



Rock River Valley Chapter Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 7

July 2024

*Promoting Native
Plants for Natural
Landscapes.*

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

www.wildonesrsvc.org

All articles for the
August 2024 newsletter, must
be submitted to:
[wildonesrockrivervalley@
gmail.com](mailto:wildonesrockrivervalley@gmail.com)
by July 20, 2024.

30TH ANNIVERSARY FOUNDERS CELEBRATION AND MEMBERS PICNIC

Saturday, July 20, 2024

9:00 am to 1:00 pm

LOCATION:

Jarrett Prairie Center

7993 N River Rd., Byron, IL

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:

<http://wildonesrsvc.org/>

Please join us as we celebrate the 30-year anniversary of our chapter's beginning.

We will meet at Jarrett Prairie at Byron Forest Preserve, Illinois, where the chapter was founded. Registration is required. Please visit our website or click here to register: <https://bit.ly/FoundersPicnic2024>.

Day at a Glance:

9:00 - 9:30 am - Social time

9:30 am - A brief presentation of the Jarrett Prairie and Forest Preserve histories by Todd Tucker, Executive Director of Byron Forest Preserve District.

10:00 am - Prairie walkabouts led by Todd Tucker and Russell Brunner, Superintendent of Restoration & Maintenance at Jarrett Prairie.

11:30 am - 1:00 pm - Picnic provided by the WORRVC inside the air-conditioned Prairie Museum. Vegan options will be available.

What to Bring: personal water bottle, sun hat, sunscreen & insect repellent

Registration Deadline is Wednesday, July 10.



Ginnie Watson, Wild Ones Library Coordinator, Plant Sale Coordinator, and longtime member, enjoys the 2023 Wild Ones picnic.

MESSAGE FROM THE (PAST) PRESIDENT

Tim Lewis



**Photo of Tim Lewis
by Laura Sjoquist**

Editor's Note: 2024 marks the 30th anniversary for the Wild Ones of Rock River Valley Chapter. In honor of founding and integral members, we are reprinting a president's message from Tim Lewis, who served as president of the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter

from 2010 to 2016. He passed away on July 12, 2020, but his legacy and inspiration live on. This president's message is from November 2004.

I'm Inspired!

This has been an amazing year for me. I am inspired by the native yards that I've seen this year. We've had some great programs and events this year, as in previous years. The inspiration really struck me this summer during our landscape tour at Prairie Crossings, where the community is based on environmental living. Since then I've seen other yards where natives dominate.

I remember my amazement as the bus pulled up in front of Mike Sand's home at Prairie Crossing. I saw this beautiful house that has a native landscape that goes right up to the street. I would guess that the entire yard is only about 10 percent lawn. Then we

went to other homes including Klaus Wisiol's whose front yard is a little more formal in that the natives are planted in drifts so that the impact is even greater. This inspired me to think about grouping natives in the more public views of my yard so that the uninformed think that the landscaping is planned and not "weedy."

Last month I went to our last seed collection site which was Bob and Carolyn Arevalo's home. As I drove up, all I could see was a sea of tallgrass prairie with a beautiful house in the middle of it. Their large property has very little lawn so there is very little maintenance. The property looks like someone placed a home right in the middle of a prairie. As you sit on their back patio and look out over the landscape, you can easily forget about the stresses of your life. Not only does the yard help the environment, it renews the owners' and visitors' souls.

For some of us, it takes a lot of exposure to examples of native landscapes before we get really inspired. For me, it is a long process. I need to see a variety of examples before I can put together a plan. But I know that in the end I will have a yard that might inspire others. I also realize that I cannot convert our yard entirely to natives overnight. It takes time, patience, and money to do that. So, I do whatever I can, have patience, and keep looking at other examples of native landscapes.

You can be inspired too. Take the time to attend at least three meetings, go on at least one Show Me/Help Me tour, and go on the landscape tour next year. Eventually you will find the yard that inspires **you**.

IN MY YARD Jane Evans

We were at the Klehm Garden Fair on June 1st when I first noticed the caterpillar climbing on the pussytoes we had purchased from Country Road Greenhouse. *Antennaria Plantaginifolia* had already attracted American Lady butterflies to lay eggs on its leaves. This small, unobtrusive plant grows only a few inches tall and likes the light shade in its well-drained spot in our yard. Its bloom looks like little cat feet and are visited by bees in spring. When the American Lady butterfly finds these plants they tend to lay heavily so it's best to have a good number of plants so that no caterpillars starve. Currently the Klehm Garden Fair caterpillar is in a chrysalis sleeping while it transforms into a butterfly.



Photo by Jane Evans

JULY MEETING RECAP: FROM PRAIRIE TO VASE Jerry Paulson



Photo by Lenae Weichel

Eighteen Wild Ones members and friends participated in the workshop held in Jerry Paulson's barn on the summer solstice, June 20, to learn how to bring cut flowers from their prairies and yards inside to enjoy. The workshop was presented by Linda Ricker and Jerry, both graduates of the University of Illinois

with degrees in Ornamental Horticulture, and both with floral design experience.

Jerry started by saying that creating bouquets of wildflowers is easy if you follow a few simple practices and principles:

- Select the right size and shape container for the flowers being used.
- Practice floral hygiene: use clean vases, remove leaves that will be below the water line, change the water every couple days, rinse the vase, and remove faded blooms.
- Don't worry about mixing colors - nature is colorful! Use complementary colors to make the flowers pop, and add accents of yellow and white.

Selecting and Conditioning Flowers and Leaves

- Some flowers do not work as cut flowers! Daylilies, spiderwort, wild roses, and early spring wildflowers don't make good cut flowers.
- Cut flowers and foliage in the cool of morning or evening and plunge in cold water for a few hours or overnight to condition. Avoid flowers that wilt.
- Remove all lower leaves, thorns and stipules below the water line! They rot and bacteria will clog stems.
- Recut stems before placing in water in a vase. Special treatment is needed for woody stems and milky sap to enhance water uptake by stems.
- Recommended for cut flowers: lilies, sunflowers, goldenrods, asters, coneflowers, rattlesnake master and other carrot-family (Queen-Anne's lace), false sunflower, flowering spurge, vervain, black-eyed Susan--especially sweet black-eyed

Susan, coreopsis, grasses and flowering shrubs all make good cut flowers. Don't overlook roadside weeds like curly dock.

Linda presented some floral design basics that apply to all flower arrangements:

- Determine where you will use the arrangement. This will dictate the size, color and form.
- Follow the general rule of thirds: cover only 1/3 of the space with arrangement.
- Scale the arrangement to the container: make arrangement 1 time the height of the container.
- Color: consider the color of the room, use colors that are next to each other on the color wheel or are complimentary colors (across from each other on the color wheel). Arrangements of all shades of the same color can be very elegant and striking, adding black or white for contrast.
- Form: Flower texture and form are important. Use large round flowers, like sunflowers, as a focal point and smaller, airy flowers as filler. Linear shapes like grasses and spikes create eye movement and interest to an arrangement. Fill in space with other flowers and fillers being sure to round out the arrangement on all sides (nature is 3 dimensional NOT FLAT!)
- Mechanics: To hold flowers in place use chicken wire, pebbles, marbles, floral foam, or make a grille across the opening of the vase using tape. You can also create a grid of stems inside the container using foliage.

Linda outlined some basic floral design principles:

- Use flowers and foliage to define the shape of the arrangement (how tall and wide)
- Place largest flowers in the middle as a focal point
- Fill in the empty space with smaller flowers, filler or foliage.

Jerry and Linda laid out flowers and foliage collected from their yards and walked the participants through creating a simple bouquet using the principles above.

Finally, Jerry gave some hints for prolonging the life of the flowers: put your vase where you can enjoy it on kitchen table or next to sink, but don't put in sunny spot or where a lot of air movement can dry out flowers.

The workshop presentation was video-recorded by Charles Johannsen and will be posted on our You-Tube channel on our website.



30 years
of native landscaping
Saving the world in
our own backyards



This year, Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter turns 30 and we are celebrating with exciting events!

**JULY
20
9AM-1 PM**

Founders Celebration & Member Picnic
*Jarrett Prairie Center, 7993 N River Rd,
Byron, IL*



**OCTOBER
19
9AM-12PM**

30th Anniversary Reception
with national staff, history, & partner
displays, & featured speaker Benjamin Vogt
NIU Rockford | 8500 E State St, Rockford, IL

**NOVEMBER
21
6PM-8PM**

Annual Meeting, Dinner & Seed Share
Location TBD



**For more information visit:
<https://wildonesrrvc.org>**



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE **Sallie Krebs, Membership Coordinator**

A membership e-form and our membership brochure describing the benefits of membership are both available on the chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org). Click on Join/Renew under the Membership tab. You can renew (or join) with any major credit card through PayPal (no PayPal account required) by using our website.

190 memberships as of June 23, 2024

Special thanks to our members who made contributions above the basic \$40 dues!

Randy & Sylvia Downing, Stockton

Sandra Quillen, Davis Junction

Welcome to our new member(s)!

Kara Mulligan, Roscoe

New Member Special!

Thanks to a generous donor, new members receive a Doug Tallamy book while supplies last! New members must pick up their copy of the book at a monthly meeting.

Anniversaries:

25 Years:

Pam & Dick Gambrel, Chana

20 Years:

Randy & Sylvia Downing, Stockton

5 Years:

Jacqueline Rheaume, Rockford



FOUNDING MEMBER FOCUS: LISA JOHNSON **Interviewed by Kim Lowman Vollmer**

What enticed you to join, and then what inspired you to stay a member?

I was working at the Byron Forest Preserve, helping with habitat restoration and doing environmental education, when a new naturalist was hired, named Josh Skolnick. Josh was very into restoring prairie and heard about a group of people in Wisconsin who started a club called the Wild Ones Natural Landscapers. So, a bunch of us from Byron traveled up to Milwaukee to meet the folks from the Wehr Nature Center Chapter and learn more about this new movement. We later went back for their annual yard tour and were treated to many beautiful native yards. At the time I was living on ten acres in the country and this was a way to learn about the many plants that I was finding there.

What excited you about Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones?

I really enjoyed the energy and knowledge



Lisa Johnson

of the other members. We all learned from each other and encouraged each other. The meetings brought in speakers who helped us learn more about how to bring native plants into our yards. We also went out to natural areas to explore and learn more.

What were some of the highlights in the first ten years?

Getting to meet some of the legends in the native habitat field, like Lorrie Otto and Dot Wade, and being able to see their homes and yards. We also had speakers come in from some of the other chapters, some were in at the beginning of Wild Ones, like Rae Sweet and Rochelle Whitman.

What were some of the things you learned in the first few years as a member?

I learned a lot of plant ID and that it's important to also learn what conditions each plant needs to survive-what are their communities.



ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Cathy Johnson

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Rockford, IL, 61108

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DON'T BECOME EXTINCT!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 07/01/2024, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last Wild Ones Journal until you renew your membership. National Wild Ones drops expired memberships the first week of the expiration month, so please don't be late! See the Membership Update for renewal information.



WILD ONES MISSION

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

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER MEETINGS

Our regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month. We are live streaming the programs over ZOOM and posting recordings on YouTube. Links to the meetings and programs are posted on our website and our Facebook page, and sent to members via email the week of the meeting. If you want to receive the link send an email to: janetgiesen@gmail.com.

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER BOARD AND COORDINATORS

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Volunteer coordinator: Cynthia Nelson (as to

the left)

Website coordinator: Janet Giesen (as to

the left)

Youth education & grants coordinator: Kim

Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [Open position]

Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson

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