



# Rock River Valley Chapter Newsletter

Volume 13, Issue 2

February 2011

## **Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.**

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## *Photo Yard Tour Thursday, February 17, 2011*

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

**Time: 7:00 pm**

**A**s home landscapers, many of us have been active planting native plants and grasses. The use of native plants in our landscapes increases the biodiversity of our environment. Native plants provide food and shelter for our native insects, birds and animals. These creatures, in turn, assist in providing the food and water that we as humans need for our existence. There are only a few creatures in the deepest parts of the ocean that do not depend on plants in some form for their existence. The native creatures that we depend on for our existence often do not utilize the ornamental, non-native plants that they have not evolved with to provide for all the needs of those depending on them. Therefore, it is important that we continue to add native plantings back into our landscapes, and encourage others to do so. However, some people feel that adding native plants to their landscapes can be a daunting task.

For the past year, many of our members have been busy snapping pictures of their activities in using native grasses, forbs, ferns, vines, shrubs and trees in their landscapes. Pictures have been taken showing a wide variety of local birds, bees, butterflies and other 'critters' visiting our native plantings throughout the seasons. Major projects have also been documented through pictures.

Join us for a visual tour presented by Wild Ones members as they have added native plantings into Northern Illinois landscapes. We will hear about the steps members have taken, with pictures showing how they have landscaped with natives. Some have added them into existing landscaping, while others have established all-native areas in their yards.

Join us on Thursday, February 17 at 7 p.m. for an informative presentation by individuals who have added native plants to their landscapes. We meet at Burpee Museum of Natural History, 737 N. Main St., Rockford, IL.

**Your photos wanted!** Please bring digital (or scanned) photos of your own landscape projects, regardless of state or size. Photos can be on a CD or USB drive and can show individual plants, beds, plant combinations, and large or small-scale projects. Include photos of the process if you have them but the finished (or even winter state) can be interesting! Our own Lisa Johnson will moderate the photo show.

This program is free and open to the public.  
For more information, please contact Lenae Weichel,  
Interim Program Chair at (815) 282-5482.

Submitted by Kim Risley, Vice President/Program Chair



Articles for the March 2011 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor, at: [dkcamps@aol.com](mailto:dkcamps@aol.com) by February 23, 2011.

## Message from the President

Constance McCarthy

### You Say Goodbye (Sort Of), I Say Hello, Part 2

Shortly after last month's newsletter went to print, some changes occurred that rendered parts of my January column incorrect. There has been some reshuffling of folks responsible for certain tasks which you should be aware of.

I was sad to learn that circumstances will make it not possible for Mary Thiesing to do the behind-the-scenes portion of the Program Chair's job. This meant that some urgent actions had to be taken, as some publicity deadlines were fast approaching for our chapter's educational programs.

Lenae Weichel has very graciously agreed to take on some of the behind-the-scenes programming tasks, especially the scheduling of speakers for 2011 slots that remain open, as well as writing up the publicity that appears in our newsletter and is sent to area news outlets (and beyond). We met with Kim Risley to be sure that the ball kept rolling forward, and in the short-term things are under control.

However, this brings us back to the need to find folks to serve on a programming committee that will handle various aspects of organizing the chapter's educational events. Lenae cannot continue in this stop-gap role indefinitely, as she is still the Show Me/Help Me chair and has all of those events to organize and coordinate for 2011.

Beyond the one person who volunteered to help with programming at our January meeting (bless your heart!), I didn't receive any responses to my request for volunteers that appeared in this column in the January

newsletter. Help will be needed if our chapter is to continue to be one of the leading sources of outstanding programming on native landscaping in northern Illinois. I don't mean to sound like Chicken Little, but I am also mindful of not burning out the folks who are already pulling our wagon forward, by asking even more from them on top of the significant time they are already giving.

No offer of help will be considered too small or insignificant. As I reminded last month, my contact information is on the back of the newsletter.

*P.S. Thanks again to Kim Risley for continuing to help in this time of transition. She thought that she'd be all done with her programming tasks by now, but she has stepped back up to make sure that nothing falls through the cracks. Kim, we are all very grateful for your being a good sport, and of course for your hard work on behalf of the chapter.*



*Lisa Johnson, Guy Smith and Janaan Lewis socialize after the January meeting  
Photo by John Peterson*

## Membership Update

Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair

### 162 memberships on February 1, 2011

47 attended the January program. Thank you to Lisa Johnson for greeting members. **Correction:** There were 30 attending the Pot Luck and Seed Exchange in November 2010.

**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](mailto: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.

## *Popular Member Benefit Gets* **BIGGER!** By Ginny Watson

With the coming of the New Year the Fran Lowman Memorial Library finds itself bursting at the seams with many excellent new books! Just in the nick of time, too, since most of us are eager to get started on plans for the growing season. Delve into these pages and you will find all the answers to your questions dealing with invasive plants, landscaping with natives, restoration, as well as a little inspiration for “rediscovering our importance to nature”! The last book is a trip down memory lane for our members of long standing!

1. **Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast: a field guide** by Peter Del Tredici  
This book will help you identify and appreciate the significance, good or bad, of the plants we find growing in the nooks, vacant lots, and ditches of our urban world. You will learn place of origin (native or alien), vegetative characteristics, habitat preferences, ecological functions, cultural significance, and more for each plant. Four to six color photos accompany the discussion of each wild urban plant.
2. **Invasive Plants: guide to identification and the impacts and control of common North American Species** by Sylvan and Wallace Kaufmann  
The title says it all and, together with the full color pictures, this book leaves nothing out. An extensive, comprehensive reference for your attack on the enemy aliens that challenge your landscape and your patience.
3. **Designing Gardens With Flora of the American East** by Carolyn Summers  
Of this book Douglas Tallamy, author of Bringing Nature Home, says, “What Carolyn Summers tells us about indigenous plants and wildlife is critical to our sustainable future.” It is said this book makes a fine follow up to Professor Tallamy’s book. Great full color pictures.
4. **Restoring Ecological Health to Your Land** by Steven I. Apfelbaum & Alan Haney  
From the introduction we learn that the authors draw from their “extensive experience and that of others, as well as basic knowledge of ecology, to develop a systematic and structured approach that will increase your chance for success in restoration projects, whether you are just getting started or have years of experience.” Steven I. Apfelbaum will be our presenter on March 17!
5. **Gardeners of Eden: rediscovering our importance to nature** by Dan Dagget  
The author, an environmental activist for 31 years, makes the case for getting back to nature, reassuming the responsibilities to the ecosystem we humans have abused for so long, and becoming examples of reliable, accountable, trustworthy stewards of this land we love so much.
6. **The Inside Story** by Janice Stiefel  
This anthology of 66 Wild Ones Newsletter Wild Flora-of-the-month columns written over a twelve year period from 1990-2002 by Janice Stiefel, is lovingly compiled by John Stiefel as a memorial to his wife. The book includes beautiful color photos taken by Janice but not found in the original articles.

*Our library is growing! Are you keeping up with all the latest information? Stop by our booth to peruse, scrutinize, and otherwise investigate our newest additions. Be prepared to take home a new ‘friend’ but don’t ignore the old. Some are silver and some are gold! (Reminiscent of an old Girl Scout song...)*

**Our library is a  
bounty of riches  
but only if you use it!**



## January Meeting Recap Cathy Schafman

### Propagating Native Plants From Seed

Tim Lewis is very experienced with germinating and growing native plants in his home. He shared his expertise with us, so that we could also have the pleasure of planting natives in our yard that we have grown from seed.

Winter is a great time to think about a choice of plants, and it is also a good time to start seed. The following are advantages of growing your own native plants:

1. It is cost effective if you are growing a large quantity of plants.
2. There may be no source to buy your desired plant.
3. You are assured it is a local specie.
4. There is much better germination with seeds started inside rather than direct sowing them outside.
5. You can provide optimal growing conditions which increase the chances of germination.
6. You have the joy of growing your own plants.
7. You can place your plants in the exact place of your choice.
8. It is fun and easy.

The following are places to get your native seed:

1. Collect them.
2. Get them at seed exchanges, like the Wild Ones has in November.
3. Buy them, but be advised to buy local. The following companies would be good sources: Prairie Moon Nursery, Prairie Nursery, and Taylor Creek Nursery.

Tim had several seed storage suggestions for us. Keep the seeds in a cool dry place in a rodent proof container. Some people freeze their seed, and still have success. Tim has had more success by keeping the seeds from 35-45° F. Some people use their refrigerator.

Seeds vary in the length of time that they are viable. Some are viable for very short periods, as short as days, and some are viable for 2 or more years.

Seeds usually need some sort of conditioning to germinate. Dormancy needs to be broken and nature needs to be mimicked. There may be moisture, light, temperature, and other requirements to remove inhibitors to germination. If you are going to try this project, Tim suggests that you consult the Prairie Moon Nursery Catalog, [www.prairiemoon.com](http://www.prairiemoon.com). It has a complete chart of

requirements for the germination and growing of their native seeds.

The pretreatment needed for native seeds varies:

1. **No pretreatment** - Grasses, sedges, and some forbes need no pretreatment, but still store seeds in a cool dry area.
2. **Stratification** - Replicate seasonal changes. This requires moisture and controlled temperature. You can stratify in the refrigerator. All you need is a moist paper towel, seeds, and a ziplock bag. You can also stratify in flats. The bottom flat needs to be solid with a shallow top flat with slits. Your planting medium can be peat, coir, sand, or a mixture. Put your planting medium in the shallow flat. Sow your seeds and lightly water. Put the porous flat into the solid one and cover it. Cover your flat with a clear plastic lid and put in a very cool, but not freezing area. Check your resource and label for your time length.
3. **Scarification** - Light sanding is required. Scratch, but do not crush, with a sharp knife, sharp sand, or a file.
4. **Inoculum** - This is a substance that helps the plant fix nitrogen. It is usually used for legumes. It improves the long term health of the plant. Store it in the refrigerator, and mix with water and the seeds before they are planted. Stratify as needed.

When these requirements have been met, you are ready to plant. One thing Tim stressed is to keep all of your supplies very clean. He keeps a 10% bleach and water mixture handy. Your flats, pots, or planting equipment could contain mold or disease and spread them to your seed. Some of the things you will need are:

1. Sterile pots or flats.
2. Some kind of soilless mix - Jiffy Seed Starter is one of the commercial products. You can also use coir (coconut hulls), peat, vermiculite, perlite, or sand, or a mix. Use only fresh medium only.

Put one inch of soilless medium in your flat. Thinly sow seeds. Some seeds need light to germinate, so surface sow. You can put more than one kind of a seed in your flat, but they should all have the same length of germination. Label seeds and water lightly. Cover with a clear lid. Bottom heat will aid germination, provided by a heat mat or heat tape buried in sand, as Tim has. When the seeds sprout, remove cover and bottom heat. Put them in your growing area. This might be near a window, or under daylight florescent tubes. Place lights 4" from plants.

## January Meeting Recap (cont'd)

Either your lights or your shelves need to be moveable to keep this requirement as the plants grow. Water plants as needed Also provide air circulation from a fan. Keep it gentle and indirect when plants are small. This will help reduce mold and fungus.

When it comes time to transplant small plants from flats to pots, throw out any plants that show signs of mold. Use a sterile mix for your potting medium. You can use a slow release fertilizer, such as Osmocote. Do not use garden soil, as it is too heavy. A plastic fork, with 2 tines removed is a handy tool for helping your small plant out of the flat without damage. Do not transplant until the plant has true leaves and a good root system. Put under lights for 12 - 14 hours a day. A timer helps. The air circulation can be more direct as the plants grow.

When you are going to transition your plants to the outdoors, make it gradual. Do not let them freeze and keep them moist. Put them out a few hours a day to start in the shade. You can increase time and gradually put them in the sun. Make sure they have a well developed roots before you plant in ground. Tim prefers fall planting. If you do not get all of your plants in the ground, cover the plants during the winter, and plant them in the spring. Tim suggested Black Eyed Susan and Bee Balm seeds would be good for a starter project.



Tim Lewis, Ed Jakaitis (guest), Ginnie Watson, Lowell Edwards talk about seed propagation.

Photo by John Peterson



## *Dodecatheon meadia*

### Shooting Star

**10" – 24" high**

**Sun to Shade • Mesic – Dry soil**

As a spring ephemeral, going dormant in the summer, Shooting Star does well in any site location as long as there is sufficient moisture in the spring. A tall flower stalk appears from mid-April to late May or early June bearing white to pinkish blooms. The stalk rises from a basal rosette of thin, succulent leaves and is striking against a backdrop of greenery or large rock. Plant a cluster of these for a stunning display..

## *Merchandise Update*    Shey Lowman, Merchandise Chair

More new items for 2011! We now have Wild Ones patches that can be ironed or sewn on for \$4.00 and Wild Ones decals and clings for \$2.00. See you at the next meeting!



# Merchandise Price List

<u>Item Description</u>	<u>Price</u>
<b>BOOKS-</b>	
Bringing Nature Home.....	\$18.00
Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East .....	\$24.00
Distribution of Illinois Vascular Plants .....	\$30.00
Gardeners of Eden.....	\$25.00
Landscaping with Native Plants Booklet .....	\$ 5.00
Nature's Second Chance .....	\$16.00
Prairie Seedling and Seeding Evaluation Guide .....	\$14.00
The Inside Story (Wild Ones) .....	\$25.00
<b>STUFF-</b>	
"In Celebration of Nature" Tote.....	\$ 5.00
Parsnip Predator .....	\$42.00
Pruning Sleeves .....	\$25.00
Wild Ones Clings.....	\$ 2.00
Wild Ones Decals.....	\$ 2.00
Wild Ones Patches.....	\$ 4.00
Wild Ones Wild Center Mug .....	\$12.00
Wild Ones Yard Sign.....	\$25.00
<b>CLOTHING-</b>	
Baseball Cap.....	\$15.00
T-Shirt M-XL .....	\$21.00
Sweatshirt L-XL .....	\$41.00
Denim Shirt with Graphic L-XL .....	\$55.00
Denim Shirt with Graphic XXL.....	\$57.00

## 2011 Chapter Programs and Events

<b>February 17</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>Wild Ones Members Photo Yard Tour</b> A visual tour of Wild Ones members native planting projects	<b>Lisa Johnson - Coord.</b> (815) 965-3433 x 1018	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>March 17</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>Nature's Second Chance: Restoring the Ecology of Stone Prairie Farm</b>	<b>Steve Apfelbaum</b> <b>Corrine Daniels</b> Taylor Creek Restoration Nurseries	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>April</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>Mar. -Apr.</b>	<b>Native Plant Sales</b> Orders taken during this time	<b>Kim Risley</b> Woodland plant Coord. <b>Constance McCarthy</b> Plant Sale Coord.	
<b>May 7</b> 1:00 - 4:00 pm	<b>Woodland Open Yard Tours</b>	<b>Lenae Weichel</b> Coordinator 815-282-5482	Vi Bates Memorial Garden at Klehm Arboretum 2715 S. Main St., Rockford Hoffmann Landscape 8232 Pueblo Dr., Rockford
<b>May 19</b> 7:00 pm	<b>Native Plants and Hidden Gems in Winnebago County Forest Preserves</b>	<b>Eric Bednar</b> , Winnebago Co. Forest Preserve District Natural Resources Technician	Burpee Museum of Natural History

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change. Please contact Mary Thiesing at (815) 874-3975 for more information.



# A River Gathering

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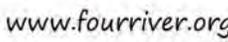
**June 16-19 2011      Rockford, Illinois**  
*education, recreation, preservation, history, stewardship*






**Celebrate the beauty, ecology, and recreation of our region's greatest natural assets.**





**Mark your calendars...Registration begins in March!**



NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

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 **2/1/2011**, 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*

*President:* Constance McCarthy 815-282-0316 (kublai@mac.com) *Librarian:* Ginnie Watson (815) 398.0138 VSWatson47@aol.com  
*Vice President:* Kim Risley 815-962-4584 (rip-cordo1@comcast.net) *Show Me/Help Me Chair:* Lenae Weichel 815-282-5482 (lenae@weichel.org)  
*Program Chair:* Mary Thiesing (815) 874-3975 (mvtcorgis@verizon.net) *Youth Education & Grants Chair:* Kim Lowman Vollmer 815-397-6044 (kimlowvol@aol.com)  
*Secretary:* Shey Lowman 815-757-4456 (slowman@niu.edu) *Volunteer Coordinator:* Ed Kletecka (815) 389.0120 fiero2@charter.net  
*Treasurer:* Janet Giesen 815-899-6139 (giesen@niu.edu) *Booth Coordinator, FREC representative:* Tim Lewis (815) 874.3468 natives.tim@comcast.net  
*Membership Chair:* Marilyn Heneghan 815-389-7869 (informationoptions@att.net) *Refreshments Coordinator:* Bev Crittenden (815) 964.8252 bevcrit@aol.com  
*Newsletter Editor:* Pambi Camacho 815-332-7637 (dkcamps@aol.com) *Merchandise Chair:* Shey Lowman 815-757-4456 (slowman@niu.edu)  
*Plant Rescue Chair:* John Peterson 815-248-2110 (tacmot@msn.com)

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](http://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.