evans (815) 399.3787
jayevans.9985@comcast.net

Tree & shrub sale coordinators: Brian Hale (815) 289.2384 moyogi2@gmail.com & Jerry Paulson (as to the left)

Booth coordinator: [open position]

Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs (815) 540.4730 membersheworrvcc@gmail.com

Facebook coordinator: Sallie Krebs (as above)

Program committee: Lisa Johnson (chair) (779) 537.8939

lejohnson3804@outlook.com
Mark Luthin (815) 543.7412

m.luthin@comcast.net
Jerry Paulson (as to the left)

Publicity coordinator: Dawn Skupien
(815) 262.7864 dawnskupien@gmail.com

Youth education & grants coordinator: Kim Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)

Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson
(815) 398.0138 vsatson47@aol.com

Mentor coordinator: [open position]

Newsletter: editorial coordinator: Constance McCarthy (as to the left)

Newsletter: production coordinator: Pambi Camacho (815) 332.7637 dkcamps@aol.com

Plant rescue/seeds coordinator: Mary Anne Mathwich (815) 721.5187 mprairedock@aol.com

Volunteer coordinator: Laura Sjoquist
(815) 298.1387 sjoquist.laura@gmail.com

Show Me/Help Me coordinator:
Linda Ricker (217) 649.3966
greencreations.leioi@gmail.com