



A VOICE FOR THE
NATURAL LANDSCAPING
MOVEMENT



Wild Ones®

NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK



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WILD ONES

NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK

FIFTH EDITION

Joy Buslaff, editor

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Natural Landscapers

This *Wild Ones New Member Handbook* replaced the *Wild Ones Handbook* (circulated 1997-1999) as the introductory publication for new members. Its intent is to describe Wild Ones' goals, services, and activities.

* * *

In 2003, the national board adopted a new name for Wild Ones and an updated mission statement: 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.

If you have questions about this handbook, want to know more about your nearest chapter or how to purchase a Wild Ones yard sign, contact:

Wild Ones

PO Box 1274

Appleton, WI 54912-1274

877-fyi-wild (877-394-9453)

www.wildones.org

info@wildones.org

or

Visit the WILD Center

2285 W Butte des Morts Beach Rd

Neenah, WI 54956



Wild Passages

BY JOY BUSLAFF, MILWAUKEE SOUTHWEST-WEHR CHAPTER

In 1974, Gail Sheehy wrote a book called *Passages* in which she described the phases through which we pass as we mature. Let's see if I can guess something about your passage to Wild Ones ...

You have pleasurable childhood memories of butterflies, toads, flowers, tree climbing and puddle jumping. As you grew up, you enjoyed fishing and camping. Maybe you read Thoreau or Aldo Leopold. Reaching adulthood, you were swept in with mainstream habits. You bought a home. You bought a lawnmower. You planted a couple shrubs and grew a few tomatoes. You watched PBS nature specials, you put out birdfeeders, you took care to sort your recyclables—but you had a lingering sense there must be more to living on planet Earth. You sensed that your property existed out of sync with your values—and then Wild Ones came along and tempted you with landscape possibilities.

If you're new to natural landscaping, this is the cliffhanger part... *What happens next?!* Well, if you follow in the footsteps of veteran Wild Ones members, the following episodes should be in your future.

SEE THE WORLD AS FOR THE FIRST TIME

You should take every opportunity to visit high-quality preserved or restored natural areas—sometimes referred to as *community models* as they model the appearance of the landscape prior to immigrant disturbance. Wild Ones chapters arrange field trips during the spring-to-fall months to local sites to point out natural features. If you don't live

near a Wild Ones chapter, take a walk with friends or a guide from a nature center. Then, observe.

See how the terrain rolls. One of the most unnatural elements about modern landscapes is how evenly they're graded. See where colors and textures emerge—in the soil, leaf litter, rocks, stems, flowers or seed-heads, trunks and branches. Look at how closely together plants grow, cheek by jowl. Then consider how you could replicate these elements on your property.

Are there places where you can exaggerate the contours of your land that would add interest and shape without compromising drainage patterns? Can you muster the courage to defy conventional landscaping practices and plant two trees only an arm's length apart? Can you import rocks, broken branches, decaying logs and leaves? These elements are not just ornamental, they are home to small organisms that will help you develop your landscape. Your neighbors, your town's recycling center, or land developers may be happy to have you cart away these natural treasures. Just ask.

To feed your eyes more natural images, attend Wild Ones' meetings where a range of experts will present slide programs. If you can't get to regular meetings, make the effort to attend a conference. For a relatively small fee, conferences offer a series of programs and sometimes tours on a variety of topics over the course of a day or more.

Another way to shop for landscaping ideas is to check out illustrated nature books from the library and compare page after page of natural scenes. You may fall in love with a

single image and experience an epiphany—one picture could literally become a template for your new landscape. But don't be disappointed if you don't come up with a master plan over night. Enjoy the process of learning and developing one idea at a time.

FIND YOUR PASSION

If you tour Wild Ones members' yards, you'll see that, even when the same species are used from one property to the next, the personality of the landscaper, their home's architecture, and site conditions make each place uniquely beautiful. These landowners made choices based on their personal preferences, financial limitations, neighbor relationships, local zoning, gardening skills, and time available for landscape development and maintenance. Following are notions to help you formulate preferences for your landscape plan.

The Purist Landscape. If you are a purist about restoring your property, you'll find design inspiration in the records available through your local courthouse, historical society and nature center. Survey maps and early settlers' accounts will describe the lay of the land and, in effect, give you a species shopping list.

The Wildlife Lovers Landscape. Attracting wildlife is often the number one priority for property owners. A little research will show you that—what a coincidence!—the plants on the purist's shopping list happen to feed the very birds, butterflies, insects, etc. you're looking to attract. Native animal and plant life co-evolved, so wildlife migration and reproduction are orchestrated to interact with the cyclical availability of nesting materials, vegetative cover, food, precipitation, and temperature changes native to this continent. If you want maximum critter attendance, you are also a candidate for some kind of water feature. It can be on any scale, but a downspout water garden is a great way to start.

The Parklike Landscape. We citizens have been culturally trained via public parks to see thick, natural vegetation as okay when it is blazed with neat paths, punctuated with benches, bordered by fences, and dotted with signage. These sorts of visual cues communicate that a landscape is planned and maintained. A parklike layout lends itself to tour groups—and an abundance of signs with plant names will draw visitors through your paths with rewards of education.

The Messy Landscape. If you want to go really wild from property line to property line, that's cool. Nature is synonymous with messy. The Grand Tetons are messy, the Redwood forests and Midwest prairies are messy, and so is Niagara Falls. We don't want to turn all of wilderness into rectangles. However, if you're at all concerned about neighborhood acceptance, look to incorporate parklike features or a mowed border to avoid friction. Attorney Bret Rappaport, a past president of Wild Ones, put it well when he wrote, "Don't be an arrogant natural landscaper. Don't be a self-righteous natural landscaper. Remember that you are a pioneer who is trying to win converts, not a martyr willing to go down in a flood of litigation and neighborhood disgust."

Visit with your neighbors before getting started. Let them know your plans, show them pictures of completed natural landscapes from books or nursery catalogs, and loan them this handbook so they can become familiar with the natural landscape movement.

The Period Landscape. For my own yard, I imagined our home as part of a pioneer settlement of the mid-1800s, with a tidy kitchen garden (containing a few exotic flowers) snuggled against the south side of the house and the wilderness sweeping away and beyond in the form of prairie. With that image in mind, every design question I faced seemed to answer itself. I particularly enjoy the contrast of the veggio



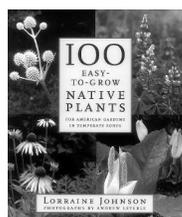
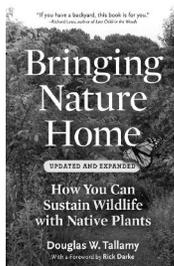
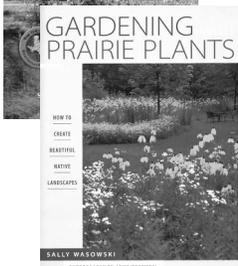
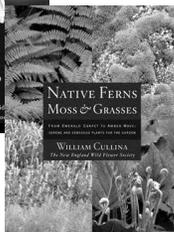
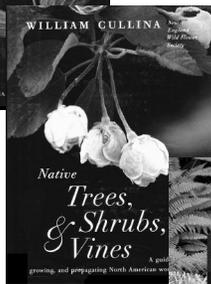
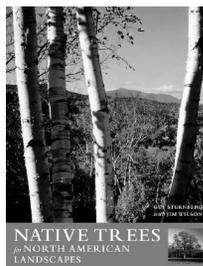
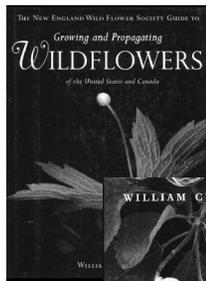
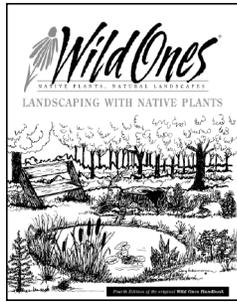
If you discover that your landscape plan is in conflict with a local weed ordinance and wish to suggest an amendment to it, visit Wild Ones' website (www.wildones.org) for sample ordinances and additional legal references which are too lengthy to present here. If you do not have internet access, seek computer time at your local library or contact our national office for assistance.

Line drawings by Lucy Schumann, Milwaukee North Chapter.

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Wild Ones' earliest hand-book has been revised and reprinted under the title **Landscaping with Native Plants.**

Shop for this how-to guide from the *Wild Ones Bookstore* at www.wildones.org where you can access many more useful and beautiful publications via our *Amazon.com* associate link.



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garden's geometric shapes playing against the chaos of the native plantings.

Another *Wild Ones* member, on a street with grand homes, designed a traditional English-style garden in tandem with her next-door neighbor, using native plants for her portion of it. The nectaring butterflies didn't seem to mind that the flowers were arranged in border patterns.

If you've always loved the charm of farm country hedgerows, then grow one. Our native Hawthorns are perfect for the job. Do your fantasies run to meadows scattered with small fruit trees? Then grow your favorite fruits amongst native flowers and grasses (if your climate allows). You get the idea—you can pursue virtually any era or style of landscaping and incorporate native plants into your design.

TIME TO HIT THE BOOKS

At this stage of your development, you're getting concerned about recognizing and naming plants. You need identification guides. Different nature guides have different strengths. Some have wonderful photography, but lack the political correctness to differentiate alien from native species. It's best to have a couple books by which to cross-reference. Some of the best reference books are out of print, and you may be able to find them only at the public library. Used-book sellers can also help locate old gems.

If you shop for books at a well-stocked nature center, you have the advantage of many titles from which to choose, expert advice from the nature center staff, and exposure to locally produced booklets describing plant communities, season of bloom, and seed harvest time in your area.

There are now so many good natural landscaping books (hallelujah!), we can't list them all here. Some national authors who have produced valuable publications and who have been especially supportive of *Wild Ones* include Sara Stein, Andy and Sally Wasowski, Lorraine Johnson,

Janet Marinelli and the staff of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, William Cullina, Doug Tallamy, Ken Druse, Carole Ottesen, and the team of Guy Sternberg and Jim Wilson. (My apologies to those authors I've failed to mention.)

Shop for children's books; many volumes are perfect for adults, too. Collect native plant nursery catalogs; they contain helpful illustrations and descriptions. Search the Web using keywords "native plants" and "natural landscaping," and visit www.wildones.org for valuable links.

WILD ONES' ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAM

Don't be surprised if you're still feeling insecure about progressing with your own landscape. If you want to move farther along the learning curve—volunteer. The more time you spend with *Wild Ones* members or other sorts of naturalists, the more you will absorb. Even volunteering to be a greeter at the door of chapter meetings or offering to wash the coffee mugs afterward will get you on the inside track. You will learn people's names, how close they live to you, and whether they have a surplus of a particular species you're welcome to have. You'll learn who's experienced at water gardening, propagating shrubs, or diagnosing tree diseases, so you'll know who to turn to when questions arise. In addition, the more evenly tasks are distributed amongst members, the less burden is placed on any individual. You don't want just one or two chapter officers doing all the work or they'll fatigue, and then the whole chapter may suffer as a result. If your chapter needs someone to coordinate a plant rescue or maintain a group e-mail list, raise your hand. If you have a professional skill you can lend, please make the offer. This is how articles and photos make their way into newsletters, promotional products are developed, and much clerical work gets done.

To learn practical skills, volunteer for a work day at a nature center

planting flowers, pulling weeds, or assisting a guide who has a handful of children to lead on a tour. A small investment of your time will yield big returns in your education.

IT'S TIME TO MAKE THE TOUGH DECISIONS

Okay, you're starting to look at your world differently, and your vocabulary is becoming more precise. You now use the words **native** (meaning the species grew here before settlement) and **non-native**, **alien** or **exotic** (species introduced from far away). You generally refrain from saying **wildflower** (which might infer any naturalized flower regardless of its origin). You use the word **invasives** (aggressive species that can dominate a landscape) instead of **weeds** (which mean different things to different people). Your next assignment is to sort the plants currently growing on your property according to these categories.

If you can't I.D. all the plants yourself, ask your Wild Ones chapter to schedule you for a "Show Me/Help Me" day (chapter support services) or hire a natural landscaping professional to do an inventory. Your plants will fall into the following five categories:

1. *Native plants worth keeping.*
2. *Alien plants worth keeping—
That might be shade trees, a patch of asparagus, or cultivated plants of which you're very fond.*
3. *Cultivated plants you may give away as your new landscape plan develops.*
4. *Invasive alien and native plants to be eliminated (yes, natives can be aggressive, too).*
5. *And lastly, the don't-worry-about-them species.*

As an example of the don't-worry-about-them, consider my prairie garden's beginnings: The first year it looked like a Dandelion farm, the second year it was rife with Hoary Alyssum. After the third year, both had disappeared, but pockets of English Plantain persisted and then finally waned. Over the course of these

early years, the native seedlings grew to shade out the d-w-a-t-s.

These are the sorts of landscaping fine points that make local advisors necessary. Sorting plants into the five categories mentioned above is going to be different from one property to the next. No national source will have all the answers for everybody, but regionalized groups can be the clearinghouse for region-specific information. That's why Wild Ones helps develop and support chapters across the country.

BABY STEPS OR LEAPS OF FAITH

You may want to start your landscaping adventure by tending a small garden in a location where you can view it often. Mastering a 5x10-foot plot would be a good first goal. In subsequent years, you can expand and add more beds by dividing plants or growing some from seed collected from your first year's planting. Working in stages gives you and your neighbors time to adjust to the changing scenery.

Plenty of us dream big, right from the start. We know we want to plant the whole of our yard with every species native to our region, even when we're clueless as to how to begin. If I could travel back in time and counsel the eager-but-ignorant me of 1995, I would give me the following advice ... "Smother virtually all of the lawn with whatever materials are available. Then, give away that noisy, stinky lawnmower and, instead of mowing every weekend, go for nature walks, attend Wild Ones presentations, and read native plant books. After a year, apply what you've learned about species selection and planting practices."

YOU WILL BE TRANSFORMED ALONG WITH YOUR YARD

In the early going, others will say you're crazy when they see you've buried parts of your yard under cardboard, carpeting, an old pool liner or three feet of shredded leaves. Be patient with them. They don't yet



"Public perception and market demand may change rapidly once the problem of sustainable living is better understood and practical solutions are illustrated. ... Once we understand the realities of place, that true freedom is possible only within these limits, there are infinite opportunities for design expression. Since every place is unique, every design will require new creativity, innovation and technology."

—From a paper presented by James M. Patchett and Gerould W. Wilhelm at the 1995 Green Building Conference and Exposition

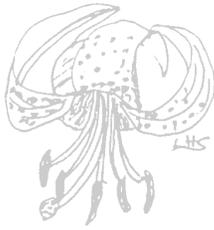
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*"I have a garden of my own
But so with roses overgrown
And lilies, that you would it guess
To be a little wilderness."*

—Andrew Marvell,
1621-1678

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understand that smothering materials create a garden bed with little effort, expense or damage to the environment. Keep the faith; you are not alone. Every day more citizens are catching on to the virtues of new stewardship techniques—and the beauty and hardiness of native plants.

In time, those who questioned your sanity will come to regard you as the neighborhood naturalist. You'll be giving yard tours to scheduled groups and the casual passerby. You will be able to recognize virtually every plant you see, even if the name doesn't come trippingly to your tongue. You will anticipate annual natural events—when wild roses bloom, when hummingbirds migrate.

Your land, at one time impersonal, will demonstrate an identity and fate of its own, much like a child. Life forms, some of which you may never have laid eyes on before, will show you their indigo blue petals, iridescent wings, or amphibian balloon throats. The plants you planted will have offspring—the precise objective of natural, sustainable landscaping.

At that point, it will be your turn to be the teacher, to coach and encourage the next wave of neophytes. One day there will be surplus flowers in your yard, and you will turn a plant over to eager hands, recalling the moment when someone made the same gesture for you. Just look how much you will have grown! 🌱

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR NATIONAL OFFICERS AND WILD ONES HEADQUARTERS

Developed with the assistance of many members, this site provides access to an ever-growing wealth of information. If you do not have access to the internet, seek computer time at a public library to see all our site has to offer.

Log on to access ...

- **General information about natural landscaping**
- **Plant rescue and seed propagation info**
- **Forums for questions and answers**
- **Handouts and downloads**
- **Municipal weed law and zoning info** and sample ordinances
- **Color photos of landscapes**
- **Wild Ones Journals archives**
- **Native plant nursery resources**
- **Logo apparel, books and misc. merchandise**
- **Member certification programs**
- **Forms**—Membership application, gift application, and change-of-address
- **Reports** and application information for the Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program

- **Meeting and special events schedules**
- **Contact information** for local chapters and national officers
- **Chapter web pages**—Include chapter contact information, copies of newsletters and details about chapter events and activities. May also provide information on suppliers of local native plants.
- **Members-only web pages**
- **Links** to native plant societies and numerous landscape- and wildlife-related websites
- **History of Wild Ones**
- **WILD Center** directions and progress.

The web is outstanding for its ability to deliver color photos to thousands of visitors. It also saves countless human hours (and quite a bit of paper) by supplying contact information, forms, and links to related resources. However, you do not have to have a computer to access Wild Ones' educational materials. *Wild Ones Journal* is your egalitarian resource. Watch your mailbox for new articles to inspire you and educate you about natural landscaping. 🌱

Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization. Wild Ones Natural Landscapers was incorporated in 1990 in the State of Wisconsin, under the Wisconsin Non-Stock Corporation Act for educational and scientific purposes. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is publicly supported as defined in Sections 170(b)(1)(iv) and 509(a). Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. Wild Ones does not sell or disclose any of its member contact information to any other entity.

GARDENING FOR LIFE

BY DOUG TALLAMY



Chances are, you have never thought of your garden—indeed, of all of the space on your land—as a wildlife preserve that represents the last chance we have for sustaining plants and animals that were once common throughout the U.S.. That is exactly the role our suburban landscapes are now playing, and will play even more critically in the near future. If this is news to you, it's not your fault.

We were taught from childhood that gardens are for beauty; they are a chance to express our artistic talents, to have fun with, and relax in. And, whether we like it or not, the way we landscape our properties is taken by our neighbors as a statement of our wealth and social status.

No one has taught us that we have forced the plants and animals that evolved in North America (our nation's biodiversity) to depend more and more on human-dominated landscapes for their continued existence. We have always thought that biodiversity was happy somewhere out there—"in nature"—in our local woodlot, or perhaps our national parks, or best of all "in the rain forest." We have heard nothing about the rate at which species are disappearing from our neighborhoods, towns, counties, and states.

We have never been taught how vital biodiversity is for our own well-being.

WE HAVE TAKEN IT ALL

The population of the U.S., now nearing 306 million people, has doubled since most of us were kids, and continues to grow by 8,046 people per day. This, coupled with our love affair with the car, and our quest to own ever-larger homes, has fueled urbanized development that continues to sprawl over two million additional acres per year (the size of Yellowstone National Park). We have

connected all of our developments with 4 million miles of roads, and their combined paved surface could occupy roughly the area of Pennsylvania.

Somewhere along the way we decided to convert most of our leisure and decorative places, both at work and at home, into huge expanses of lawn. So far we have planted some 40 million acres in lawn. Each weekend we mow to a one-inch height an area the size of Missouri or Oklahoma and congratulate ourselves on a job well done.

To make things worse, the little woodlots and "open spaces" that we have not paved over or manicured are far from pristine. Nearly all are second-growth that has been thoroughly invaded by alien plants like autumn olive, multiflora rose, Oriental bittersweet, and Japanese honeysuckle. So far, over 3,400 species of alien plants have invaded nearly 200 million acres of the U.S..

To nature lovers these are horrifying statistics. I stress them so that we can clearly understand the challenge before us. We have turned 54 percent of the lower 48 states into cities and suburbs, and 41 percent more into various forms of agriculture. That's right: We humans have taken 95 percent of nature and made it unnatural. Most of the 5 percent we have left pristine is either too high or too dry to support much of anything.

So what does it matter? Are there consequences to turning so much land into the parklike settings humans enjoy? Absolutely. Both for biodiversity and for us. Our fellow creatures need food and shelter to survive and reproduce, and in too many places we have eliminated both. State natural heritage folks estimate that as many as 33,000 species of plants and animals in this country are "imperiled." Many of

those that haven't suffered local extinction are now too rare to perform their ecosystem role effectively. These can be considered functionally extinct.

The songbirds that brighten spring mornings have been in decline since the 1960s, having lost 40 percent of their numbers. Birds that breed in meadows are in even more trouble. Once-common species such as the northern bobwhite, eastern meadowlark, field sparrow, and grasshopper sparrow have declined 82, 72, 68, and 65 percent, in total numbers, and are completely absent from many areas that used to support healthy populations. Evening grosbeaks have declined 90 percent in 15 years because we are leveling their boreal forest breeding grounds to make junk mail. For most of us, hearing such numbers triggers a passing sadness, but few people feel personally threatened by the loss of biodiversity.

WHY WE NEED BIODIVERSITY

Here is why every one of us should feel threatened. Here is why it matters. Losses to biodiversity are a clear sign that our own life-support systems are failing. The ecosystems that support us—that determine the carrying capacity of our Earth and our local spaces—are run by biodiversity. It is biodiversity that generates oxygen and clean water, creates topsoil out of rock, buffers extreme weather events like droughts and floods, pollinates our crops, and recycles the mountains of garbage we create every day. Now, with human-induced climate change threatening the planet, it is biodiversity that could suck that carbon out of the air and sequester it in living plants if given half a chance. It is plants that turn sunlight into all of the food that supports life on Earth, yet we continue to reduce complex forests into lawns the world over.

Humans cannot live as the only species on this planet because it is other species that create the ecosystem services essential to our survival. Every time we force a species to extinction we promote our own demise. Biodiversity is not optional.

PARKS ARE NOT ENOUGH

I am often asked why the habitats we have preserved within our park system are not enough to save most species from extinction. Research has shown that the area required to sustain biodiversity is pretty much the same as the area required to generate it in the first place. Put another way: Species are lost in the same proportion with which a habitat is reduced in size. The consequence of this simple relationship is profound. Since we have taken 95 percent of the U.S. from nature, we can expect to lose 95 percent of the species that once lived here, along with the services they have provided us.

The good news is that extinction takes a while, so if we start sharing our landscapes with other living things, we should be able to save much of the biodiversity that still exists.

START LOCALLY: REDESIGNING SUBURBIA

Scientific facts, deduced from thousands of studies about how energy moves through food webs, outline for us what it will take to give our local animals what they need to survive and reproduce on our properties: native plants, and lots of them.

Here is the general reasoning:

- Plants are the source of all energy that supports life. In other words, all animals get their energy directly from plants, or by eating something that has already eaten a plant.
- Some animals don't eat plants directly. They must rely on other animals, which do eat plants, to transmit the energy.
- The group of animals most responsible for passing energy from plants to the animals that don't eat plants directly, is insects. This is what makes insects such vital components of healthy ecosystems. So many animals depend on insects for food (e.g., spiders, reptiles, amphibians, rodents, bats, and 96 per-

cent of all terrestrial birds), that removing insects from an ecosystem spells its doom. If you think back on our suburban landscaping history, getting rid of insects is exactly what we have tried to do. For over a century we have favored ornamental landscape plants from China and Europe over those that evolved right here. Among the reasons for favoring the imported plants has been the observation that they "are not subject to insect infestation."

Research now tells us that not all plants are created equal. Every plant species protects its leaves with a species-specific mixture of chemicals. With few exceptions, only insect species that have shared a long evolutionary history with a particular plant lineage have developed the physiological adaptations required to digest the chemicals in their host's leaves. Insects have specialized over time to eat only the plants carrying particular chemicals. When we present insects from Pennsylvania with plants that evolved on another continent, chances are those insects will be unable to digest them.

We used to think this was good. Avoid insect infestation by planting suggested species, and/or spray and kill all insects that do show up on our plants.

Now we know that an insect that cannot, for whatever reason, eat part of a leaf, cannot fulfill its role in the food web.

We have planted Kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*), a species from China that supports no insect herbivores, instead of our native flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) that supports 117 species of moths and butterflies alone. On hundreds of thousands of acres we have planted goldenrain-tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) from China, a tree that supports one caterpillar species, instead of a variety of our beautiful oaks, and we have lost the chance to grow 534 species of caterpillars, all of them nutritious bird food. My own research has shown native ornamentals support 29 times more biodiversity than do alien ornamentals. Further, it's unnerving to learn that 82 percent of the woody invasives in our country are escapees of the horticultural industry.

YOUR GARDEN HAS A FUNCTION

In the past we have not designed gardens that play a critical ecological role in the landscape, but we must do so in the future. The importance of our doing this cannot be overstated. We need to quickly replace unnecessary lawn with densely planted woodlots in the East and West, and natural prairies in the Midwest; whatever can serve as habitat for our local biodiversity.

Homeowners can do this by planting the borders of their properties with plants native to their region: In the East, native trees such as white oaks (*Quercus alba*), black willows (*Salix nigra*), red maples (*Acer rubrum*), green ashes (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), black walnuts (*Juglans nigra*), river birches (*Betula nigra*) and shagbark hickories (*Carya ovata*), underplanted with woodies like serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*), arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*), hazelnut (*Corylus americana*), and blueberries (*Vaccinium spp*). Our studies have shown that even modest increases in the native plant cover on suburban properties significantly increases the number and species of breeding birds, including birds of conservation concern.

We have also recently demonstrated that homeowners needn't worry that native insects will defoliate their gardens. A diversity of native plants will support a diversity of native insects that, in turn, support a healthy community of natural enemies that keeps them in check. One bluebird pair brings up to 300 caterpillars back to their nest every day. You will be hard-pressed to find any caterpillars in your yard if you create habitat for breeding birds. In a recent study, homeowners who planted natives exclusively found that only 3 percent of the leaves on their properties were damaged by insects.

As gardeners and stewards of our land, we have never been so empowered to help save biodiversity from extinction, and the need to do so has never been so great. All we need to do is plant native plants. 🌱

WHERE IS NATURAL LANDSCAPING APPROPRIATE, AND

WHY?

AROUND OUR HOMES

Never has the expression “think globally, act locally” been more fitting. If you care about the environment, want to learn about nature, hanker to express your creativity, and are wise enough to invest in a landscape that becomes more self-sufficient over the years (as you, let’s be honest, become less vigorous), then your home is the perfect place for a natural landscape.

AROUND SCHOOLS

The “classroom without walls” is as requisite to education as is the presence of a library. See “Seeds for Education” article on page 18 for a description of the outdoor classroom’s value.

AROUND BUSINESSES

In the 1990s, turf maintenance has been estimated to cost between \$500 and \$1,200 per acre per year. Business is about profit, and reducing maintenance expenses improves the bottom line. A well-designed and developed landscape also elevates corporate image. Planting species native to a community is a way of reflecting local interest and civic-mindedness. A company could even use a native plant landscape as a publicity stunt—and why not? If a business is smart enough to choose natural landscaping, it must also be smart about its products or services.

AROUND HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Author and naturalist Mel Ellis wrote, “I would not argue an Eden lost except I live in Eden. Heaven? After this Earth, who needs a bonus?” For some it’s easy to see nature as God’s work, the rest of the congregation might require some conversion. Wild Ones members have introduced native plant gardens on all scales to their religious communities. One, in particular, was begun as a meditative garden and memorial to a member of the congregation. At first, there was opposition, but resistance ultimately fell away in the face of sheer botanical beauty.

AROUND MEDICAL CENTERS

If a meditative garden is valuable at a house of worship, wouldn’t it make sense on hospital grounds? A natural, fragrant garden presents a welcome contrast to super-sanitized medical facilities. Additionally, medicine owes its roots (pun intended) to plants, and such a garden could entertain and educate patients, visitors, and staff with signs imparting such information as: “Botanists travel the world in search of chemical compounds from plants—‘phytochemicals.’ Many of today’s medicines were discovered through botanical research, and at least 10 to 25 percent of pharmaceuticals now in use are still derived from plants.”

AROUND SENIOR HOUSING

In that passage when one has time to observe and reflect on life, let us be immersed in life. That’s what a natural landscape is—the whole chain of life acting out every day. Plants can spark memories and ignite conversation. Feeding the birds gives us a sense of purpose, watching squirrels gives us a sense of humor. A special landscape gives us a *sense of place*—which seems ever more important when one has left behind their familiar home.



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*“We go to sanctuaries to remember
the things we hold most dear,
the things we cherish and love.
And then—the great challenge—
we return home seeking to
enact this wisdom as best we can
in our daily lives.”*

— William Cronon



*"We are responsible not only to those people who neighbor us physically, but also to those who neighbor us in time."
—Joy Buslaff*



AROUND GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Wherever your hometown lies, it is the bedrock, soil and vegetation that make it Oak Ridge, Elm Grove, Cedarburg, Sun Prairie, Savannah, Palm Beach, Rice Lake or Marshfield. Government, ever mindful of our history and our future, should certainly keep its grounds patriotic, and that's what this Presidential memorandum of 1994 instructs:

The Report of the National Performance Review contains recommendations for a series of environmental actions, including one to increase environmentally and economically beneficial landscaping practices at Federal facilities and federally funded projects. Environmentally beneficial landscaping entails utilizing techniques that complement and enhance the local environment and seek to minimize the adverse effects that the landscaping will have on it. In particular, this means using regionally native plants and employing landscaping practices and technologies that conserve water and prevent pollution.

These landscaping practices should benefit the environment, as well as generate long-term cost savings for the Federal Government. For example, the use of native plants not only protects our natural heritage and provides wildlife habitat, but also can reduce fertilizer, pesticide, and irrigation demands and their associated costs because native plants are suited to the local environment and climate.

AROUND HISTORICAL SITES

One would surely laugh at Civil War battlefield reenactments if the participants wore sweatshirts, khakis and Reeboks. Likewise, Native American campsites and effigy mounds, pilgrim harbors, pioneer settlements and cemeteries are historically authentic only when their landscapes accurately reflect the era they represent.

AROUND FARMS

Authors Mrill Ingram, Gary Nabhan and Stephen Buchmann explain this subject best. For more information, consult the book *The Forgotten Pollinators*.

Pollination—the transfer of pollen from one flower to another—is critical to fruit and seed production, and is often provided by insects and other animals on the hunt for nectar, pollen or other floral rewards. In fact, animals provide pollination services for over three-quarters of the staple crop plants that feed human kind and for 90 percent of all flowering plants in the world. ... According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), we are facing an “impending pollination crisis,” in which both wild and managed pollinators are disappearing at alarming rates owing to habitat loss, pesticide poisoning, diseases and pests. ... Insect pollination is a necessary step in the production of most fruits and vegetables that we eat and in regeneration of many forage crops used by livestock. Recent surveys document that more than 30 genera of animals—consisting of hundreds of species of floral visitors—are required to pollinate the 100 or so crops that feed the world. Only 15 percent of these crops are serviced by domestic honey bees, while at least 80 percent are pollinated by wild bees and other wildlife.... We must recognize that pollination is not a free service, and that investment and stewardship are required to protect and sustain it.

IN FLOOD ZONES AND EROSION-PRONE SITES

Vegetation existed all over North America prior to settlement—hardly a site was so soggy, so arid, so hot, so cold or so windy as to be void of plants. These plant communities can again help stabilize steep hillsides and mitigate flood waters. Note the term *plant communities*. It is the network of root fibers and leaf structures that, together, make a living machine. Consider this passage from the book *Natural Landscaping for Public Officials* prepared by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission:

Native vegetation in naturalized drainage ways enhances the infiltration of contaminated stormwater. The dense, deep root systems augment the permeability of the soil and help the uptake of certain stormwater pollutants. Native vegetation buffers are particularly effective along the edges of streams, lakes, and wetlands. They can intercept runoff and subsurface water pollutants from urban and agricultural land uses and construction sites.

IN CITIES

A researcher with the Global Hydrology and Climate Center at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, Dr. Jeff Luvall, explains cities' plight in this way:

The artificial materials [asphalt, concrete, shingles] store much of the sun's energy and remain hot long after sunset. This produces a dome of elevated temperatures over a city... The more a city grows—replacing trees and grass with buildings and roads—the warmer it becomes, increasing peak electricity demands. To meet those demands, power plants must utilize fossil fuels to a greater extent, which ultimately has a negative impact on air quality.

One cure for these “heat islands” is the reintroduction of vegetation. The most cost-effective vegetation is naturalized plant communities which can renew themselves so workers do not have to continually replant city landscapes.

NEXT TO ROADWAYS

Native vegetation establishes regional identity—an increasingly desirable characteristic in a world of fast-food franchises, look-alike housing, and lawns from coast to coast. One of the pleasures of travel should be to enjoy the scenery—thus, regional landscaping. In addition to viewer value, natural landscapes save highway dollars. Following are comments from Bob Bryant, editor of *Public Roads*, and Bonnie Harper-Lore, roadside vegetation coordinator for the Federal Highway Administration:

... states have discovered many benefits in roadside wildflowers, including a major reduction in maintenance costs as a result of less mowing. Texas, for example, has documented a reduction of roadside maintenance costs of about 25 percent—about \$8 million per year. Other benefits include: increased wildlife habitat and biodiversity; improved erosion control; enhanced aesthetics; increased planting success with hardy native plants; strengthened partnerships with natural resource agencies and volunteer groups; suppressed noxious weed invasions, which are costly; and a demonstrated commitment to the environment.

(Note: Naturally landscaped roadways are still periodically mowed about 10 feet from roadside for the sake of driver visibility.)

IN PUBLIC PARKS

The public park might be the last vestige for native plants in many communities. Without them, it could be possible for an American to live their entire American life without seeing an American plant community.

... AND ANYWHERE ELSE

No matter where we landscape, there is one, big common “why” for all sites—*biodiversity*. Let's think metaphorically for a moment...

Driving to visit relatives living half a continent away, your family would rely on highways, service stations, restaurants and inns to survive the trip. You might not make it if the pavement were available in only limited areas, if service stations pumped only diesel fuel, if the restaurants served only cabbage and hot sauce, or the inns had room for only three people per night. The same holds true for other life forms. Without a safe corridor of passage, a source of food (with the correct fueling ingredients), and a place to bed down, an individual animal or insect will not survive, let alone go on to raise another generation.

The natural landscape is needed everywhere—and in quantity. Those plants and animals who dwell exclusively in forest interiors, for instance, become locally extinct when the overall size of a woodland is reduced, thereby leaving habitat only for woodland-edge species. It isn't habitat fragmentation alone that undermines the survival of a diversity of life, it's sheer, overall mass.

“We may help achieve the goal of sustainable landscapes—and public demand for them—by demonstrating that they can possess a new level of beauty derived from the richness of their lines, forms, colors, and textures, from their regional associations, and from their very productivity and sustainability.”

*—Darrel Morrison, FASLA
Landscape Architect*



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*“I got up this morning and couldn't decide whether to save the world or savor it.”—
E.B. Whyte, author of Charlotte's Web*



TOP TEN REASONS TO BUY SEEDS AND PLANTS

1. Saves you labor.
2. Prevents depletion of wild resources.
3. Speeds the start-up of your landscaping.
4. Delivers all materials when you're ready to plant.
5. Permits access to species not available by other means.
6. Provides planting instructions (Mother Nature does not).
7. Makes available expertly blended seed mixtures or plant groupings for specific sites.
8. Gives you properly treated and stored seeds for optimal germination.
9. Encourages commerce in natural landscaping—a green industry we want to encourage so more consumers will have access to native plants.
10. It supports the businesses that support Wild Ones.

"If suburbia were landscaped with meadows, prairies, thickets or forest, or with combinations of these, then the water would sparkle, fish would be good to eat again, birds would sing and human spirits would soar."—Lorrie Otto

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT DOES A NATURAL LANDSCAPE COST?

If you took advantage of Wild Ones plant rescues, seed gatherings and exchanges, you could conceivably landscape at no expense. Most natural landscapers, however, choose to buy seed and plants from native plant nurseries. A prairie seed mix made to cover 1,000 square feet might cost \$50 to \$100. Potted perennials may run about \$5 when purchased individually. Bareroot shrubs and trees can cost as little as \$1 or \$2 apiece, especially when purchased in bulk as some chapters do. Larger shrubs and trees cost as much as the cultivars you see at conventional garden centers.

To create a new landscape requires some investment of money and effort, but once established, a native landscape requires no fertilizer, no irrigation, and overall maintenance time is reduced.

HOW DO I FIND A NATIVE PLANT NURSERY?

One can find native plant nurseries listed in some Yellow Pages directories. But that won't be true for all areas, so here are some other suggestions. Some native plant nurseries can be found advertising in *Wild Ones Journal* and on Wild Ones' website. If you're a member of a chapter, your fellow members can clue you in to the best suppliers in your area. Not only are nature centers a referral source, they may sell native plants and seeds, too. Many states have native plants societies (visit the Wild Ones website for links) that can provide leads. Your state Department of Natural Resources is another logical starting point.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO CHANGE MY YARD INTO A NATURAL LANDSCAPE?

To be accurate, a true restoration probably cannot be viewed within a landscaper's lifetime because it can take centuries to amass the kind of density and diversity exhibited in preserved natural areas (all the more reason to preserve them). But take heart—a prairie garden started from seed will look pretty in three years. Bareroot shrubs, no larger than a soda straw, can leap to shrub size in two or three years. Wetland plants are very speedy growers. Time will pass anyway, so go ahead and plant an acorn.



HOW MUCH MAINTENANCE WILL I HAVE TO DO?

You may need to water young plants or, during drought, a few favored plants, but ultimately your landscape should be able to be weaned of supplemental watering.

The amount of weeding you will have to do depends on the concentration of invasive species in your neighborhood. You will probably always have to be mindful of certain aggressive invaders.

If your landscape would benefit from a prescribed burn and it is permitted in your locale, you can incorporate this into your management plan, although it isn't absolutely necessary.

Your maintenance will depend greatly on where you live and which plants you're growing. In any case, the effort should be less than that for a lawn or other conventional landscapes.

UNFOUNDED CONCERNS

ALLERGIES

The flowers and grasses planted by Wild Ones are rarely sources for allergens. In fact, the *non-native* grasses are particularly bothersome to allergy sufferers: Timothy, Bermuda Grass, Redtop, Orchard Grass, Sweet Vernal Grass, and some Blue-grasses, including Kentucky Bluegrass. Some trees are significant contributors of pollen, especially the Birches, Hickories, Ashes, Walnuts, and Oaks. But most property owners find these trees too valuable to destroy. Goldenrods have had a bad rap for years, but it's Ragweed (which flowers at the same time of year) which provokes hayfever. Although native to America, Ragweeds are not among the species desired in natural landscapes.

A GENERAL RULE OF THUMB: *Showy* flowers attract pollinators to ferry their heavy male pollen to female pistils. *Inconspicuous* flowers cast their powder-like pollen to the wind—and to one's sinuses.

MOSQUITOES

Mosquitoes breed in standing water. In a diverse natural landscape, the soil is more porous, having been assailed by a variety of root-types and soil-residing organisms. Thus, water is absorbed more quickly than it is in lawns or compacted soils. Mosquitoes will linger in vegetation of any kind, but a natural landscape will harbor more of the mosquitoes' predators who will help reduce mosquito numbers.

RODENTS

Rodents, being a menu item on so many predators' plates, scurry for cover within grassy, woody or earthy sanctuaries. So, you will find them hiding in natural landscapes. However, by controlling rodent food supplies, you can manage which critters share your property. If you keep garbage and pet food contained (and your neighbors do the same), the despised Norway Rat will not make a home in your garden.

FIRE

Fire is a natural process. Natural landscapers recreate its effects with controlled burns (aka prescribed burns) in order to reduce thatch or leaf litter build-up, to fight invading species, return select chemicals to the soil, and to encourage propagation of some species.

To become familiar with the experience, you would do well to volunteer to assist with a burn at a nature center or Wild Ones members' land where you'll learn about wind conditions, firebreaks, and extinguishing tools. Wear natural fiber clothing; nylon has a low melting point.

Before conducting a burn, you should check with local fire officials about permits or other regulations. Sometimes a fire department will monitor a prescribed burn, either as a training exercise or just to evaluate whether future burns will require monitoring.

Once you invite your neighbors over for a burn party on your property, they'll get a feel for the heat intensity of a grass fire, which is relatively low and brief as compared to fires from other fuel sources. To make the fire look tamer, cut down the vegetation prior to the burn. This will keep the flames lower to the ground.

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REASONABLE CONCERNS

SNAKES can show up almost anywhere, even in the typical mowed landscape. You can even find them warming themselves on pavement. If your area contains poisonous snakes, make your paths wide and keep them well groomed so you can see far enough ahead to avoid confrontations.

The best safeguard for an activity area, such as a patio, is a fence at least three feet in height. (Snakes can support about three-quarters of their body up against a vertical surface.) The fence needs to be smooth, such as that made with vertically placed boards coated with a glossy paint. Staple fine wire mesh to the bottom of your fence and bury it a foot or more underground to create a seamless barrier.

To put risk in proper perspective, Consumer Product Safety Commission statistics indicate you should be more concerned about lawnmower injuries (20,000 annually). Amongst animal-induced injuries the most common are dog and cat bites and deer/ car collisions.

FIRES do cause some air pollution, but much of the visible smoke is actually steam released by the vegetation. Controlled burns should be done when the air is neither stagnant nor too gusty. A burn emits fewer volatile organic compounds than a gas-powered mower making weekly cuts on the same size property. Where possible, burn only one-quarter of your planting each year to maintain habitat for over-wintering pollinators.



HOW TO COLLECT AND HANDLE SEED

Your chapter may be able to get permission for members to collect seeds from a nature center or other public or private grounds. Depending on species and climate, seeds can become ripe anytime from spring forward, but most collections are organized for the fall and, unlike plant rescues, are scheduled in advance.

The first time you collect seeds, you will want to stay close to your chapter leaders who will tell you the names of the species and something about their growing requirements. Take along several envelopes and a marker to label them. (You may want to start a new habit of saving junk mail envelopes throughout the year just for this purpose.) Seed collection is a wonderfully tactile and perfumey experience.

When you get your seeds home, you can plant them right away (some species germinate best this way) or store them until you're ready to plant. Depending on your climate and the species in question, the seed may require special handling. Reference books and local experts should be your guides. Here are a few tips from members Pat Brust, Lucy Schumann and Carol Chew that will make you familiar with some seed-handling concepts:

DRY STRATIFICATION

Store in a cool, dry place in a clean, dry airtight container. A garage or unheated attic serves well.

MOIST AND COLD-MOIST STRATIFICATION

Four to eight weeks before germination is desired (either inside or outside), moist stratification increases germination success for many species. Other species require cold-moist stratification. Place seeds with equal amounts of clean, moist (sandcastle consistency) sand into clean plastic bags. Close and label with species' name and date. Then place in the refrigerator (not freezer) to mimic nature's cycle of freeze-thaw of the soil surface which breaks down chemical inhibitors of germination.

SCARIFICATION

Legumes and puccoons require additional techniques to break their hard coats. One is scarification, which involves making a small cut in the hard seed coat

enabling the seed to absorb water. As it does, the embryo expands, which ruptures the protective coat causing the seed to sprout. Scarify by rubbing seeds against a wire screen or sandpaper. Moist stratification should follow scarification, but for a shorter time, usually 10 to 14 days.

INOCULATION

Inoculation is necessary for certain legumes. After scarification and stratification, seeds of this group will germinate but need nitrogen-producing soil bacteria for successful growth. Your soil may contain these bacteria, but to be sure, purchase inoculum (from seed suppliers) specific to the particular species.

COLD-WEATHER SOWING

Native seed can be sown outdoors during winter months and even into very early spring. The combination of cold weather with ice and snow provides natural stratification conditions needed for germination which occurs during warmer spring weather. Protective seed mechanisms, such as thick coverings or germination-inhibiting chemicals, ensure that young plants won't sprout during fall rains and freeze in winter. Cold weather and repeated exposure to moisture softens seed coats and dissolves inhibiting chemicals when conditions are optimum.

To do winter planting, find an area in your yard that has bare, humus-rich soil and is free of snow. (If you have special types of seeds you'd have trouble replacing, reserve a portion to winter over in the refrigerator and plant later in flats or use for reseeding, if needed.) Since the ground will probably be frozen or wet, it might not be possible to set seeds by raking. Birds may relocate seeds to new unplanned areas (which may add to your pleasure) so some experts cover the planted site with hardware cloth to keep out wildlife. Seeding just before a snowfall will press seeds into the soil and provide a protective blanket.

Native seeds vary in appearance, hardiness, growth patterns, and germination rates. Keep in mind biodiversity and try seeds in different spots until you find the best places. 🌱

See also: *wildones.org*



HOW TO CONDUCT A SEED EXCHANGE

Seed exchanges help new members get started and senior members procure new species. Each chapter's seed exchange tends to have a little different personality. For start-up chapters, exchanges might be slow-going, but each passing year will produce more seeds. For older chapters, there can be such a surplus that the seed is earmarked for donation to educational projects.

Because seeds are gathered across the growing season into late fall, winter months are used for seed exchanges. This coincides with the festive mood around the holidays, so some chapters take this opportunity to do a potluck or offer sweets to foster socializing. Usually no program is planned for this meeting, but other activities (such as plant rescue training, a demonstration of propagation techniques, or having members share photos of their landscapes) can round out the get-together.

The seed giving-and-getting process can be informal or structured. Most chapters simply ask that members who have seeds to share bring them in labeled bags. Then members belly up to the table, sprinkling seeds into their envelopes to take home.

BAGS SHOULD BE LABELED WITH ...

- common name
- botanical name
- location of origin
- and brief growing instructions

At least one chapter conducts their exchange like a cookie swap, and they schedule their event for October. Margrit Nitz, a member of the Greater DuPage Chapter, describes their process:

Our chapter doesn't restrict the exchange to members, so we actively advertise with press releases to radio stations, newspapers, forest preserves, master gardeners, garden clubs, area libraries and park districts. Because of this, we have learned to anticipate a large turnout, which requires sufficient accommodations for 100 people at a time. (This also increases our chances of attracting new members!) Members donate finger food for the seed exchange, but we don't advertise the fact when circulating our flyer.

Since the seed exchange attracts the highest number of

attendees, the annual elections and chapter meeting are also scheduled for this day.

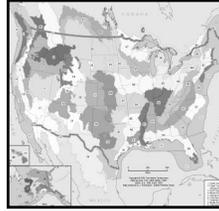
We set up a couple greeters who ask each arriving guest if they are a Wild Ones member or if they have ever been to a seed exchange before. We give them our handouts and direct those with seeds to the proper table.

With such a large turnout, several tables are set up and labeled "prairie," "woodland," "grasses," and "other." We also set out plenty of chairs—used mostly for the meeting. We have members set up garden photo collages, lay out photo albums and put up posters which help to show the plants whose seeds have been brought to the exchange. These also do a great job of letting people see how to use the plants in their yards.

For every species of seed you bring, you are allowed to take one quantity of seed from the tables. Example: If you bring Black-eyed Susan, Purple Coneflower and Big Bluestem seeds, you may take three plant quantities from the tables. You should bring plenty of baggies, envelopes or empty film canisters to hold seed, as well as a pen for labeling your containers. If you have no seeds to exchange, a nominal fee may be charged per quantity of seed. A guide to successful seed germination is given to each participant, and you are encouraged to ask chapter leaders for germination advice. If we can't find someone at the exchange with firsthand knowledge about a particular species, a name and phone number for a contact will be furnished. In addition, used gardening books, tools, identification guides (plants, birds, insects or others) and magazines that you have outgrown are appreciated as a donation to our dollar table.

We have experimented with raffles, a silent auction, and the dollar table. Raffles are legal in our state, but, as with seed and plant exchanges, you should check about regulations in your state. •

Check with your chapter newsletter editor about an exchange column where members may list "extra" or "wanted" seed and plants.



To learn more about ecoregions, visit the following website or check out links on Wild Ones' website.

http://gis.tnc.org/data/MapbookWebsite/map_page.php?map_id=103

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL ECOTYPE

GUIDELINES ON THE SELECTION OF NATIVE PLANTS

The following guidelines are intended to assist Wild Ones members and others in their natural landscaping efforts. They were developed by a committee who read widely in the scientific literature and consulted with experts. While there is ongoing debate within the restoration community concerning the issues below, we offer the following with the hope it will help make our landscapes places of health, diversity and ecological integrity.

Wild Ones—Natural Landscapers advocates the selection of plants and seeds derived, insofar as is possible, from local or regional sources at sites having the same or similar environmental conditions as the site of planting. Such plant material is often termed the *local genotype*.

Environmental Conditions: These include everything from soil, climate, elevation, drainage, aspect (such as north/south slope), sun/shade, precipitation, etc.

Local or Regional Sources: Plant material that originates in and is native to your geographic region is generally the best to use. These regions have ecological, not political boundaries, i.e., it is better to use a source from your geographic region but outside your state than to use a source from a different geographic region inside your state. Such regions are often referred to as ecoregions by scientists. The ecoregions within the U.S. are best delineated by The Nature Conservancy in the U.S. and the Conservation Data Centres in Canada. (Maps of the ecoregions can be obtained from these groups; a copy of each set of maps is in Wild Ones' library.)

WHY CHOOSE LOCAL ECOTYPES

1. To ensure the greatest success in your landscaping efforts. In general, the more closely you match the environmental conditions of the source of your plant material to that of the planting site, the better it will grow. Studies show that this is because species have become genetically adapted to the local conditions to varying degrees—some species more than others. Since there is little species-specific information, it is best to take a conservative approach so plantings will do better both in the short term and in the long term.

Example: A red maple from the deep south will not do well in the north. Also, a red maple from a lowland will not do well if transplanted to an adjacent upland site.

Exception: Threatened and endangered species which have reduced genetic variability, may need an infusion of genetic variability from plants from other, maybe distant locales, in order to ensure their survival over the long term. Work with such species should be conducted under the supervision of the state and federal agencies which have jurisdiction over them.

2. To help preserve local pollinators, insects, birds, and mammals, and other wildlife which have co-evolved with plants of local ecotype and depend upon them for food, shelter, etc.

3. To preserve the genetic diversity and integrity of native plants. An all-important concern today is the preservation not only of a diversity of species, but also of the genetic diversity within each species. A native species varies genetically in its adaptation to the particular localities and environmental conditions under which it grows. This results in a number of ecotypes of the same species or gradations (clines) between populations.

You can help preserve the local ecotypes in your area by using them in your landscaping. There can also be significant genetic variation within an ecotype in terms of form, size, growth rate, flowering, pest resistance, etc. You can help preserve this gene pool by asking for *seedling stock*, not *clonal stock* or *cultivars*.

HOW TO FIND YOUR LOCAL ECOTYPES

To prevent the local extinction of native plants, plants should be bought from reputable nurseries, not dug from natural areas.

Exception: Plants rescued from a site slated for immediate development. (However, every effort should be made to save such sites whenever possible.)

Where to Buy: A list of nurseries carrying native plants of local ecotypes can often be obtained from local nature centers, from state natural resource departments, from local Wild Ones chapters or from native plant organizations. Nature centers or nurseries dealing exclusively with native plants are more apt to have stock of local ecotypes.

Ask the nursery about the source of their plant material. Does it originate within your ecoregion?

Beware of plant material dug from the wild or plants which are *nursery grown* in pots after being dug from the wild. Plants should instead be *nursery propagated* from seed or cuttings, not collected from the wild. It is environmentally unethical and contrary to the mission of Wild Ones to buy plants dug from our last remaining natural areas in order to naturalize your yard.

Ask for seedling stock, not clonal stock, cultivars or horticulturally enhanced plants. Clonal stock, cultivars and horticulturally enhanced varieties lack genetic variation. They are usually selected for bigger, showier flowers or sturdier stems, and this goal of aesthetic uniformity is at the expense of genetic diversity. Cultivars and horticulturally enhanced varieties are often propagated asexually and thus are clones rather than unique, genetic individuals. (A variety of an individual species can be a naturally occurring variety or a horticulturally produced variety.) Check with local lists of native plants to see if the varieties are native locally or horticulturally produced.

SEED COLLECTION

When collecting seeds, collect from many individual plants from within the same ecotype of each species (rather than taking seeds from only the biggest plant, for example), and do not take all the seeds from any plant. This will help preserve and increase the genetic variation of the population. Also, be sure to get permission for seed collecting; it is not allowed in some natural areas.

DOCUMENT YOUR PROJECT

Keep records of the origins of the plant material you use. This is particularly important for large-scale restorations, especially if they are at nature centers or other places of education. Detailed records on sources of plants used can help us understand their success or failure and adapt our plant selection strategies, as needed. This may become increasingly important given the changes in climate expected with global warming.

This guideline drafted by the Local Ecotype Committee: Pat Arm-strong, Lorraine Johnson, Christine Taliga, Portia Brown; final revisions made by committee chair Mariette Nowak, Aug. 7, 2001; revised March 19, 2002. Bibliography available at www.wildones.org.

If you're interested in starting a chapter, download a "Chapter Start-Up Kit" from www.wildones.org or contact the national office.



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HOW A WILD ONES CHAPTER IS FORMED

A chapter is officially chartered when Wild Ones' national office receives the following:

- ✓ Names of your chapter officers
- ✓ Name, phone number, and email address of your chapter contact person
- ✓ Names of 10 paid members from your locality
- ✓ Calendar of planned events

Officers and the chapter contact must be paid members. The goal is to have at least 20 paid members within 12 months of being chartered to maintain chapter status. You should have a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. (A person may hold more than one office.)

Membership dues are to be sent to Wild Ones. To give new chapters a head start, 55 percent of the dues is returned to the chapter with the percentage decreasing by 5% each year until a maximum of 30% is reached. All dues are 100 percent tax-deductible. Funds retained by national are used to defray costs for printing *Wild Ones Journal* and for national administrative expenses. Donations made directly to the chapters and funds raised by the chapters are also 100 percent tax-deductible, and are retained wholly by the chapter.

A chapter checking account must be established using the name "Wild Ones Natural Landscapers" and our EIN. Details regarding this will be sent to you once your chapter has been chartered. An accounting of chapter finances must be submitted to the national treasurer annually, as well as a chapter status report.

PROGRAMS

Your chapter should plan to conduct regular monthly activities which focus on what can be done to use native plants in residential, commercial and public areas. The following ideas have proven helpful for a number of established chapters. Please share ideas that are successful for your chapter.

It is helpful to hold your meetings on the same day every month. Members will know when to anticipate a meeting and get into an attendance routine. (Unfortunately, whichever day you select, some people will not be able to attend.) Chapters generally schedule tours, field trips and work projects during warm-weather months, while educational meetings are con-

ducted during more inclement months. Meetings are important for member networking and chapter continuity.

Some chapters have a loose association with nature centers in their area and use their facilities for meetings. Other chapters use meeting rooms at local universities or colleges, libraries, arboretums or botanical gardens, or community buildings such as senior centers or municipal meeting rooms.

Programs should promote Wild Ones' philosophy and help members learn how to design natural areas, identify native plants and their companion plants, identify alien species and the problems they create, propagate and plant native plants, maintain restored landscapes and native remnants, and promote camaraderie and helpfulness between natural landscaping enthusiasts. A prime benefit of attendance is encouragement and support for new members by more experienced members—a satisfying experience for both parties.

Opening some of your meetings to the general public for a small donation can increase your membership as guests often join the group. Do keep some of your programs for members only to encourage membership rather than occasional attendance.

To increase regular participation, you should publish a chapter newsletter. Sometimes a high school or college student can coordinate and layout the newsletter for you and earn school credit.

SPEAKERS

Consider propagators, nursery staff, educators (university, nature centers, etc.), authors, landscape designers, DNR personnel, school project designers, artists, photographers, environmental activists, county extension agents. Make it clear to your speaker that the program is to be on the use of native plants. By encouraging members to document their landscapes right from the start, programs can also be developed with photos from within your membership.

We encourage you to offer an honorarium to all your speakers—even your members who give presentations. It is best to establish a standard guideline for your chapter and do not hesitate to accept the honorarium back as a donation if it is so offered. 🐾

“What happens in a society when the young are not stimulated by the diversity of life? Since childhood we’ve been taught that one form of life depends on another. In adulthood we, in turn, preach it to the young. Yet, in the areas where we could put our learning and teaching into practice—schoolyards, churches, hospitals, roadside and most obvious of all, our own yards—we neaten and bleaken, consistently and relentlessly destroying habitat. It’s as if we took off our heads, hung them up, and left them at the nature center.”—Lorrie Otto

SEEDS FOR EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM

Wild Ones has established a quite wonderful perpetual legacy for our children in honor of our beloved Lorrie Otto, teacher, naturalist, activist, and inspiration to thousands, called the Seeds for Education (SFE) Grant Program. Funded by donations from Wild Ones members and friends, the SFE Grant Program was launched at an April 1996 dinner honoring Lorrie which raised \$10,000, most in the form of \$20 to \$50 to \$100 contributions from individuals. The endowment continues to grow through donations and investment with the Wild Ones Lorrie Otto SFE Fund.

Wild Ones awards grants to places of learning all across the country for projects whose efforts best reflect our message of creating natural landscapes using native plants and environmentally sound practices, and appreciating humankind’s proper place in the web of nature. Each year, beginning in 1997, we have awarded grants to schools and other places of learning working to establish outdoor classrooms for and with children.

Grant applications are available year-round through the Wild Ones website and are due November 15th annually. Accepted *only* in electronic format via the Inter-net, the application can be found at www.wildones.org. By February, an expert panel of volunteer judges has determined the grant recipients. In addition to cash awards, Nursery Partners (native plant nurseries) provide the grant recipients with discounted seeds, plants and services.

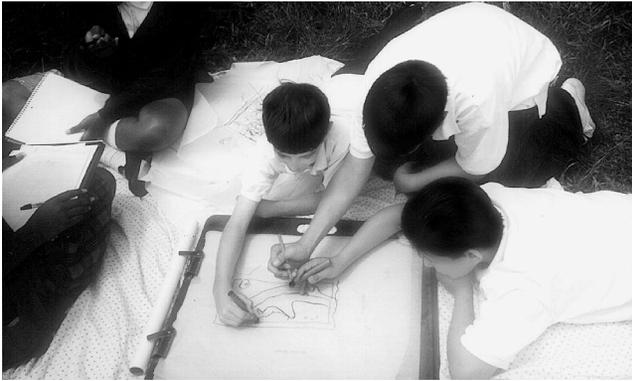
Now, your school/church/center wants to go wild — how do you get started, and where can you get help? The Wild Ones website (www.wildones.org) provides many links to resources for information on native landscapes, benefits of schoolyard habitats, environmental education, curriculum connections, and more. Within those links are more resources, including native plant nurseries. Wild Ones encourages schools near a Wild Ones chapter to contact the chapter early on for ideas and assistance and possible collaboration. Wild Ones can also put you in touch with other outdoor classroom projects we know about. 🌱

If you want to honor Lorrie for her inspiration and guidance, send your donation to “SFE” at the national office.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are the goals of your project?**
- How will the site be used?**
- Which activities will most commonly occur?**
- Who is involved?**
- What age or grade levels?**
- How can the community be involved and affected?**
- How will the project enhance educational use of the area?**
- How will the project affect habitat and wildlife?**
- What are the site conditions?**
- What kinds of habitats and plant communities do you want to develop or restore?**
- How will the area be managed or maintained long-term?**
- Do you have a qualified and committed project coordinator?**
- What are possible funding sources?**
- What about continued funding for maintenance?**

THE BENEFITS: Planning, planting and direct observation of a natural landscape sets the stage for learning about history and biology and uses skills related to math, reading and writing. The landscapes’ infinite and changing forms and colors offer endless artistic exploration. Recognizing the relationships between different organisms—and their fragility in a developing world—expands students’ thought processes and encourages discussion about self and citizenship. Because the site is on schoolgrounds, students can share their experiences with friends and family, giving children a chance to show off what they’ve learned and helping to educate the community at large. Because a “field trip” is available right outside their door, teachers can efficiently weave hands-on demonstrations into their lesson plans and reduce the need for bused trips. In addition to educational and visual rewards, a natural landscape eliminates the pollution and contamination associated with turf maintenance.



A PLACE TO PLAY

"[Jens] Jensen's ideas about schools and playgrounds were precursors of more recent environmental education efforts and movements to incorporate qualities of nature into play spaces. ... Jensen suggested that play areas emphasize a variety of spaces and settings to stimulate different kinds of creative play and exploration activities, rather than focus only on physical equipment. He was concerned that children, particularly those in urban areas, needed places in which to experience nature firsthand and develop attachments to natural environments at a young age. Current research in playground design confirms that children respond enthusiastically to diverse environmental settings—including water for splashing or wading, soil and sand for digging, boulders to climb or to use as settings for make-believe, trees for shade and climbing, shrubs that mark places to hide in or explore, and both rough and mowed grass ... play areas that emphasize quiet places for reflection and dreams as well as active zones for socialization and physical exercise. Jensen designed sensual spaces that were deliberately open-ended, creating a sense of both enclosure and mystery. In their many layers of vegetation and in the wildlife they attracted, children found great variety and numerous places to explore. Plantings were chosen to recall primitive qualities of the site and to help children sense the rich history of the region."

—Robert E. Grese,

Jens Jensen: Maker of Natural Parks and Gardens

TEN COMMANDMENTS TO PLANTING A SUCCESSFUL OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

- 1 Select a single leader to spearhead the project. Form a committee—but not too big or nothing will be done. Open the process to teachers, parents, students, and maintenance personnel. Involve the principal in the process since no one is more important to the success of the project.
- 2 Think out the project and consider retaining a landscape design professional. She or he will provide valuable suggestions and give the project credibility and credentials.
- 3 Find money, the more the better. It is unlikely that the school will have surplus in the budget for an outdoor classroom.
- 4 Bring in the superintendent. At this point the project will be taking shape and she or he needs to be consulted, and her approval is essential. You may need to demonstrate that the project has direct educational benefits. Cite studies.
- 5 Open the process to teachers, parents, and others again. Now that the project has taken shape, some who were previously uninterested may now want to join up. At this point look to the curriculum for tie-ins with the outdoor classroom.
- 6 Involve the community and community-based organizations.
- 7 Ensure compliance with all laws and regulations before the first hole is dug.
- 8 Have a BIG meeting or several to finalize plans for plant selection, planting and maintenance. Get firm commitments that people are sure they can keep. A "do-gooder" who doesn't follow through can seriously undermine the success of the project.
- 9 Pray for good weather on planting day.
- 10 Remember that an outdoor classroom is a process, not a destination. **HAVE FUN!**

—Bret Rappaport

"Every child should have mud pies, grasshoppers, waterbugs, tadpoles, frogs and turtles, elderberries, wild strawberries, acorns, hickory nuts, trees to climb, animals to pet, hayfields, pine cones, rocks to roll, sand, snakes, huckleberries and hornets—and any child who has been deprived of these has been deprived of the best part of his education."

—Luther Burbank, 1849-1926

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P.O. BOX 1274
APPLETON, WI
54912-1274
www.wildones.org

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WILD ONES

In the 1960s, Citizens for Natural Resources of Wisconsin, the Environmental Defense Fund and Lorrie Otto formed an alliance that led to the banning of DDT in Wisconsin, similar legislation in other states and, ultimately, national legislation outlawing DDT. After this success, Lorrie Otto went on to become a prominent Wisconsin environmentalist and a national figure in the natural landscaping movement. It was due to Lorrie's efforts that, in 1977, nine people attended a natural landscaping workshop offered by the Schlitz Audubon Center of Milwaukee. They became intensely interested in the (then) new concept of landscaping with native plants, and their enthusiasm blossomed into The Wild Ones Garden Club, with Lorrie as their philosophical leader.

By 1989, 69 members were on our mailing list, but President Deb Harwell was convinced we could extend our reach. Deb talked Lorrie into writing for our newsletter, *The Outside Story*, and set Janice Stiefel loose in a column entitled "The Inside Story." Lucy Schumann generously produced the illustrations, and Carol Chew became the first editor. Advertising helped support costs, and Joyce Powers of Prairie Ridge Nursery was the first to place an ad.

In 1990, Deb took us to the next level by incorporating the club into Wild Ones Natural Landscapers Ltd with Milwaukee as the headquarters and, in 1991, making Green Bay the first chartered chapter. Following our 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational certification in 1995, attorney Bret Rappaport became our first national president; Mandy

Ploch, vice president; Dorothy Boyer, treasurer and Pat Brust, secretary. In 1996, we hit 1,000 members, and editor Joy Buslaff published the first issue of the *Wild Ones Journal*.

From the first, Deb writes that she found herself "among some of the finest people I had ever met. So generous in spirit all. If anyone had had success, there would be bags of seeds to share all around, with hints of how best to sow with success. Or perhaps there would be divided treasures in a car trunk to be shared. That spirit of generosity and camaraderie and the unity of purpose, I am convinced today, was why the movement has grown and flourished."

Our members have volunteered at schools in the creation of outdoor classrooms using native plants. Since 1996, Our Seeds for Education (SFE) Grant Program has granted thousands of dollars to schools and public facilities for the purchase of native plants for educational gardens.

In 2007, the purchase of the Wild Ones Institute for Learning and Development (WILD Center) in Neenah, Wis., brought us our first permanent headquarters. The WILD Center, consisting of 16 acres of upland, riparian woodland and marsh as well as a lovely headquarters building, will be a showcase for natural landscaping and native plants as we restore ecosystems and install demonstration gardens. The generosity of our members and the tenacity of our first (and so far only) executive director, Donna VanBuecken, have created a dream come true. Many others should be credited here, but in the space allowed, let us welcome and thank every member for being a part of Wild Ones.