

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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*Pruning Native Trees and Shrubs
Thursday, October 21, 2010*

Location: Burpee Museum of Natural History
737 N. Main St., Rockford IL

Time: 7:00–9:00 pm

Trees and shrubs add a great deal of structure and dimension to a landscape, both in the wild and in our "manicured" home landscapes. For many years now, our chapter of Wild Ones has had a native tree and shrub sale, adding hundreds of native plants into the landscapes of Winnebago and surrounding counties. The vast majority of these trees and shrubs are planted and left to grow on their own as they would in the wild. Occasionally Mother Nature will "prune" them for us - through windstorms (most of them not as damaging as the July 5, 2003 storm) or ice storms. This natural pruning of our trees and shrubs often leaves the specimen with so much damage that it cannot recover well on its own.



Would pruning have helped to avoid some of that damage? Does pruning help the tree stay healthy and disease free? Should native trees and shrubs be pruned? If so, why? When? How? A certified arborist for over 24 years, John Richards, owner and president of Tree Care Enterprises in Rockford, will share the answers to these questions that are commonly asked not just by those who purchase from our chapter's tree and shrub sale, but also by homeowners far and wide. He will also provide a hands-on presentation focused on the proper techniques of pruning.

Join us on Thursday, October 21, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at Burpee Museum of Natural History, 737 N. Main St., Rockford, IL to learn the nuts and bolts of pruning for native trees and shrubs.

This program is free and open to the public.
For more information, please contact Kim Risley at (815) 962-4584.

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

photo of John Richards supplied by Applied Ecological - Taylor Creek Nurseries



Articles for the November 2010 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor, at: dkcamps@aol.com by October 23, 2010.

Message from the President (cont'd)

Constance McCarthy

Signs of Progress

In mid-September, the Midwest Master Gardener Conference was held in Rockford. Several Wild Ones from our chapter were in attendance, and Tim Lewis was one of the presenters at the education sessions. In addition, our chapter's booth was on display.

Tim (who is also our chapter's booth coordinator) told me that among the Master Gardeners who stopped at our booth, most said that they were already incorporating native plants in their home landscapes. I find this very encouraging, that more and more folks are seeing the benefits of even just intermingling natives among non-natives in their gardens.

I have heard that other chapters have not had much luck in attracting Master Gardeners to their chapter activities, but that is definitely not the case with the Rock River Valley chapter. I am very happy to see more and more of my fellow Master Gardeners at our meetings and joining the chapter. I have been trying to emphasize that there is room for everyone in the Wild Ones tent, from the person just beginning to dabble in natives, to the person who has removed their lawn and replaced it with a prairie.

A hearty thank-you to all of you who have helped make everyone feel so welcomed at our meetings. The more the merrier!

2010 Tree and Shrub Sale Recap

John Peterson



trees and shrubs anxiously waiting to go their new homes

The results of this year's Rock River Valley Wild Ones Tree and Shrub Sale was that more than 26 of our members and friends ordered and took delivery of 126 native trees and shrubs covering 24 different species. The most popular species this year was Spice Bush, followed by last year's favorite, Maple Leaf Viburnum. One of the perennial favorites, American Filbert was the third most popular shrub. The most popular tree, again this year, was Bur Oak.

This year, our chapter donated 19 tree and shrubs to the new Wild Ones WILD Center, in Appleton, Wisconsin. Last Saturday, Tim Lewis, the new Wild Ones national president, delivered the plants to the WILD Center and helped oversee their placement and planting. Also, our Wild Ones chapter, with the help of Lenae Weichel, worked with Spectrum School in Rockford to provide them a discount on 10 trees and

shrubs that they planted at their North Main location, as part of a school project.

In addition to a big thank you to everyone who bought plants this year, a special thanks to Tim Lewis for updating this year's sale flyer material and to Kim Risley for reviewing and proof reading the material. Thanks also to Don Heneghan, Tim Lewis, Lu Clifton and Janet Giesen for helping to fill orders on the pickup dates.

Over the last 6 years, our Wild Ones Chapter has sold 1025 native trees and shrubs. In addition to helping us raise money to fund our chapter's activities, your plant purchases meant that more a thousand trees and shrubs, all native to our area, are now growing and providing wonderful examples of why we should all plant native trees and shrubs.



Don Heneghan, Mike Eickman, Tim Lewis and Lu Clifton assisting Mike with his order.

Lisa Johnson to Coordinate Photo Yard Tour Submitted by Kim Risley

For our February 2011 meeting, we will be doing a different type of presentation than you might be accustomed to seeing at Wild Ones programs. The focus will be on the activities of chapter members to increase native plantings and diversity in their individual landscapes. Members are encouraged to take pictures showing various areas of their landscapes throughout the seasons. These pictures may document the stages of developing a particular native planting; existing native plantings that support different elements from nature - birds, butterflies, bees, reptiles or amphibians, insects or other wildlife; the visual effect of native plantings throughout the seasons, or anything else featuring plants, shrubs and/or trees native to our area that you may imagine.

If the thought of speaking in front of a group is not a pleasant one for you, fear not! We will work with such members, perhaps finding a more loquacious member to do the speaking part of the presentation, or having some folks display photos and a description of their project (on poster board, for example). Again, your creativity and imagination may be used.

Lisa Johnson is the coordinator for this program. Please contact Lisa by phone at 815-965-3433 ext. 1018 or by email at Lisa.Johnson@burpee.org. The amount of presentation time for each individual will depend upon the number of people who choose to share with us, as well as the extent of the member's efforts with natives.

Keep snapping those pictures and making plans to share your efforts with all of us. Let's all work together to make this an exciting and educational presentation for all who attend - members and non-members alike! Please contact Lisa to let her know:

1. That you would like to share with us,
2. How you would like to share (*digital, photo display, etc.*),
3. If you will speak or if you would like someone else to present for you,
4. If you are willing to speak on behalf of another member who is sharing.

Don't be deterred from participating just because you're not the master of public speaking, or because you feel that your efforts "just don't measure up to those of other members." Think of our Show Me/Help Me events: while it's always inspiring to see the magnificence of the completed efforts at incorporating natives into a home landscape, there is also benefit to hearing about projects that are just in their infancy. Whether you have only a few slides or more extensive documentation of your efforts, we would love to hear from you.

Please feel free to contact Lisa by email at Lisa.Johnson@burpee.org or at 815-965-3433 ext. 1018 with any other questions you have. You may also contact me at rip-cordo1@comcast.net or by phone at 815-962-4584.



Membership Update Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair

166 memberships on October 1, 2010

Welcome new member

Brandon Sterns
Andrea Dubnick & Allen Reed
Brett Hanson

Special Thanks to Recent Rock River Valley Chapter Donators

(any amount about the \$30 basic dues)

Terry Laman
Michael & Jean Maloney

43 attended the September program. Thank you to Anita Johnson for helping to greet members.

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.

September Meeting Recap Janet Giesen

Photos by Tim Lewis

Who's that Creeping Around my Flowers?

Reptiles & Amphibians in Our Backyards



When I was asked to write a recap of the September meeting on reptiles and amphibians, I couldn't help but think back when I was a child, stuffing garter snakes in my shirt to help me keep cool during hot summer days. I lived in the country and loved exploring and discovering all the wild creatures down by the river, in the farm yard, and everywhere in between. My mother knew I liked snakes, toads, frogs and turtles, but she never

allowed them in the house, so, reluctantly, I put the snakes and any other of my wild "pets" safely away in the vegetable garden for another day. Lisa Johnson, Burpee Museum educator, and one of the founding members of Wild Ones, Rock River Valley Chapter, is as enthusiastic about reptiles and amphibians as I was about them as a child, and her presentation on these beautiful creatures was near and dear to my heart, and also many of those in the audience at our September 16 meeting.

Lisa began the program by referring to her handout *Reptile and Amphibian Species Lists for Winnebago, Ogle, and/or Boone Counties*, which lists the scientific and common names of over 30 species of reptiles and amphibians. Although there was not enough time for Lisa to cover all of the species on the list, she provided in-depth details for close to 20 species that she particularly likes. The amphibians she discussed included salamanders, toads, and frogs while turtles and snakes represented the reptile species.

As Lisa described each species, she projected vivid close-up photographs of each, pointing out specific details such as color variation, body shape, size and texture. Identification of some species is difficult but can be less confusing by looking at both the top and underside of some species. For example, box turtles have lots of variety in their carapaces (the top shell) and can be more accurately identified by looking at the color, shape and patterns of its plastron (the bottom shell). Snake identification can also be confusing because the top

stripes and/or intricate markings of just one species can vary such as garter snakes that can have brownish, grayish, yellowish or reddish stripes. The color of a single frog species like the Western Chorus frog can be greenish, brownish, grayish to reddish with three dark brown blotchy stripes down its back that may be broken or absent. Also, some frog species will change colors like a chameleon by taking on the color of their immediate environment to help avoid predators, making identification challenging. Sometimes, then, it can be helpful by looking at the underside of a species to help determine a specific type of snake, toad, salamander, frog or turtle. Interestingly, the Hognose snake aids in its own identification by turning itself belly up as a way to protect itself by playing dead.

Predation of reptile and amphibian species provides food for fox, skunks, raccoons, opossums, muskrat and other mammals, as well as birds, other reptiles and amphibians and humans. Although many of the developing tadpoles and young reptiles and amphibians are eaten by other animals, their species survive because of the sheer number of offspring they produce.

During the presentation of toads and frogs, Lisa included audio files of some of these species. Listening to the calls, chirps and sometimes musical sounds helped many of us identify a particular species we have heard at different times of the year. Lisa also explained the life cycle of many species of reptiles and amphibians including their habitats, eating habits and predation, how they hibernate, and mannerisms. These are described below.

Basic Facts of Specific Reptiles and Amphibians

In general, toads have rough, dry skin and short legs for hopping while frogs have smooth, moist skin and long legs for jumping. Frogs stay near water to keep their skin moist while toads can be away from water for extended periods of time. None of the snakes in Winnebago, Ogle or Boone County are poisonous although some are aggressive and will bite. The Hognose snake, however, does not have any teeth!

Egg-laying and Offspring:

One common requirement of most toads and frogs is the need for water in which to lay eggs and rear aquatic larva (tadpoles). Typical aquatic habitats for toads and frogs include slow moving rivers, streams, ponds, swamps, and marshes. The toad and frog tadpoles in this region emerge as adults in summer and autumn (roughly between one and one half to three months after the egg stage). Although water is necessary for egg laying and tadpole development, that water source does not need to be permanent but could be a depression that holds water long enough for metamorphosis to occur. These temporary aquatic areas are called vernal pools.

September Meeting Recap (cont'd)

Tiger Salamanders often lay their eggs in vernal pools. The eggs hatch into larvae that have external gills. It can take two years for the young to reach adulthood. Toads and frogs lay their eggs in water that is permanent, semi-permanent or vernal. Eggs are laid in jelly-like masses, strands or films that are attached to water plants, rocks or submerged logs and can hold anywhere from a few hundred to over 20,000 eggs. Eggs hatch into tadpoles that can range in size from a 1/4 inch to the six inch **Bullfrog** tadpole. Tadpoles become frogs after about two months although the **Bullfrog** tadpole can remain in the larval stage for up to three years.

Turtles lay between two and 83 eggs in the ground that hatch within one and one half to three months. Even though all snakes hatch from eggs that range in number from three to 60, some species will bear their young live where they initially developed in eggs that remained inside the female. Live bearing snakes include the **Common Garter Snake, Midland Brown Snake and Northern Watersnake**, which can bear anywhere from three to 40 baby snakes at one time. Other snakes lay their eggs in the ground or in rotting vegetation or under rocks or logs.

Habitat:

Tiger Salamanders, *Ambystoma tigrinum*, live in damp woods, pastures and urban areas but need water for laying their eggs. They breathe through their skin and the lining of the mouth. Because salamanders are nocturnal, we often don't get to see them during the day because they hide under dead wood and leaf litter.

American Toads, *Bufo Americanus* live in forests, prairies and urban areas and also need water to lay their eggs. **Bullfrogs**, *Rana catesbeiana* live in permanent freshwater habitats such as lakes, ponds, slow moving rivers marshes, swamps, and slow parts of streams.

Northern Leopard Frogs, *Rana pipiens* live in the same freshwater habitats as **Bullfrogs** but may move away from water in summer to forage in meadows and grasslands. **Western Chorus Frogs**, *Pseudacris triseriata* habitat includes marshes, moist woods or meadows. **Grey Treefrog**, *Hyla versicolor* habitat includes wooded areas near temporary or permanent water such as swamps, ponds, lakes, old fields, thickly wooded suburbs and forests. **Spring Peepers**,

Pseudacris crucifer, live in forests and regenerating woodlands near semi-permanent wetlands. **Ornate Box Turtles**, *Terrapene ornata*, live in prairies and pastures.

Snapping Turtles, *Chelydra serpentina*, live in slow-moving rivers, stagnant ponds, shallow lakes and swamps with muddy bottoms, lots of vegetation for cover and logs for sunning. **Midland Painted Turtle**, *Chrysemys picta*, live in ponds, lakes, marshes and slow-

moving rivers with muddy bottoms, rocks and logs for sunning. **Northern Map Turtle**, *Graptemys geographica*, live in ponds, river bottoms and lakes with muddy bottoms, vegetation for cover and logs for sunning. **Red-eared Slider**, *Trachemys scripta elegans*, live in rivers, ponds, backwaters and likes to sun on fallen logs. **Spiny Softshell**, *Apalone spinifera*, lives in large rivers, lakes, marshy creeks and ponds and likes to bury itself in gravel, sand or mud.

What They Eat and Who Eats Them:

Tiger Salamanders eat small insects, worms, slugs, spiders, and millipedes. In turn, salamanders are prey for large frogs, snakes, raccoons and herons. **American Toads** eat insects, worms and slugs and are prey for Garter snakes and Hognosed snakes. **Bullfrogs** eat snails, tadpoles, fish, other frogs, small turtles, snakes, birds and rodents and are eaten by bigger Bullfrogs, snakes, kingfishers, heron, osprey, otters and mink. **Northern Leopard frogs** eat insects, worms, smaller frogs, small birds and small snakes and are prey for snakes, raccoons, other frogs. **Western Chorus Frogs** eat insects including flies, mosquitoes, ants, beetles, moths, grasshoppers and also spiders. They are prey for bigger frogs, snakes, herons and small mammals. **Grey Treefrogs** eat insects, mites, spiders and snails and are eaten by other frogs, snakes, birds and small mammals. **Spring Peepers** eat insects and spiders and hunt in low vegetation and are preyed upon by bigger frogs, snakes, diving beetles, and skunks. **Ornate Box Turtles** eat insects, spiders, worms, beetles, grasses, fruit, flowers and carrion. They are often killed by cars and collected for the pet trade. **Snapping Turtles** eat carrion, small birds, fish, invertebrates, small mammals, amphibians, reptiles and plants and their young are eaten by herons and adults snappers are eaten by humans for turtle soup. **Midland Painted Turtles** eat insects, worms, small fish, crayfish, mollusks and plants. Their eggs are eaten by mammals, crows, snakes, ants and humans, while young painted turtles are eaten by small mammals, large fish, herons and other reptiles. **Northern Map Turtles** eat snails, clams, crayfish, insects, dead fish and plants. They are prey for the same animals as the painted turtle. **Red-eared Sliders** eat fish, insects, tadpoles, frogs, crayfish, snails, carrion and plants. They are often sold in the pet trade where unwanted pet turtles that are released outside of their native range compete with native turtles. **Spiny Softshell Turtles** eat crayfish, insects and fish and its eggs and young are eaten by fox, raccoons, skunks, herons and big fish. Adult softshells are eaten by humans for turtle soup.

(continued on page 6)

September Meeting Recap (cont'd)

Hibernation:

Tiger Salamanders and **Western Chorus frogs** hibernate under leaves, decaying logs and underground; **American Toads** hibernate underground; **Bullfrogs** and **Northern Leopard Frogs** hibernate at the bottom of deep pools; **Grey Treefrogs** and **Spring Peepers** hibernate on land (and survive because of a chemical in their bodies that acts like antifreeze). All of the turtles mentioned in this article hibernate underwater, buried in the mud except the **Ornate Box Turtle** that hibernate in holes dug into the ground. Some snakes hibernate individually, in crevices and fissures below the frost line or in group site called a hibernaculum.

The real excitement of the evening began after the slide presentation, when Lisa introduced us to some live species. Carefully taking them from their boxes one at a time, Lisa walked around the room and showed the audience a **Box Turtle**, a **Barred Salamander** and several species of snakes, one of which is her favorite, a **Western Fox Snake** called Sister 2. This snake was extremely docile and allowed "willing" audience members to hold her. Toward the end of the program Lisa brought out Monty, an African Ball Python which prompted some lively stories from audience members about snakes. Although the African Ball Python is not native to the United States, it is popular reptile in the pet trade which is often purchased when small but outgrows the owner's ability to take care of it.

The decline in reptile and amphibian species is due in part to the use of pesticides and other chemicals, habitat destruction and ultraviolet radiation reaching the earth's surface because of the diminishing ozone layer. But we can make a difference in our own landscapes by eliminating (or wisely using) garden chemicals and restoring habitats by planting native plant species and providing water and plants in small ponds and pools. These wildlife-friendly ponds should have gently sloping sides and varying depths with plenty of vegetation to provide cover. It's best not to have fish in these aquatic environments to keep amphibians safe from predation. We can also support and become active in organizations such as Wild Ones, whose mission, in part, promotes and preserves biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities.

Lisa concluded her presentation by encouraging the audience to spread the word on the benefits of our native reptiles and amphibians - they eat many of our garden pests such as slugs, snails, insects and rodents such as mice and rats. Reptiles and amphibians also act as indicator species, telling us what is going right (and wrong) with our local ecosystems. Lisa's optimistic and



informative presentation helped to diminish misinformation about our native reptiles and amphibians and emphasized that we become more open-minded and accepting of these important and beautiful species.

Reptiles and amphibians that Lisa discussed during her presentation:

Amphibians

Tiger Salamander
American Toad
Grey Treefrog
Spring Peeper
Western Chorus Frog
Bullfrog
Northern Leopard Frog

Reptiles

Snapping Turtle
Panted Turtle
Red-Eared Slider
Ornate Box Turtle
Spiny Softshell Turtle
Fox Snake
Eastern Hognose Snake
Milk Snake
Northern Water Snake
Brown Snake
Common Garter Snake



Hats Off!

by Constance McCarthy

Congratulations are in order for two of our chapter members who were recently honored with awards for their volunteer work involving natives.

At the Midwest Master Gardener Conference in September, **Lu Clifton** was honored with a University of Illinois Extension - Outstanding State Master Gardener award. Her work on the prairie at Lake Summerset was among her accomplishments cited (and was also featured in the previous issue of this newsletter).

Guy Smith was recognized by the Natural Land Institute as an Outstanding Volunteer of 2010. He helps on the Tuesday and Wednesday work crews at Nygren and, according to the NLI volunteer newsletter, is known far and wide as the "NLI volunteer of the century."

Please join me in congratulating them next time you see them at a meeting, or while they are out volunteering!

2010 Chapter Programs and Events

| Date/Time | Program | Speaker | Location |
|---------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| October 21 7:00 p.m. | Pruning Native Trees & Shrubs | John Richards Arborist and Owner of Tree Care Enterprises | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| November 18 7:00 p.m. | Pot Luck and Seed Exchange All Members only welcome with or without seeds Bring a dish to share. | | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| December | No Meeting-Happy Holidays! | | |

2011 Chapter Programs and Events

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| January 22 7:00 p.m. | Propagating Native Plants From Seed | Tim Lewis Wild Ones National Board President | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| February 17 7:00 p.m. | Photo Yard Tour A visual tour of Wild Ones members native planting projects | Lisa Johnson - Coord. (815) 965-3433 x 1018 | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| March 17 7:00 p.m. | Nature's Second Chance: Restoring the Ecology of Stone Prairie Farm | Steve Apfelbaum Corrine Daniels Taylor Creek Restoration Nurseries | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| Mar. -Apr. | Native Plant Sales Orders taken during this time | Kim Risley Woodland plant Coord. Constance McCarthy Plant Sale Coord. | |

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.



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 **10/1/2010**, 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 and Chairs

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|---|---|
| <i>President:</i> Constance McCarthy 815-282-0316 (kublai@mac.com) | <i>Youth Education & Grants Chair:</i> Kim Lowman Vollmer 815-397-6044 (kimlowvol@aol.com) |
| <i>Vice President:</i> Kim Risley 815-962-4584 (rip-cord01@comcast.net) | <i>Librarian:</i> Ginnie Watson (815) 398.0138 VSWatson47@aol.com |
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| <i>Treasurer:</i> Janet Giesen 815-899-6139 (giesen@niu.edu) | <i>Booth Coordinator, FREC representative:</i> Tim Lewis (815) 874.3468 natives.tim@comcast.net |
| <i>Membership Chair:</i> Marilyn Heneghan 815-389-7869 (informationoptions@att.net) | <i>Refreshments Coordinator:</i> Bev Crittenden (815) 964.8252 bevcrit@aol.com |
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| <i>Plant Rescue Chair:</i> John Peterson 815-248-2110 (tacmot@msn.com) | |
| <i>Show Me/Help Me Chair:</i> Lenae Weichel 815-282-5482 (lenae@weichel.org) | |

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.wildones.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.