

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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



Articles for the September 2013 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Chair, at: Pambi@wildonesrrvc.org August 23, 2013.

*Native Trees and Shrubs: What Works!
Thursday, August 15, 2013*

Location: Burpee Museum of Natural History

737 North Main Street, Rockford, IL

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm



A lot of people tend to just take trees for granted. And “all those bushes and undergrowth are just plain overgrown and messy-looking!” Hopefully, through the Wild Ones programs, we can all learn the importance of trees and shrubs, not only as beauty in our landscape, but also as vital parts of the natural ecology.

Connor Shaw will talk at our August 15th meeting about native trees and shrubs, and what grows best here. This ties in with our annual NATIVE TREE AND SHRUB SALE, chaired by John Peterson. Let us remember, too, that the brushy undergrowth and shrubs provide valuable habitat for birds, insects, and other creatures. There’s more to native landscaping than planting things that look “pretty.”

Connor Shaw and his wife Jo reside in Monee, Illinois at their place of business, Possibility Place Nursery. Since 1978, the nursery has specialized in growing native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants that are indigenous to the Chicago, and north-central Illinois area. More recently, the nursery has been involved in a root-bag method of production, not common in the industry.

With an undergraduate degree in Forest Hydrology, and a Master’s degree in Wildland Hydrology from Utah State University, Connor acted as resource consultant on zone changes in the Chicagoland area for ten years. He determined what effect proposed developments would have on water, soils and vegetation in the report area, and how those elements would affect the development.

Connor has taught several classes on Arboriculture and Plant I.D. at Joliet Junior College and has taught one- and two-day seminars at the Morton Arboretum, and the Chicago Botanical Garden. With his vast experience with native plants, Connor is invited to give many lectures each year at garden clubs, golf courses, association meetings, and arborist meetings and has been called upon to lend support to municipal tree groups hoping to change their local practices.

Please join us August 15 to welcome Connor Shaw and learn about native trees and shrubs!

This program is free and open to the public.
For more information please call 815-627-0344

Submitted by Lynda and Lee, Co-Program Chairs

Message from the Co-President **Bob Arevalo**



Bob Arevalo

photo by Jon McGinty

I have read a number of articles recently regarding an important subject: pollinators. In the current edition (Spring/Summer 2013) of Northwest Quarterly magazine that is widely available for free around town is a cover article written by Jon McGinty on pollinators. Phil Nixon, University of Illinois extension entomologist in Urbana, Illinois says “Urban sprawl, which consumes farmland; the push to remove hedgerows; and mowing or

removing roadside vegetation, all reduce the number of native plants available for food and nesting sites for bees and other insects.” He goes on to say “a manicured lawn, for example, with only grass and no weeds, is essentially an ecological desert for pollinators.” I try to do my part as a steward of my prairie and as a hobby beekeeper. You can read about beekeeping and see pictures of me in a section of the article.

Besides the thousands of other pollinators, bumble bees are also important. Severson Dells hosted a program “Bumble Bees in Your Backyard” on July 20th.

The speaker warned of the use of strong insecticides such as neonicotinoids. For more information about the use of insecticides go to www.xerces.org/pesticides/. One of the benefits of a native landscape is the non or minimal

use of insecticides. Native plants and insects have lived happily together as they have for millions of years without the use of insecticides.



Our national organization has developed a wonderful program in support of monarch butterflies, another important pollinator. Here is a link to that extensive program: <http://www.wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs/>.

A good resource for selecting native plants for pollinators is on the Pollinator Partnership website. Here is the link to that information: <http://pollinator.org/PDFs/Guides/EBFContinentalrx13FINAL.pdf>.

By maintaining a landscape with native plants, you are providing food and shelter not only for the native insects but also for the birds and other creatures that depend upon biodiversity. Plus your landscape will be an ecological oasis instead of an ecological desert!



Bob and his bees

Membership Update **Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair**

171 memberships on August 1, 2013

Welcome New Members

Fiona & Graham Fordyce
Donald & Joyce Hyson

31 members attended the July yard tour and pot luck.



Note: It is preferred that renewal donations be sent directly to the Chapter's Membership Chair, Marilyn Heneghan, Wild Ones Rock River Valley 5411 E. State Street PMB340 Rockford, IL 61108

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.

Please send email address changes
to Marilyn Heneghan at
Marilyn@wildonesrrvc.org

Dues payments can be sent either directly to the National Office or to the Chapter Membership Chair, Marilyn Heneghan, Wild Ones Rock River Valley, 5411 E. State Street PMB340, Rockford, IL 61108. 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.

June Show Me/Help Me Recap

Anita Johnson *Photos by Mary Anne Mathwich*



A total of nine hardy Wild Ones braved a morning of heavy rain to visit two yards and Midway Village. We began the morning at the Freiman home. The Freimans want to add more natives to their yard and reduce lawn area. To the left of the entrance of their driveway is a bed of day lilies where a single healthy milkweed has sprouted up. Could this be the inspiration for a butterfly garden? In the front yard under a basswood tree, Rick Freiman would like to replace grass with ground cover. It was the consensus of the group that the ground should be prepared with leaf mulch and then use wild ginger as a ground cover. For more diversity, adding ferns and woodland natives would be a possibility. Moving to the corner of the yard, Rick pointed out a tree that needs to be replaced; suggestions included replacing the tree with either a pagoda dogwood or serviceberry. Along the back of the home is an attractive deck. The group felt that the edge of the deck would be a perfect location for a colorful prairie border. Rick showed us where his recent purchase of butterfly weed had died. Tim Lewis pointed out that butterfly weed requires well drained soil and is subject to crown rot. Since the soil in the Freiman's yard contains a lot of clay, a compost pile would be useful in amending the soil. Judy Letourneau noticed what looked to be gray dogwoods volunteering near the deck. Mary Anne Mathwich took a leaf and carefully ripped it horizontally to the main vein. A translucent strand held the two pieces together, which is one way to identify a member of the dogwood family. As the tour concluded, we viewed a vegetable garden. Julia Olson was able to give some good tips

on the use of rain barrels. Our second stop was the yard of Paul and Judy Letourneau. The Letourneaus have done a great job of preserving the natural beauty of their yard of 34 years. Under a canopy of red oak, basswood, maple, hickory and walnut are viburnums, dogwoods, chokeberry, wahoo and a variety of woodland wild flowers. The leaves of ginger plants were the healthiest and largest the group has ever seen. This summer Judy's may apples developed spots on their leaves. Through Wild Ones lending library, she was able to identify the problem as "rust" which only affects the leaves and does not become systemic in the plant. The Letourneaus recognize invasive honeysuckle as a non-native but are reluctant to cut it out completely because it does act as a screen at the periphery of their yard. Over the years they are slowly adding other native shrubs and trees. The sunniest

portion of the yard contains prairie species; Judy thoroughly enjoys the butterflies and wildlife the plants attract. However, because the plot is dominated by Joe-pye weed, cup plant and rosinweed, there is little diversity. When new species are added, they are choked out by the more aggressive plants. After some discussion, it was concluded that the only way to encourage more diversity is to eliminate the more aggressive plants. The group proceeded on to Midway Village; the rain was still pouring down. We identified plants along Anne Meyer's Mill Pond restoration. Then we headed inside the museum center to talk about our morning and enjoy refreshments in dry surroundings. It had been a very wet but good morning.



July 2013 Members Social Recap Janet Giesen

Photos by John Peterson



plants with friends, family, and neighbors. Lucky them!

The native species count in Bobby's yard is impressive. Her current counts shows 22 native shrubs and trees, 42 woodland wildflowers and ferns, 68 prairie forbs, and 8 grasses!

Bobby began her yard transformation first by planting what she calls the "bones" or shrubs, including *Prunus americana* (American Plum), *Viburnum trilobum* (American Cranberrybush), *Cornus alternifolia* (Pagoda Dogwood), *Rhus glabra* (Smooth Sumac), *Cornus racemosa* (Grey

On the very hot and humid evening of Thursday, July 18, our yearly, members-only Evening Social/Yard Tour converged at the home of Bobby Lambiotte. When I drove down Bildhal Street, I saw ordinary yards until a "natural" yard appeared. Even from a distance I could see that Bobby's yard was different and once I arrived at her front gate, I knew that this was the yard of a Wild Ones member without even looking at the house number! As I walked through the open side gate and into the yard, I could see the work of a woman who loves native plants—her large yard had been transformed into prairie, savanna, and woodland.

Bobby began her quest to change her yard from typical to native 13 years ago. In doing so, she coupled her passion and eye for designing with native plants with her ability to renovate buildings! The property had two garages, one she tore down and the other she converted into a roomy potting shed. Bobby installed recycled components including windows, French doors, and a skylight, plus shelves and benches to hold her garden tools and supplies. And on the wooden walls Bobbie has hung framed nature prints that give the potting shed a cozy and homelike appeal.

To amend the soil where the old garage stood, Bobby laid down used paper bags and added 4 inches of top soil to build up the area. The soil type in Bobby's yard is mostly sand and she experiments with her plantings – if a plant doesn't do well in one spot, she will move it to another. When asked about transplanting native plants, Bobby said that she transplants all season long and often will cut off some top growth because the roots have been cut, too. This helps the plants handle the shock of transplanting. Bobby contends that most plants can be transplanted, even in the summer, as long as the plants quickly get into the ground and are given plenty of water. Unless she is using them for her own gardens, Bobby graciously shares these trans-

Dogwood), *Euonymus atropurpureus* (Wahoo), *Ptelea trifoliata* (Wafer Ash or Hop Tree), *Malus ioensis* (Prairie Crab), and *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus* (Coralberry). Many of these shrubs will flower and produce berries and seeds that persist into the fall and winter months, which are eagerly eaten by migrating and resident birds. After the shrub "bones" were in place, Bobby then began to plant the forbs, grasses, and sedges.

Bobby planned her gardens to be viewed from the street, sidewalks, and in the garden, but also from inside the house. She emphasizes that when planning native garden areas, one should consider how they look from all perspectives and also what animal species they might attract. Birds, for example, eat seeds from plants that flower and seed at different times during the growing season – early summer *Coreopsis palmata* (Prairie Coreopsis) and *Echinacea pallida* (Pale Purple Coneflower), followed by the impressively tall *Silphium perfoliatum* (Cup Plant) in mid-summer, and then late summer/early fall *Coreopsis tripteris* (Tall Coreopsis) and other later flowering species. Bobby keeps the forbs, grasses, and sedges in place in the fall and winter because many of them still have seeds that are eaten by birds and other wildlife during the cold months of the year. She then cuts back all the dead plant material in the spring to allow new growth to emerge.

We began the tour in the first garden Bobby planted 13 years ago at the side of the house. This garden has a wonderful mix of well-known, sun-loving species of various heights and flowering times such as *Veronicastrum virginicum* (Culver's Root), *Rudbeckia hirta* (Black-Eyed Susan), *Echinacea purpurea* (Purple Cone Flower), *Eryngium yuccifolium* (Rattlesnake Master), *Parthenium integrifolium* (Wild Quinine), *Liatris spicata* (Marsh Blazingstar), *Liatris aspera* (Rough Blazingstar), and *Aster sericeus* (Silky Aster), which is one of Bobby's favorite plants. In

July 2013 Members Social Recap (cont'd)

addition to three species of milkweed in this sunny garden: *Asclepias syriaca* (Common Milkweed), *Asclepias verticillata* (Whorled Milkweed), and *Asclepias tuberosa* interior (Butterfly Milkweed), two unusual native plants make their home: *Tephrosia virginiana* (Goat's Rue) and *Lithospermum incisum* (Fringed Puccoon), both of which grow best in sandy soil.

We walked in and around the other garden beds that border the entire yard and ended at the large, gently curved, woodland garden, which is centered in the back yard between the house and potting shed. All the garden borders are neatly defined with narrow interlocking pavers, which can easily be moved to create straight or nicely curved edges. Also, throughout the back yard Bobby has placed round stepping stones, which helped guide us through this large central garden area. The stepping stones are surrounded by lush carpets of *Antennaria plantaginifolia* (Pussytoes). The fuzzy leaves of this short native plant fill in various open spaces and provide a soft silver-grey color that nicely contrasts with the darker greens of the surrounding plants. Bobby says that when they bloom in spring, the wispy stems and fuzzy "flowering toes" create a charming ethereal layer throughout the woodland gardens.

A focal point of Bobby's yard is a massive *Celtis occidentalis* (Hackberry tree) that sits at one side of the back yard. Under this handsome tree is a woodland that includes many native species including *Anemone cylindrica* (Tall Thimbleweed), *Solidago ulmifolia* (Elm-Leaved Goldenrod), *Elymus hystrix* (Bottlebrush Grass), drifts of *Asarum canadense reflexum* (Wild Ginger) and *Carex pensylvanica* (Pennsylvania Sedge), and a great number of *Campanulastrum americanum* (American Bellflower), which adds a lovely vertical feature to the gardens.

Juglans nigra trees (Black Walnut) were also part of the landscape when Bobby moved to her home over a decade ago. Contrary to what some people think, many plants can successfully grow under Black Walnut trees, and Bobby seems to have found the right mix. Despite the production of juglone, the plant toxin produced by Black Walnut trees, we saw lush woodland and savanna under and near these trees, including *Monarda punctata* (Dotted Horsemint), *Blephilia ciliata* (Downy Wood Mint), *Anemone cylindrica* (Tall Thimbleweed), *Eupatoriadelphus maculatus* (Purple Joe Pye Weed), *Heuchera richardsonii affinis* (Prairie Alumroot), *Penstemon digitalis* (Foxglove Penstemon), *Lupinus perennis* (Wild Lupine), *Aquilegia canadensis* (Wild Columbine), *Zizia aurea* (Golden Alexanders), *Asclepias purpurascens* (Purple Milkweed) and *Asclepias exaltata* (Poke Milkweed). All of these plants were mature and flourishing, proof of their ability to thrive under the Black Walnut tree (not to mention the spring ephemerals that had already bloomed this year).

Bobby said that she is constantly pulling out weeds, which

is part of a gardener's life, even when you plant natives! She says that some native plants are more prolific than others and might need to be thinned, transplanted, or given away to make room for other native species. It takes a few seasons to see how some plants respond to their environment but keen observations and keeping records of plants and their habits can be useful when planning native spaces. With this information, Bobby then purposefully positions plants that go well together such as *Tradescantia ohioensis* (Ohio Spiderwort) and *Anemone virginiana* (Tall Thimbleweed). These species are complementary and after the Spiderwort is done blooming, it's cut back and the Thimbleweed fills in the empty space. Also, a nice sun-loving threesome is *Parthenium integrifolium* (Wild Quinine), *Veronicastrum virginicum* (Culver's Root), and (Black-Eyed Susan), all which bloom in succession (with some overlap), that provide constant blooms and color.

After touring Bobby's lovely yard and learning how she transformed her ordinary double city lots into a lush native plant environment filled with diversity, texture, and color, we settled into a buffet of delicious summer-time food, yummy desserts, and great conversation. As the daylight turned to dusk, people began to leave, but not before Bobby showed us two blue boxes with screened tops that house Monarch Butterfly larvae she is raising from eggs she found on *Asclepias syriaca* (Common Milkweed) leaves. Bobby follows the female Monarch Butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) in her yard, making note of where the female butterfly lays her eggs. Then she takes the leaves off the plant, places them in a plastic water pic inside the box, and raises the larvae through metamorphosis – all in an effort to maximize the number of butterflies that reach maturity. Bobby's success rate in rearing Monarch Butterflies is much higher than the 10 percent survival rate this species experiences in the wild. However, the following statistics certainly tell a story: In 2010, Bobbie released 137 adult Monarch Butterflies; in 2011 she released about 120; in 2012, she raised 5 and only 3 survived; and this year to date, she has released 6 adult Monarch Butterflies and currently there are 8 at various stages of metamorphosis (larvae and chrysalis). As you can see from just one Midwestern residential location, Monarch Butterfly populations are dwindling. But we can make a difference in helping the Monarch Butterfly make a comeback by planting a variety of milkweed species in all of our yards!

As the evening light slipped away and the temperature began to lower, the fireflies came out in grand numbers (and we were fortunate that the mosquitoes stayed away until almost everyone had gone home). It was a wonderful evening and I think many of us left with some new ideas and inspiration for our own yards and native planting projects. Thank you Bobby for a hosting this year's Rock River Valley Wild Ones Evening Social/Yard Tour!

Meet the Board

Periodically, we will introduce you to members of the Board of Directors of the Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones so that you may meet the hardworking people who keep this chapter on the cutting edge. They are all volunteers who give of their time and energy to make this chapter the bench mark for chapters just starting up.



Mary Anne Mathwich – Co-Chairman, Show Me/Help Me

Along with Anita Johnson, I am the Wild Ones Show Me/Help Me co-chair. Anita does the calling of landscape owners and arranges for our visits while I do the computer work to create the flyer and do the emailing. We both try to show up on Show Me/Help Me days whether it's hot, pouring rain or perfect weather. I have been a member of the Wild Ones, along with husband Bruce, since 1994, shortly after the chapter was formed. At that time, Bruce and I were trying to learn as much as we could about native plants as we wanted to create native

plantings in our yard and struggling with how it could be done. Joining Wild Ones and meeting people such as Anne Meyer and Fran Lowman was huge in helping accomplish our goals. I have held several offices over the years including president, vice president, secretary and natural landscape tour chair. I have worked the last five years as the science specialist for kindergarten through fifth grade at Keith School. This has given me the opportunity to share my interest in native plants and animals through hands-on activities, discovery hikes around the campus and creation of two outdoor classrooms. I think I'm retired now, unless something else comes along that is as much fun. Right now, our home landscape looks and sounds amazing. The prairie and savanna areas seem to be making up for their poor showing during last year's drought and heat. Surprisingly, some of the more conservative species that we thought were gone, showed up this year. One of the most fun things about landscaping with natives, I believe, is the surprises you find every time you look!



Anita Johnson – Co-Chairman, Show Me/Help Me

A bus tour to view Milwaukee yards using native plants led by Lorrie Otto, the founder of Wild Ones, prompted me to join our local chapter in 1998. However, even before the bus tour I had been a proponent of using Illinois natives in the landscape. Our first home had a shady yard under white oak, hickory, and hackberry. It wasn't long before I became convinced that woodland natives were the way to landscape- no chemicals, no watering problems, little maintenance. In 2004, representing the Council of Rockford Gardeners, I established the Vi Bates Memorial Garden at Klehm Arboretum featuring woodland plants native to Northern Illinois. I've also developed Ledgewood School prairie in Roscoe and provide educational guidance to teachers and students. When we moved to our present home three years ago, the yard contained a conventional sunny flower garden, a shady area of ferns and violets and lots of grass. I'm not a "purist" in my own yard; I love all plants native and non-native. Nevertheless, I find myself gradually replacing my non-natives with natives. I believe very strongly that our urban yards should be a refuge for insects, birds, and native species. It just makes sense.

Merchandise Must Haves...

Submitted by Shey Lowman,
Merchandise Coordinator
shey@wildonesrrvc.org

TWO shopping days remain until the end of the year for your favorite Wild One!
Merchandise will only be available at the August and October meetings, so make your lists now.

We have great gifts!

Solar Dancing Illinois Roses **\$10.00**
Denim logo bags, 3 sizes @ **\$4.00**
Pájaro Field Bag **\$35.00** (Made in the USA)



Plan next season with **exclusive reference books:**

Guide to Seed and Seedling Identification **\$14.00**
Seedling ID Guide for Native Prairie Plants **\$12.00**
Bringing Nature Home **\$15.00**
The Flora and Vegetation History of Winnebago County, Illinois **\$15.00**
Distribution of Illinois Vascular Plants **\$30.00**
Plants of the Chicago Region **\$45.00**



Tools for efficient land management:

Parsnip Predator **\$42.00**
Pruning Sleeves **\$25.00**
Ticked Off **\$10.00** (Made in the USA)



2013 Chapter Programs and Events

Aug-Sept	Native Tree & Shrub Sale Orders taken during this time	John Peterson Tree and Shrub Sale Coordinator	
August 15 7:00-9:00 pm	Native Trees & Shrubs: What Works!	Connor Shaw	Burpee Museum of Natural History
September TBA	Pick Up Tree and Shrub Orders See brochure for full details	John Peterson Tree and Shrub Sale Coordinator	14037 Baker Rd Durand, IL 61024 815-979-8539
September 19 7:00-9:00 pm	Global Warming as it Relates to Natives	Jessica Hellman, PhD Univ. of Notre Dame	Burpee Museum of Natural History
October 17 7:00-9:00 pm	Native Plants in Winter	Dr. James Reinartz, Director Univ. of Wisc.-Field Station	Burpee Museum of Natural History
November 21 7:00-9:00 pm	Pot Luck and Seed Exchange Members only: All members welcome with or without seeds. Bring a dish to share.		Burpee Museum of Natural History
December	No Meeting-Happy Holidays!		

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.
Please contact Lynda and Lee Johnson at (815) 629-2781 for more information.



NATIVE PLANTS. NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

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 **8/1/2013**, 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
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
5411 E. State Street PMB340
Rockford, IL 61108

Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter

Board of Directors and Chairs

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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 \$37, Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$20, Business \$250
Entire membership contribution is tax deductible. Contact Membership Chair for additional information or to join.

815-627-0344 • Visit our Web site at www.WildOnesRRVC.org

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.