

**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 January 2015 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Chair, at: [Pambi@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:Pambi@wildonesrrvc.org) by November 23, 2014.

*Bringing the Beauty of the Prairie Indoors:  
Member Potluck and Seed Exchange  
Thursday, November 20, 2014*

**DIFFERENT Location: Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockford  
4848 Turner Street, Rockford, IL 61107**

**DIFFERENT Time: 6:00 – 9:00 pm**

Typically, November has been our time for our Member Potluck, Annual Report from the Board, and Seed Exchange. This year, we've ADDED A REALLY FUN PROGRAM, TOO! Loris Damerow, President of the Wild Ones of Fox Valley Area Chapter (Wisconsin) will lead you through the creation of a dried arrangement for your home using native forbs and grasses. Seedpods, stalks, vines and branches are combined for great effect in any container you choose. Exploring the shapes and textures of our native plants can reveal their unique beauty. Bring a vase, jar, antique box, coalscuttle, basket, whatever you have available. See how many native seedpods you can identify in their autumnal state. Yes, there may be a mix-and-match quiz for fun. **Dried material will be provided, with additional gatherings from your yard welcomed! Please bring scissors or pruning shears.**



Loris now lives in Appleton, Wisconsin, but she previously lived in rural South Beloit for 25 years. An extremely creative soul, she is a landscape designer and avid native plant gardener, and is also an art therapist.

Please note the **DIFFERENT LOCATION**.....that's because even though our meeting place at Rock Valley College is a wonderful location – we just can't EAT there. The UU Church is near Alpine & East State St. in Rockford. Also note the **DIFFERENT TIME!** Come at 6:00 p.m. (or as close to that for working folks as you can), so we'll have

time to eat, listen to the Board report, and enjoy the fun and creative program by Loris, and exchange seeds and dried plant materials.

Bring your own eating utensils and a dish to pass. Vegetarian lasagna and drinks will be provided. Bring seeds to add for the exchange: please put in envelopes or baggies with label: common name, scientific name if you know it, and place of origin- e.g. Winnebago County, WO plant sales, or other source, and your name, in case anyone has questions like 'how the plant grows.' For newbies – we always have lots of seeds – if you are new to this, you are welcome to go home with some seeds! We want to share - the better chances of more and more native plants growing all over the place.

If you are not a member yet, this is a great time to join and participate in one of the fun member benefits. Call 815-627-0344.

Submitted by Lynda and Lee Johnson, Program Co-Chairs

## Message from the Co-President Ginnie Watson

*photos by Tim Lewis*



**Ginnie Watson**

*photo by Jon McGinty*

Philosophers will tell you never look back; always look to the future. Sometimes, however, it is very rewarding to review the recent past in order to fully appreciate a well spent year. This has been a banner year for positive change and accomplishment.

Our very first monthly meeting, in January, found us assembling in a new forum.

We moved our monthly meetings to **Rock Valley College** and immediately

enjoyed a positive response. So many of you mentioned how pleased you were with the room layout, comfortable seating, better parking, improved location, and easy access of Rock Valley College. Our larger audience reflects that increased approval rating!

On March 28 we learned our chapter had won the prestigious **Seth B. Atwood Award**. Presented by the Rockford Park District and the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, now known as the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, the award recognizes individuals and organizations for their exceptional volunteer contributions to facilities, programs or services which preserve natural areas and park spaces, provide recreation or education. Such awards are not realized without a lot of effort and time spent over the years. Actually, earning the Atwood Award was 20 years in the making which brings me to our next mile post.

Having grown from a fledgling organization of 18 founding members to our current membership of 219, the Wild Ones Rock Valley Chapter celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year! We first met at the Jarret Prairie

Preserve in Byron, moved to the Mahlburg Auditorium in Burpee Museum of Natural History in 2002, and as noted now find ourselves at the Woodward Technology Center in Rock Valley College. We set two major goals for ourselves this year in honor of our longevity. The first was to increase our membership to 200 by Christmas 2014. We reached that milestone by July! Our second goal was to increase our name recognition and to do that we needed to become more publicly recognized.

We wanted the public to know who we are, what we stand for, what we do, and why it is so important. The **Wild for Monarchs Lecture Landscape Tour** exactly fit the bill. The plan was to offer an informative lecture by an engaging speaker, Dr. Michael Jeffords, who would tell the audience why growing natives was not only an interesting way to landscape but was so important for the conservation of the ecology of the region. The landscape tour of 9 public and private sites would demonstrate what native landscaping looked like. In order for the public to know when and where

the event was taking place we had to publicize and thereby got our name in the papers and on the radio! The lecture drew an audience of 150 and well over 400 visitors toured the 9 sites demonstrating native plant landscaping at its best. The Wild for Monarchs Lecture Landscape Tour was declared a smashing success!

Let us not forget that this was on top of all the other benefits of Wild

Ones membership such as our benchmark newsletter, instructive Show Me/Help Me events, the resource filled library, the informal Evening Social, the November Pot Luck/Seed Exchange, the Mentor program, and plant rescues, as well as the opportunity to learn through volunteering. That last point is important. None of what happened this year would have occurred without all the time and effort put in by volunteers. We applaud you all! We must also recognize the well stocked merchandise



*Jack Armstrong, President of the Rockford Park District, presenting Bob and me with the Seth B. Atwood Award for our chapter.*

table, the fact filled website, Youth Education and Grants, the extremely popular plant sales, and our well attended monthly meetings which help to further our influence.

And, one more achievement occurred this year. The Wild for Monarchs event highlighted how important Monarch conservation is to the balance of nature and, by association, how all of nature is interrelated. By talking about the threats monarchs face such as loss of habitat and exposure to toxins we were able to increase public awareness of these dangers which affect all of nature.

Well done, **Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter!**



*Wild for Monarchs Lecture*



## *Upcoming Annual Membership Survey and Elections* Shey Lowman

A huge thank you to all of you who responded the October Meeting Survey! We hope you appreciate being able to provide your feedback while the event is still a fresh memory. It can be frustrating trying to remember all the meetings and events at the end of the year when we usually ask for your feedback.

Ballots for the election of the Board of Directors will be sent on November 7 and will be due by December 8. Members without email addresses will receive their ballot with their paper copy of the annual membership survey as in the past.

Members with email addresses will receive the annual survey in smaller segments throughout the year. The program evaluation segment will be sent out the day after the November 20th potluck. The volunteer sign up segment will be sent out in December.

By sending out surveys throughout the year via email the chapter saves about \$200 in printing and postage costs. And saves your survey volunteer over 100 hours of report compiling over the end of the year holiday season. Thank you for your patience and thoughtful consideration with this new process!

## *Board of Directors in Action* Cathy Johnson, Secretary

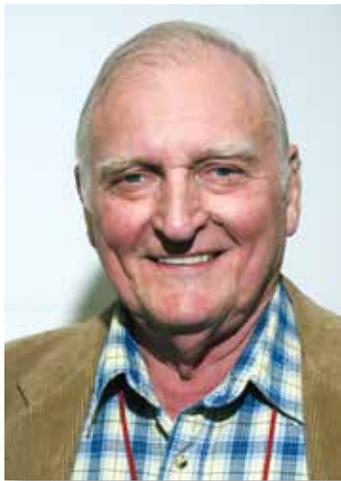
Highlights of activities of the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter Board of Directors, as discussed at the October 9, 2014 meeting, include the following.

- Chapter membership has grown to 218 members, as of September.
- The chapter continues to increase its use of technology, and is now using Constant Contact to conduct member surveys and polls. This will help us to assess response to monthly programs and better match them to members' interests.
- We now have a Facebook presence which can be viewed at Wild Ones: Rock River Valley Chapter.
- The annual members potluck and seed exchange is scheduled for November 20, at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 4848 Turner St., Rockford, IL. Members are welcome to attend even if they do not have seeds to share.

## October Meeting Recap Cynthia Nelson

photos by Tim Lewis

### Shooting Star A Prairie Plant with an Attitude



Common names for *Doedecatheon meadia* besides Shooting Star include Pride of Ohio, American Cowslip, Indian Chief, Roosterheads, Birdbills, Johnny Jump, Shuttle Cocks, Mosquito Bills, Mad Violets, and Sailor Caps, some of which are also used for other species. When asked by one of the DeKalb Forest Preserve District volunteers he mentors for

the common name of a plant he had identified by genus and species, Professor Sorensen replied “Oh, whatever you like.” When he wants to communicate clearly about plants, he prefers using their scientific names. When he wanted better results in the propagation of Shooting Stars, he applied scientific methods of observation, hypothesis testing and deduction.

Success in establishing the species in prairie restorations has been limited because the plant reproduces and spreads slowly under normal conditions. One way the plant reproduces is by buds formed in the root system. The photograph shows the root crown system of a plant that had grown three or four years.



**Root Crown System**

The buds (or crowns) can be separated, along with their fleshy roots, from the clump, and used for vegetative propagation. This creation of clones is a sure method to reproduce a plant that has characteristics of interest. It is not, however, particularly productive, since the root crown system will generally produce one new bud a year.

Increase by dispersal of the small seeds of the plant will also take some time. An initial planting of seeds in 1992 yielded no plants either that year or the next. A few plants appeared the second year after planting, with the number gradually increasing to 25 in 2006 and to 36 in 2009 (including one with eight blossoms). By 2013 there was a colony of Shooting Stars with enough plants to be impractical to count. The length of time required to establish an abundant planting is the reason our speaker refers to the Shooting Star as “a plant with an attitude.”



**Separated Root Crowns**

A series of studies on propagating Shooting Stars from seed began with an initial test of a 30-day cold stratification period, which was found to be adequate to promote germination. However, the seedlings, initially healthy-looking, exhibited symptoms after some days that are associated with damping off. Noting that seedlings growing outside exhibited the same symptoms, Professor Sorensen returned some seedlings that had started shriveling to refrigeration. There was some re-sprouting of plants that were removed from the refrigerator after 30 days. The conclusion: The seedlings exhibit the same ephemerality that is characteristic of the mature plants.

Seed germination tests were planned in order to determine the minimum time in cold-stratification required for sprouting of seeds, as well as the time required for re-sprouting. The first task was to separate out the empty seeds using an apparatus known as a fan, which traps the lighter empty seeds. The remaining “plump” seeds were placed in petri dishes lined with moist filter paper. Each batch of seeds was cold-stratified for a different length of time. The number of days to first germination after the period of cold treatment was recorded, as well as the final percentage of seeds that germinated. As indicated in the literature, seeds will germinate after receiving seven days of

cold stratification. However, a longer period of cold stratification resulted in a higher rate of germination. The highest germination rate (98 percent) was observed at 11 days for the batch that had received 20 days of cold stratification. Professor Sorensen has used these findings to determine the time period to use in his subsequent work. He is currently investigating methods to decrease the time needed for cold-stratification. To learn about the time required for re-sprouting, germinated seeds were carefully transferred into trays containing a growth medium. The trays were placed into refrigeration for varied lengths of time, with the best results occurring after a cold period of 75 days.

These laboratory findings provide insight into the life-history of the Shooting Star. The first year is the seedling stage with the initial appearance, and subsequent disappearance of the cotyledon. The plant root produces a tiny bud that has to go through six months of hot, dry weather and then has three or four months of cold weather before it sprouts and shows a small amount of growth in March. Although the plant then disappears above ground, it is alive underground and the bud has enlarged. This sequence repeats every year, with the plant producing a flower after five or six years. "Not fast enough" according to our speaker.

Continued work with the Shooting Stars demonstrated that the production of cloned plants from the root crown can be enhanced. In addition to the central bud on a root, there is a lateral bud on each of the fleshy roots. If the root crown is allowed to grow, the lateral buds won't develop because of the apical dominance of the central (or terminal) bud. However, the apical dominance of the central bud can be altered by hollowing out the central bud.



#### **Hollowed Central Bud**

After a 75 day cold period followed by 90 days in the greenhouse, the lateral buds will be developed. These can be separated along with their fleshy root and planted. Since there are a lot of lateral buds this will greatly



*Members & Shooting Star Root*

increase the number of plants that can be produced. The results of this method were studied on one plant, which produced an initial 29 plants from the lateral buds. Three of these flowered in the second growth period, and all 29 produced flowers in the third growth period. The average number of flowers per inflorescence was 10.4 and the average number of lateral buds increased from 3.4 in the second growth period to 11.4 at the end of the third growth period. An additional finding from the study of the growing plants was that the Shooting Star has contractile roots that draw the plant deeper into the ground.

If you are interested in propagating Shooting Star using the buds formed in the root system, dig up a mature plant after it has produced seeds. Of course waiting until the seeds are viable provides an additional means of propagation. It is important to provide plenty of water to these plantings to prevent the roots from drying out. A substantial layer of mulch in the late Fall will prevent frost heaving.

Selected references to Professor Sorensen's research can be found at <http://www.bios.niu.edu/sorensen/sorensen.html>

*Merchandise Now* Shey Lowman, Merchandise Coordinator

If you need to purchase merchandise before next year, especially for gift giving, please contact me ([shey@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:shey@wildonesrrvc.org) or 815-757-4456) and we will make arrangements for you to get whatever you need. A flyer listing most of the available merchandise is on the chapter website at:

[http://www.wildonesrrvc.org/Documents/Merchandise/Wild\\_Ones\\_Merchandise\\_Flyer\\_2014.pdf](http://www.wildonesrrvc.org/Documents/Merchandise/Wild_Ones_Merchandise_Flyer_2014.pdf)

Thank you for your purchases and support this year! Our net income to date from merchandise sales is about \$500.



*Dr. Sorensen and Meeting Attendees*



**Membership Application/Renewal**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- I prefer receiving the color digital version of the monthly newsletter as a PDF file via email.
- Check here if you do not want to be published in the annual January membership roster.

**Please select your membership category:**

|  | <b>Wild</b>   | <b>Wilder</b>                  | <b>Wildest</b>                   |
|--|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Household Membership                             | <input type="checkbox"/> \$37                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100+  |
| Household Lifetime Membership                    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1500 (Or 3 annual payments of \$500) |                                |                                  |
| Professional Educator Membership                 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$120 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150   |
| Not-for-Profit Affiliate Organization Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$120 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150   |
| Associate Membership (limited income/student)    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20                                   |                                |                                  |
| Business Membership                              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$600 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,200 |
| Gift Household Membership                        | <input type="checkbox"/> \$37                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100+  |

*If this is a gift membership, please put your name below to let the recipient know it is from you:*

- I would like to make an additional donation to support the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter for: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your **check payable** to **Wild Ones** and mail it to:

**Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter**  
**1643 N Alpine Rd Ste 104**  
**PMB 233**  
**Rockford, IL 61107-1464**

I have enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to  start/  renew my membership for \_\_\_\_\_ year(s).

# Membership Update Shey Lowman, Membership Co-Chair

A membership e-form and our membership brochure describing the benefits of membership are both available on the chapter website ([www.wildonesrrvc.org](http://www.wildonesrrvc.org)), just click on the Membership tab. Renew with any major credit cards through PayPal (no PayPal account required) by using our website. Go ahead and rack up your rewards points and we all win. Thank you for helping us reach our goal of 200 members in 2014!

## 215 memberships on October 23, 2014

Thanks to our 11 members who renewed this month!

### Welcome to new members!

Andrew & Ashley Stickler, Rockford, IL  
 Carol Mercado, Capron, IL

### Anniversaries

**Congratulations to this month's loyal members!**

#### 15 Years

Terry Laman, Lena, IL

#### 5 Years

**Paul & Carol Soderholm, Mount Morris, IL**

**59 attended the September meeting, including 6 visitors.**

**A big thank you to our September meeting volunteers!**

Refreshments- Cynthia Nelson, Ron Hendrickson  
 AV/Sound Equipment- Bob Arevalo  
 Library Assistants- Barbara Flores, Cathy Johnson  
 Greeters- Janaan Lewis, Pat Rooney  
 Meeting Recap for the Newsletter- Cynthia Nelson, Janet Giesen  
 Photographer- Tim Lewis

**It is preferred that renewal memberships be sent directly to the chapter** for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. Please use the address below:

**Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter  
 1643 N Alpine Rd Ste 104  
 PMB 233  
 Rockford, IL 61107-1464**

Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter and your national Journal address labels. You will be mailed a renewal reminder two months prior to your expiration date with a completed membership form and return envelope for your convenience.

Please send address and email address changes to Shey Lowman at [shey@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:shey@wildonesrrvc.org).

Thirty percent of all dues paid are returned to the chapter by National Wild Ones to support our chapter activities. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

**Thank you for your continued support!**



## 2014 Chapter Programs and Events

**November 20** Member Only Potluck and short program:  
**6:00-9:00 pm** "Making Unique Dried Arrangements  
 Using Native Plant Material"

**NOTE: different location**

Unitarian Universalist  
 Church  
 4848 Turner St.  
 Rockford, IL 61107

**NO December meeting - enjoy the holidays!**

**2015**

|                   |   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>January 15</b> | Converting a City Lot into a Wild Place | Mary Anne and Bruce Mathwich,<br>long-time Wild Ones members<br>and native plant enthusiasts. | Rock Valley College<br>Woodward Technology |
|-------------------|---|---|--|

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  
1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104  
PMB 233  
Rockford, IL 61107

### *Don't become extinct!*

If the expiration date on the mailing label is **11/1/2014**, 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:  
**Wild Ones Rock River Valley**  
**1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104**  
**PMB 233**  
**Rockford, IL 61107**

## Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter

### *Board of Directors and Chairs*

#### *Co-Presidents:*

Bob Arevalo 815-332-3343  
Bob@wildonesrrvc.org  
Ginnie Watson 815-398-0138  
Ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org

*Vice President:* Jerry Paulson 815-222-4414  
jerry@wildonesrrvc.org

*Program Co-Chairs:* Lynda and Lee Johnson  
815-629-2781 lyndaLee@wildonesrrvc.org

*Secretary:* Cathy Johnson 815-978-0865  
cathy@wildonesrrvc.org

*Treasurer:* Janet Giesen 815-899-6139  
janet@wildonesrrvc.org

*Membership Co-Chairs:* Marilyn Heneghan  
815-389-7869 marilyn@wildonesrrvc.org  
Shey Lowman 815-757-4456  
shey@wildonesrrvc.org

*Newsletter Chair:* Pambi Camacho  
815-332-7637 pambi@wildonesrrvc.org

#### *Plant Rescues/Seed Collection Chair:*

John Peterson 815-979-8539  
john@wildonesrrvc.org

#### *Show Me/Help Me Co-Chairs:*

Mary Anne Mathwich 815-721-5187.  
maryanne@wildonesrrvc.org  
Anita Johnson 815-226-1606  
anita@wildonesrrvc.org

#### *Youth Education & Grants Chair:*

Kim Lowman Vollmer 815-397-6044  
kim@wildonesrrvc.org

#### **Appointed Coordinators**

##### *Prairie Plant Sale Coordinators:*

Rick Freiman 815-871-7424  
rick@wildonesrrvc.org  
Deb Freiman 815-871-7424  
deb@wildonesrrvc.org

##### *Woodland Plant Sale Coordinator:*

Barbara Flores 815-289-8602  
barbara@wildonesrrvc.org

*Tree & Shrub Sale Coordinator:* John Peterson  
815-979-8539 john@wildonesrrvc.org

*Booth Coordinator:* FREC Representative:  
Tim Lewis 815-874-3468  
tim@wildonesrrvc.org

*Conference Coordinator:* Kim Risley  
815-962-4584 risley@wildonesrrvc.org

*Library Coordinator:* Ginnie Watson  
815-398-0138 ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org

*Mentor Coordinator:* Melanie Costello  
815-645-8430 melanie@wildonesrrvc.org

*Merchandise/Website Coordinator:*  
Shey Lowman 815-757-4456  
shey@wildonesrrvc.org

*Volunteer Coordinator:* Cynthia Nelson  
815-758-8978 cynthia@wildonesrrvc.org

*Publicity Coordinator:* Doreen O'Brien  
815-732-4186 domassage1@gmail.com

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at

Rock Valley College/Woodward Technology Center, WTC, 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114

*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 Memberships: Household \$37, Associate (limited income/full-time student) \$20, Affiliate Non-Profit Organization or Educator \$90, Business \$250. Your entire membership contribution is tax deductible. Contact Membership Co-Chairs for additional information or to join.

815-627-0344 • Join on-line with any major credit card at [www.WildOnesRRVC.org](http://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.