

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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*Underground Ecology or:
How I Learned to Love Dirt
Thursday, September 17, 2009*

Location: Burpee Museum of Natural History
737 N. Main St., Rockford, IL
Time: 7:00–9:00 pm

Dr. Teri Balsler is an associate professor of soil and ecosystem ecology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her dissertation assessed the importance of microbial community composition for ecosystem functioning. “When we disturb the soil or change the environment, soil microbes responsible for processes will be affected and the composition of the microbial community will shift as organisms better suited to the new environmental conditions grow and compete.”

Through her doctoral research, Dr. Balsler found that life within the soil influences plant growth there. It also affects how plant life responds to global changes. As we strive to include more native plantings in our yards and communities, we are disturbing the soil and changing our community.

Join us at our September meeting to learn the effects these changes can have on the ecology of our communities - learn to "love the dirt" as Dr. Balsler has.

For more information, please contact Kim Risley at (815) 962-4584.

Submitted by Kim Risley,
V. Pres./Program Chair

Grants: Seeds for Education Grant Deadline moved up to OCTOBER 15TH

- Hurry and complete yours today! This grant program is available to non-profit educational organizations (i.e. schools, nature centers, churches, etc.) for the purpose of establishing outdoor learning centers to educate youth and others, using native plants. These are child centered activities. Awards are usually up to \$500. You will find the application on line at <http://www.for-wild.org> Part of the grant process is to have the application signed by the local chapter, which would be by me, Kim Lowman Vollmer, Youth Education and Grants Chair. To meet this requirement please have it to me by October 1st (kimlowvol@aol.com or 815-397-6044). I would be happy to help you with your grant writing process or to read over your finished product. I am a grant judge and has been a grant recipient. Please contact me about any questions or projects you are working on.

Let Wild Ones know how we can help or just to share your exciting progress. We love pictures and stories about projects too!

Kim Lowman Vollmer, Your Education and Grants Chair



Articles for the October 2009 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor, at dkcamps@aol.com by September 23, 2009.

Message from the President Constance McCarthy

Plant donation and silent auction

At our August meeting, Guy Sternberg, of Starhill Forest Arboretum, donated several swamp privet (*Forestiera acuminata*) seedlings to our chapter. We have decided to donate these to another organization, perhaps the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District or the Rockford Park District (undetermined at the time this column was written).

Our chapter is always guided by the principle of promoting and educating folks about native plants that are local ecotype. This applies when we are selecting which plants, trees, and shrubs will be offered in our chapter's sales, as well as when a member wishes to give away plants at one of our monthly meetings.

For our purposes, we view local ecotype as being native to Winnebago or immediately surrounding counties. In Illinois, the swamp privet is native only to the far western and far southern part of the state.

Based on our chapter's guideline on local ecotypes, we felt that the best home for the seedlings would be at an organization or facility that cultivates a wide variety of plant species, not only natives. We are thankful to Guy for his donation, and are confident that the seedlings will find a good home. I'll be sure to let you know they wind up.

Ginnie Watson, our chapter's library coordinator, generously donated an ironwood tree to the chapter, to be the object of a silent auction at our September meeting. According to the Illinois State Museum Herbarium Collection, in our area this tree is native to Ogle, Carroll, and Jo Daviess counties. The specimen that Ginnie donated is quite a lovely looking tree, and we thank her for her generosity, as well.

Call for Nominations

The end of the year is not far off, and it is time to call for nominations for our chapter's board. If you are interested in running for one the elected board positions, please contact Constance McCarthy at kublaikahn@mac.com or (815)282.0316 by September 30.

Ballots will be sent out (along with the annual membership survey) in October, so that results can be announced at our November potluck and seed exchange at Burpee.

August Volunteers

Tim Lewis and other volunteers staffed a booth at the Energy Fair in Oregon. Volunteers were Steven Hall, Dick Noser, Ed Foster, Guy Smith, Darryl Wahler, and Doreen O'Brien. Thank you all for helping and hope you had a good time at the fair.

Native plants for sale

Chris Samuelson, a chapter member, has a lot of native plants for sale, all of which came from Country Road Greenhouses (based in Rochelle). Plants are \$2 per bunch of plant. The following are available: yellow coneflower, wild geranium, bottlebrush grass, penstemon, and smooth aster. If you're interested, contact Chris at (815) 505.5347.

Membership Update Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair

179 memberships on September 1, 2009

Welcome New Member

Barbara & Frank Flores
Sandi Andersen

Special Thanks to Recent Rock River Valley Chapter Donators

(any amount about the \$30 basic dues)
John & Cathy Schafman

61 attended the Aug. 20 program A special thank you to Kirby Doyle for greeting members at the August program.

Note: It is preferred that renewal donations be sent directly to the Chapter's Membership Chair, Marilyn Heneghan, rather than to the national office. Processing goes quicker this way for the chapter. Your expiration date is on your newsletter and your Journal address label. Thank you.

"NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES"
Please notify Marilyn Heneghan at informationoptions@att.net if you change your email address.

Dues payments can be sent either directly to the National Office or to the Chapter Membership Chair, Marilyn Heneghan. Forty percent of the dues paid, regardless of the amount, are shared with Rock River Valley Chapter. Members wishing to make donations specifically for the local chapter, should make a separate payment or so note on their membership application under "Chapter Contribution" and mail to the Chapter Membership Chair. Dues payments, regardless of amount, are considered a donation and are tax deductible.

Wild One's Merchandise Submitted by Shey Lowman, Chair

Thanks to everyone who brought their shopping skills to the last meeting! Especially thanks for supporting the chapter through your generous purchases. The new merchandise was so popular that we sold out of Parsnip Predators and the *Prairie Seedling and Seeding Evaluation Guide*. Both items will be back in stock by the next meeting, so bring your check books.

The Parsnip Predator is a tool designed, by The Prairie Enthusiasts, to control moderate-sized top-rooted weeds; wild parsnip, thistle, Queen-Anne's lace. It is a modified short shovel that is easily used to slice taproots 2-3 inches below the ground. John Peterson highly recommends the Parsnip Predator and uses it in his prairie.

The Parsnip Predator sells for \$40, you save \$2 off the mail order price. The *Prairie Seedling and Seeding Evaluation Guide* sells for \$12, also \$2 off. If you have not seen this Guide, take a look at the next meeting, it is a must have for every library.



We are closing out plain backed denim shirts with the Wild Ones logo over the front pocket. These shirts are normally \$44.00, they are now \$34.00 and available in men's sizes medium and large.

Remember the upcoming gift giving season and check out what we have. Any item we do not have in stock can be special ordered for you.

Support our business members: Fall plant sales

At **Pizzo & Associates**, located in Leland, Illinois, will be having a sale on native plants this September. Some will be only 30 cents per plant, or \$10 for a tray of 38 plants. That's more than 75% below their wholesale prices. Items on sale include sweet flag, purple love grass, switch grass, rough avens, queen of the prairie, prairie coreopsis, cup plant, New England aster, hairy beard tongue, and prairie cinquefoil. For more information on plant availability, etc., contact Kyle Banas, Nursery Manager, at kyleb@pizzo.info or (815) 826.0495.

Red Buffalo Nursery, located in Hebron, Illinois, will be open on September 11, 12, and 13, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. They'll also be at the Green Fair in Elizabeth, Illinois on September 26. Many of their plants will be half off (or more). For more information on plant availability, etc., contact Jack Kaskel at kaskel@mc.net or (815) 648.4838.

Board of Directors in Action Shey Lowman, Secretary

Highlights of activities of the Board of Directors, as discussed at the August 13, 2009 meeting, include the following:

- Nationally Wild Ones is experiencing a 10% decline in membership. We continue to need your help recruiting all those people out there who share our interest in native plants and natural landscapes.
- The Board voted to return \$996.36 of dues reimbursement to National Wild Ones to help them with budget issues due to reduced membership.
- The Board voted to donate \$2.00 per member to Seeds for Education in recognition of Lorrie Otto's birthday, the founder of Wild Ones.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, October 8, 2009, at Aunt Mary's on State Street in Rockford. The meeting officially starts at 6:30 p.m., but many come at 5:30 to purchase their dinner. All chapter members are welcome and invited to attend board meetings.

August Meeting Recap Cathy Schafman

Guy Sternberg shared his thoughts with us about tree choices that would help hedge our bet with possible climate changes. He said general global warming causes varying local conditions. It was during these climate shifts in the past when mass extinctions took place. The trees that he suggested would be tolerant to heat and drought, ice and wind storms, poor urban soil conditions, and floods. He said never to plant a row of the same species. Plant a variety of trees, so if a disease or a condition adversely affects one variety, you will not be wiped out. Guy is the owner of his own research arboretum, Starhill Forest. He, along with others, are working on hybridizing trees using tough natives and crossing them with European varieties to improve them. He picks the parents of hybrids with the best qualities. One example is creating an elm tree that would be resistant to Dutch elm disease. Guy gave us an example of how strong elm trees can be, as the only remaining plant near the bombed government building in Oklahoma City was an American Elm. He also warned us about choosing a site that lends itself to the qualities of the tree. If you have a variety of tree that has berries, it is good for the birds, but don't plant it over a sidewalk.

I will share with you some of Guy's suggestions and note if they are included in the current Wild Ones native tree and shrub sale.

Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) is a very tolerant tree. Acorns adapt to different regions. Oaks can have a very long life, as Guy showed us an oak tree believed to be 400 years old. Recently, the Rockford Register Star had a picture of a Bur Oak at the corner of Spring Creek and Alpine. It is estimated to be over 200 years old. *Bur Oaks are available from the Wild Ones tree and shrub sale.*

Chinquapin Oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*) is also available during our sale. It is tolerant of high pH and drought conditions, and is one of the most adaptable oaks.



Guy Sternberg

Photo by Tim Lewis

Hill's Oak (*Quercus ellipsoidalis*) is noted for its great scarlet fall color. It is one of the smaller oaks and will grow on sandy and heavy soils. *It can be ordered in our tree sale.*

The next two oaks are either new or still in the process of propagation.

New Madrid (*Quercus nuttallii*) has a purple color in the spring, green in summer and red in fall.

Champion Seedless (*Quercus xdeamii*) is a cross of a Bur Oak and Chinquapin Oak. It has no acorns, which could make it a desirable landscaping oak.

Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*) can be a very tolerant tree. Once it is established, leave it alone as it does not respond well to being moved.

Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*) is known to have a toxin that has ill effects on some plants. Guy stated that this can be positive in some situations as it retards the growth of broadleaf plants, such a dandelions. The male trees would produce no nuts.

Kentucky Coffee Tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*) is adaptable to urban areas. Those of you who went to John Peterson's in July saw a beautiful Kentucky Coffee Tree. *This specie is available in our tree and shrub sale.*

Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) is a survivor tree. Think of how many huge Cottonwoods you have see. If you choose a male tree, it will have no cotton, while the female tree does.

Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) can be a long living tree. At one time a Sycamore was the largest tree east of California.



Guy Sternberg and others at the August meeting.

Photo by Tim Lewis

Guy said that everyone asks what he has planted on his home property. We were all surprised when he said Osage Orange (*Maclura pomifera*). He has male trees, which produce no fruit, and his trees are nearly thornless. The wood in them are so strong that the pioneers used them for fences. He said he never worries about those trees falling on his house. If anyone wants hedge apples, he suggested a variety called Cannonball. It has a huge fruit.

The web sight for Starhill Forest is www.StarhillForest.com. You can get more information about Guy's work and see pictures of some monumental trees.

Janet Giesen

Photo by Tim Lewis



2009 Chapter Programs and Events

Date/Time	Program	Speaker	Location
July 15 – September 19	<i>Native Shrub and Tree Sale</i> Orders taken during this time.	John Peterson Native tree & shrub Sale Chair	
September 17 7:00-9:00 PM	<i>Underground Ecology-or, How I Learned to Love Dirt</i>	Dr. Teri Balsler, Assoc. Prof. Earth Sciences	Burpee Museum of Natural History
September 25-26	<i>Native Tree & Shrub Pickup</i> See brochure for complete details	John Peterson Native Tree & Shrub Sale Chair	Riverfront Museum Park parking lot
October 15 7:00-9:00 PM	<i>What is a Burn? How Does Burning Help Our Landscapes?</i>	Andy Bacon Natural Land Institute	Burpee Museum of Natural History
November 19 7:00-9:00 PM	<i>Pot Luck and Seed Exchange</i> <u>All Members only</u> welcome with or without seeds		Burpee Museum of Natural History
December	No Meeting-Happy Holidays!		

Please check future newsletters for remaining 2009 Events and Activities

2010 Chapter Programs and Events

January 21 7:00-9:00 PM	<i>Native Plant Communities of Northern IL</i> Why is biodiversity so important? What we had, where it went, what can we do as homeowners	John Nelson Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Burpee Museum of Natural History
February 18 7:00-9:00 PM	<i>Planning native plantings, incorporating into existing, using cultivars, planning for burns</i>	Patricia Hill Author of <i>Design Your Natural Midwest Garden</i>	Burpee Museum of Natural History

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.

Please contact Kim Risley (815) 962-4584 for more information. 7:00-9:00 PM



ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Pambi Camacho
6680 Hartwig Drive
Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is **9/1/2009**, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last *Wild Ones Journal* until you activate your membership

You may receive a renewal notice from both the National organization and your chapter. Your membership information will be updated quicker if you renew through your chapter so you won't miss an issue of the chapter newsletter.

Mail your renewal to Marilyn Heneghan
P.O. Box 114, Roscoe, IL 61073

Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter

Board of Directors

President: Constance McCarthy 815-282-0316 (kublai Khan@mac.com) *Newsletter Editor:* Pambi Camacho 815-332-7637 (dkcamps@aol.com)

Vice President: Kim Risley 815-962-4584 (rip-cord01@comcast.net) *Plant Rescue Chair:* John Peterson 815-248-2110 (tacmot@msn.com)

Secretary: Shey Lowman 815-757-4456 (slowman@niu.edu)

Show Me/Help Me Chair: Lenae Weichel 815-282-5482 (lenae@weichel.org)

Treasurer: Janet Giesen 815-899-6139 (giesen@niu.edu)

Youth Education & Grants Chair: Kim Lowman Vollmer 815-397-6044 (kimlowvol@aol.com)

Membership Chair: Marilyn Heneghan 815-389-7869 (informationoptions@att.net)

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Burpee Museum of Natural History, 737 North Main St., Rockford, IL

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

Wild ones Annual Membership: Family \$30, Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$20, Business \$200
Entire membership contribution is tax deductible. Contact Membership Chair for additional information or to join.

Visit our Web site at www.for-wild.org/chapters.html

Wild Ones Mission

Wild ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restorations and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.