

a voice  
for the natural  
landscaping  
movement

# Wild Ones®

NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

## JOURNAL

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VOL. 26, NO. 4

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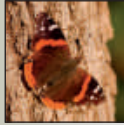


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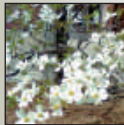
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Working toward our next  
30 years restoring native plants  
and natural landscapes.

## White House Honors Leaders of Citizen Science Groups Studying Ecology

*"Champions of Change" recognized for engaging non-scientists in research*



Karen Oberhauser of the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project with future citizen scientists.

Credit: Bruce Leventhal

Karen Oberhauser, Associate Professor, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, University of Minnesota, is founder and director of the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project. Since the Monarch Larva Monitor Project started 17 years ago, more than 1,000 project volunteers have collected data on monarch butterflies from Mexico to Canada. The data are being used to help explain geographical and temporal variations in North America's monarch populations. In addition, Oberhauser leads a program that recruits fifth to eighth graders to conduct authentic (mentored) research projects on monarch ecology.

### Popularity and Importance of Citizen Science

The Citizen Science Champions of Change are leaders in a field that is currently exploding in popularity--partly because the Internet and new applications afford quick and effective communication between citizen scientists and scientists. More than 600 citizen science groups are currently engaging more than 100,000 worldwide volunteers.

Citizen science is a simple concept. It uses the power of many non-scientific citizens to gather amounts of data no single scientist could gather over a period of time. It involves amateur scientists and everyday curious people as well as those who are passionate about a cause. It allows the non-scientists in our world to participate in the development of our knowledge about climate change, pollution, loss of habitat, loss of pollinators -- just to name a few. With some of the articles in this issue of the Wild Ones Journal, if you are not already involved in some form of citizen science, we hope to convince you to get involved. 🌱

## Do for One What You Wish You Could Do For Many



A dear friend, mentor and a long-time member, Anne Meyer, has been a hands-on volunteer for all her life. Her most recent project of nearly a decade has been to organize and plant several large natural landscapes at a local heritage museum including a creek bed that flows through the museum, a prairie and a woodland. She is well known in the area for being highly involved with several other natural landscapes. She recently told me that she is trying to slow down and limit her time at the museum to just one day a week. After all, she is 80 years old!

I too have been volunteering for many organizations most of my adult life. Seems like every time I join another organization, I eventually become a volunteer. There are so many worthy causes and organizations that I could help if I had the time and energy. But I just can't. I wish I could. I have to admit, there have been times when I got burned out and quit volunteering for a while because I was doing too much.

At the beginning of this year, I heard someone talk about "doing for one"—concentrating deeply one's attention on one effort. This taught me that perhaps I can't take on many diverse efforts, but I can surely do my part by being more selective about volunteering.

This idea of doing well for one what you wish you could do for many is an idea that goes back for millennia, but it certainly applies in our current multi-faceted world that daily presents us with myriad challenges and opportunities.

Specifically, these days there are so many non-profits struggling to recover from the recent recession, that their needs exceed our individual abilities to help all of them. The best solution may be for individuals to concentrate their resources—to do the best that we can with the resources that we have, one effort at a time.

If each of us, over the next year, were to look for one opportunity to volunteer for Wild Ones along with another similarly oriented organization, collectively we could make a big difference. We would be concentrating our energies and resources

It makes practical sense to take advantage of every opportunity, no matter how small, to impart to a willing listener our understanding of the bigger, ecological picture. Not all of us are proficient (or even willing) public speakers, but let's do what we can to share our understanding of the growing encyclopedia of scientific information. 🌿

Tim Lewis, Wild Ones National President (president@wildones.org)

### Welcome to the newest Wild Ones Chapter!

We are pleased to welcome the Blue Ridge Chapter to the Wild Ones family. Located in northern Virginia along the Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge mountains, everyone in Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland is invited to join them. For more information on this chapter and to find out about upcoming events, please contact blueridgewildones@earthlink.net

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.

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## Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Program

By Mark Charles



"My hope is that exposing children to the interesting visitors that native plants attract [in a garden] will inspire them to want to protect the wild habitats where these plants grow." Bob Grese (Wild Ones Honorary National Director).

From Robert McCloskey's classic *Blueberries For Sal* (1949)

through Lorrie Otto's school gardens in the 1990s, inspiring children to appreciate the beauty and complexity of native plant communities has been important to our role as parents and teachers. Since 1996, Wild Ones have been supporting children's connections to the web of life by supporting projects to establish and expand native plant gardens at schools, nature centers and houses of worship across the US.

Are you aware that through your generous donations over the years, the SFE Grant Program has provided \$56,732 in funding for 175 projects in all but 13 states, and including Washington DC and the Virgin Islands?

For 2013, Monarch Watch, our cohort in Monarch Joint Venture, matched our grant awards for every project that certified as a Monarch Waystation. This year Monarch Watch is making the same offer. Help us use this offer of matching funds. The more donations we receive from you, the more project grants we can award.

SFE Grant Applications for 2014 are due October 15th. Your donations make this grant program happen year after year. Let's make 2014 a really special year for the grant applicants.

Now is the time to reach out to anyone who might want to submit an application for 2014 funds.

Experience shows that youth projects that are connected to a local Wild Ones member, chapter or similar resource are consistently "most likely to succeed." Sometimes a bit of encouragement can help a teacher move forward with a project idea. Other times, it's a nugget of information – perhaps a story about a similar effort at another school. Or a reliable answer to the question "what plants are native here?"

Your friendly conversation can help bring the gift of

nature to many children. And remember, too, our "Project Buddy" program is a way for you to stay involved on a continuing basis with a youth project. Our updated web site has many good ideas. Please contact me if you would like more information at [sfeditor@wildones.org](mailto:sfeditor@wildones.org).  
**What's A Project Buddy?**

Project buddies are Wild Ones members who believe it's important for children to learn about native plants, animals, and the web of life.

They use their knowledge of native plants to mentor the adult leaders of a youth projects such as butterfly gardens, prairies and woodland gardens at schools and nature centers. Project buddies offer encouragement and help the leaders answer questions about native plants, methods to establish new plants, and similar factors that go into a successful project. Some buddies visit with the leader over coffee, others check in by telephone or email. Please consider becoming a buddy. 🐛



Grant recipient Native Butterfly Garden in Jacksonville N.C.

## Authors & Artists

**Dorothy Boyer** is past president of Milwaukee-North (WI) Chapter and was our first national treasurer in 1995.

**Candy Sarikonda** is a member of the Wild Ones Oak Openings Region (OH) Chapter and serves on the Wild Ones Monarch Committee. She is a Monarch Watch Stewardship Specialist.

**Mark Charles** is Coordinator of our Seeds For Education Grant and a member of the Ann Arbor (MI) Chapter.

**Janet Allen** is a member of the Habitat Gardening in Central New York (NY) Chapter. She is a Contributing Editor to the Journal.

**Stephen Packard** is a member of the Lake to Prairie (IL) Chapter. He is a co-author of *Tallgrass Restoration Handbook for prairie, savanna, woodland and wetland ecosystems*.

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**Barb Bray** is a Contributing Editor for the Wild Ones Journal and a member of Wild Ones.

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**Barbara Kuminowski** is a member of the Rock River Valley (IL) Chapter, and Chair of their mentoring program.

**Neil Diboll** is a Business Member of the Central Wisconsin Chapter and owner of Prairie Nursery in Westfield, Wisconsin.

## Collect and Save Your Seeds

Besides saving milkweed seed to send to Monarch Watch again this year, we'd like you also to send your extra seed suitable for Midwest prairies to help us do a winter overseeding of the WILD Center prairie. We want to make certain the Wild Ones prairie is a spectacular one, so we want to have plenty of great plants growing in it!

To learn about saving seeds see: <http://www.wildones.org/learn/native-plants-and-landscaping/gathering-rescuing-and-propagating/plant-rescues/> to find out more about collecting and sending seeds to Monarch Watch, see: <http://www.wildones.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Milkweed-Basics.pdf>

Thanks for doing this.

## WILD Center Update

There are lots of things going on at the WILD Center this summer. Promotional efforts and beautiful gardens have brought us many new visitors including a larger number of turtle sightings this year. Tracey Koenig (Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter) and her husband spotted this Blanding's Turtle near the Center. You may recall from our previous updates, that the Blanding's is a threatened species and that our long-term goal was to entice them to our nesting area. Looks like it happened sooner than we had hoped!

With our abundant rainfall we have awesome looking flowers and grasses growing and blooming. We also are seeing unusually tall species this year. Volunteers have been doing a lot of staking along the walkways to keep them from toppling into visitor paths.

Great News! Citizens Natural Resources Association (CNRA) has donated the balance of funds needed to complete the council ring which makes up the center focus of the Pollinator Garden. The council ring will be completed in time for the Annual Membership Meeting so we hope to have our first fire during the dedication ceremony. 🐝



Bountiful rain garden fronts the WILD Center.



Tracey is a member of the Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter and also the Executive Director of Heckrodt Wetlands Preserve.

## Let's Keep the Journal in Color for 2014

Would you like to continue to see the Wild Ones Journal in color in 2014? If we can raise \$2500 before the end of this year from our rebates from Amazon and GoodSearch, we can keep the issues of the *Journal* in color in 2014 and it doesn't cost you a penny. So far we've collected \$730 for 2013.

When you search the Internet or shop online, please use [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com). GoodSearch gives money to Wild Ones every time you search the web and shop online through their site. If you are going to shop on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), Wild Ones also receives a rebate every time you shop their online store.

Shopping through these programs will not increase your cost. You still get the great deals and prices while earning rebates for Wild Ones.

Help make the checks Amazon and GoodSearch send us for the rest of 2013 the biggest ever. Whether you are back-to-school shopping, holiday shopping or everyday shopping, go to [www.wildones.org](http://www.wildones.org) first to link to these websites. Let's increase these rebates so you can continue to see the wonderful color photos in the *Journal* for another year. 🐝

If you are going to shop on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), first go to [www.wildones.org](http://www.wildones.org) and use the Amazon box to start your search.

If you are going to search the Internet, use [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)  
Select Wild Ones - Natural Landscapers Ltd as your cause to support and start your search.



# Monarch Matters

By Candy Sarikonda

It's fall, and the monarch migration is underway. You can help save the monarch migration by planting milkweed and fall nectar plants. What do I mean by, "Save the Monarch Migration?" Most monarch scientists believe it is unlikely that monarch butterflies will become extinct. Scientists are, however, very concerned that the migration will become so small that it will be almost unnoticeable--no rivers of monarchs migrating through Texas and along the East coast, painfully few monarchs overwintering in Mexico. Those amazing images of thousands of monarchs overwintering at one California site may be gone forever. More recently, some scientists and monarch enthusiasts are starting to get worried, as never before. How low of a population is too low, they are asking? At what point will the population be so low that monarchs cannot recover? Will people begin to forget about monarchs, when monarchs are no longer regularly seen in their backyards?



Show your friends and neighbors that you care. Certify your butterfly garden and cast your vote for monarch conservation. Plant milkweed, and fall-blooming nectar plants. Fall is a critical time for monarchs. Monarchs actually need to gain weight as they migrate south to Mexico for the winter. Monarchs survive the winter by living off fat stored in their abdomens. There are few nectar sources in the monarchs' winter home, certainly not enough to feed millions of butterflies throughout the winter! So monarchs must feed heavily on nectar plants as they migrate south, building their fat reserves. This gain in lipid mass is illustrated in the Lipid Mass slide at the Journey North link, [http://www.learner.org/jnorth/images/graphics/monarch/Lipid\\_Mass\\_Month.html](http://www.learner.org/jnorth/images/graphics/monarch/Lipid_Mass_Month.html) with an accompanying audio explanation provided by Dr. Chip Taylor at [http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/monarch/nectar\\_lipid\\_graph.html](http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/monarch/nectar_lipid_graph.html). Clearly, fall nectar sources are critical to the fall migration and successful overwintering of the monarch butterflies. Fall-blooming plants such as asters and goldenrods can easily be added to an existing garden, or a new garden can be created to help sustain the migration. See the Wild for Monarchs brochure for a list of plants that would be perfect for your butterfly garden <http://www.wildones.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Wild-For-Monarchs-Brochure.pdf>

Fall is an ideal time for planting. If you have milkweeds to share, or plants needing to be rescued, fall is a great time to transplant milkweeds. Milkweeds such as butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*) and common milkweed (*A. syriaca*) can be transplanted in the fall, after they are done producing seed and have begun to senesce (die back) for the winter.

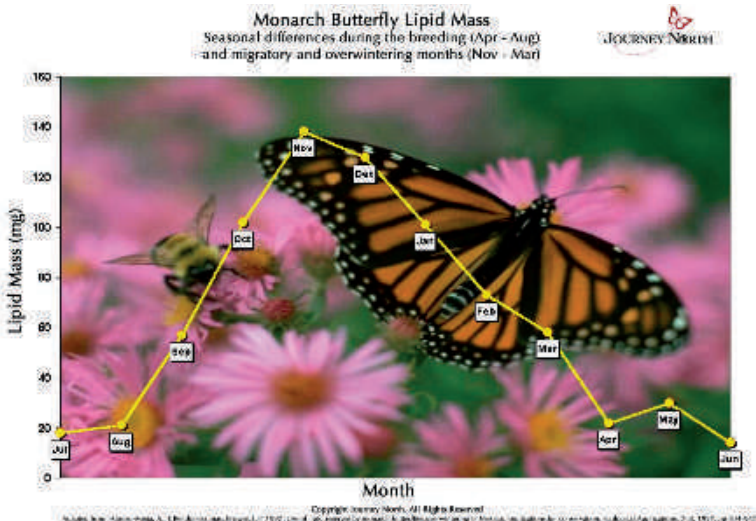
*Monarchs actually need to gain weight as they migrate south to Mexico for the winter.*

Swamp milkweed is probably the easiest milkweed species to transplant. The roots of swamp milkweed form a ball, similar in appearance to the head of an old-fashioned mop. Dig 1-2 feet deep and 1-2 feet wide around the base of the plant, depending on its size. A good rule of thumb is to dig twice as wide as the crown of the plant is wide. Always, water your plants before digging them up—this will help the soil adhere to the roots, and give the plant a thorough drink before disturbing its root system. After digging up the plant, place it in a pot, bag or a bucket of water in a part shade area for a few days. This will help the plant overcome transplant stress. If you must plant it in its new home immediately, you can do so, but keep the plant well-watered for a few weeks. Choose an early morning or cloudy day to do your transplanting, to protect your new transplants from the harsh sun.

Butterflyweed is a bit more tricky to transplant. Butterflyweed transplants best in late fall or very early spring. This milkweed species has a deep taproot that is thick and knobby, reminiscent of a carrot. Again, it is important to water the plant before digging it up. Dig deep, usually 2-3 feet deep and 2-3 feet wide around the base of the plant. Place the plant in a pot, or move it to its new home immediately. You can place the transplant in a bag, but often sandy soil will fall from the roots or the taproot will break—using a pot will work best. Make sure to plant the milkweed at the same depth it was previously, to avoid rotting the taproot or exposing too much of the taproot to winter heaving. Be certain to place the plant in a site with well-drained soil, and keep it watered well for a few weeks to help it through the transplant stress.

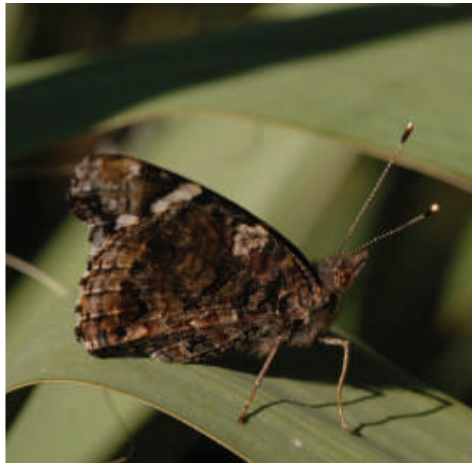
Common milkweed can also be transplanted, but it has a very deep taproot. You will need to dig 2-3 feet deep, and 1-2 feet wide. Make sure you dig up a section of the root that includes the horizontal rhizome. The rhizome is the horizontal root that runs out like a tendril from the stalk, or ramet. When you dig up the ramet, you will need to cut the rhizome with your shovel blade, leaving a portion of the rhizome still attached on either side of the ramet. Essentially, you will be digging up a section of the root system that will look like an upside-down "T." Digging up a "T" section of the root system will greatly increase your transplant success. After digging up the plant, place it in a pot and move it to its new home. Keep it watered well for a few weeks to help it through the transplant stress.

Milkweeds can be transplanted in early spring as well. Follow the same steps as described previously, but dig the plants up shortly after they break ground, when they are about 4-6 inches tall. Never dig up plants when they are blooming or going to seed, doing so will cause significant transplant stress and may kill the plant. Do not dig plants from the wild, and always get permission from the property owner if it is not your property! Finally, keep your transplanted milkweeds watered regularly for the first year, and then leave them on their own. They are native, after all!



# Citizen Science

By Janet Allen



These are all Red Admirals but with wings in different positions.

Credit all Harlan Ratcliff: Citizen Scientist

It was quite an experience. We watched Red Admiral butterflies enter our yard from the southwest and exit northeast. Not whole flocks, but a steady stream of one or two, all following the same path, only rarely stopping on flowers to refuel. This went on for days and days. But no one else in our neighborhood had noticed! Why had we? Because we had recently learned about the Vanessa Migration Project, which had asked people to report “directional flight” of any of the Vanessa butterflies. “Directional flight?” I had thought at the time. Don’t butterflies just flutter around? But here it was, directional flight happening right in our own backyard.

Becoming more observant and aware of nature around us is one of the many benefits of becoming a citizen scientist. What is citizen science? I like FrogWatch USA’s description: “...research collaborations between scientists and volunteers that expand opportunities for scientific data collection while also providing access to scientific information for community members.” Citizen science is especially appropriate for long-term or large-scale research. Although there are citizen science projects in fields as varied as astronomy and medicine, here we’ll cover projects involving the natural world, especially those plants and animals we encounter in our daily lives.

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*Don't butterflies just flutter around?  
But here it was, directional flight happening  
right in our own backyard.*

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## History of citizen science

Citizen science isn’t new. Wells Cook created the first project in the 1880s when he asked people to collect information about bird migration: when birds first arrived, when they became most abundant, and when they left. This project continued until the 1970s, and over the years thousands of volunteers created 6,000,000 records. (More about this project later.)

A better-known project, having just completed its 113th year, is the National Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Count, started in 1900. But apparently it was not until Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Project FeederWatch, begun in the 1970s, that the term “citizen science” was used.

In the last few years, especially with the advent of the Internet, mobile devices, and social media, the number and kinds of projects has exploded. Most are fairly straightforward

with simple protocols (that is, rules for collecting data). A few can provide more challenge: the House Sparrow Project, for example, allows citizen scientists to collectively design a field experiment, and the Garlic Mustard Field Survey involves an ambitious assessment of garlic mustard populations. Although some projects necessitate visiting specific kinds of sites (for example, fields or wetlands), many can be done in your own yard or even just at your computer.

## Is citizen science real science?

When comparing “real” scientists with citizen scientists, Sam Droege of USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center said, “Just because you paid them doesn’t mean their data are better.” He points out that volunteers often stay around for years, providing valuable consistency in data; they’re often more mature and motivated than interns; and they bring the kind of dedication that a paycheck can’t buy.

Information collected by citizen scientists has already been the basis of published research. But the bottom line is that many of these projects simply could not be done were it not for the participation of citizen volunteers. Collecting the data needed would otherwise be financially and logistically impossible.

## Children as citizen scientists

Children, young and old, are welcome to participate, and citizen science can be an important part of their science education. Instead of reading about science, students do science – learning to observe, follow protocols, and to reason about their results. Many projects provide curricula, activities, and resources specifically designed for education. And, of course, families can also use these resources for informal learning.

Besides learning about science, though, these projects give children a reason to observe nature – something few children do these days – and they can develop a sense of stewardship of the natural world.

## My experience as a citizen scientist

My first experience as a citizen scientist, many years ago, was a bird survey a Syracuse University professor conducted through his bird column in our local newspaper. This led me to Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Project FeederWatch – still my favorite project, and the one I’ve been most faithful to, missing only four weeks in the past twelve years. In fact, I started as a novice birder, and learned to identify birds by participating in these projects.

My favorite computer-based project is the North American



Bird Phenology Program, which holds the historic bird migration cards mentioned above. Those 6,000,000 records cannot be used in research until they're digitized. My role as a citizen scientist is to transcribe those old handwritten cards (scanned by on-site volunteers so they're available online) into a standard digital format (see photo). It's quite interesting and not as tedious or boring as it might sound! It creates a bond between us transcribers and those people long ago who faithfully recorded their observations. This legacy data, combined with historical weather data, will be invaluable as scientists track the effects of climate change on birds.

Some of the other projects I participate in – all at home -- are FrogWatch USA, eBird, Monarch Tagging, Project BudBurst, Great Sunflower Project, Help Build Merlin, and Firefly Watch. Participating in these projects has added immeasurably to my enjoyment of my yard and increased my knowledge of the natural world.

### Some tips

Everyone is busy these days, so part of the challenge of being a citizen scientist is remembering to make your observations. Scheduling data collection on my iCal works well for me, but the important thing is to create something to jog your memory. Other projects, such as the Bird Phenology Program, can be done anytime you have a few moments.

Another tip: Although projects generally provide datasheets to print, I like to create my own custom datasheets. For example, I created a Word document for Project Feeder Watch (<http://www.ourhabitatgarden.org/act/pfw.html>) that lists just the birds I've seen from November through April, in the same order Project FeederWatch lists them, so it's easy to tally the birds and enter the results online. I also include on the sheet the other information needed, as well as my username and password. It was worth the time to create this template since I use this sheet five months of the year every year.

And some advice: Start small and give yourself time to become comfortable with your chosen project's procedures. It's better to become comfortable with one project than to get overwhelmed with many. Learning how to participate may take a bit of effort at the beginning, but with experience it becomes second nature.

The real secret to getting involved in citizen science is finding a project that resonates with your interests and inclinations. Not everyone is interested in bees; maybe you like birds instead. Not everyone enjoys traveling to a field to collect data; maybe you prefer collecting data in your own yard. There's such a wide variety of projects that everyone should be able to find one or more projects that are right for them.

### Citizen science for the future

We face so many challenges: loss of wildlife habitat, invasions by exotic species, dangerously low populations of pollinators, climate change, and more. We simply don't know enough about many of these problems to craft solutions. In our rapidly changing world, the more information we have, the better we will be able to meet the challenges ahead.

I enjoy participating in citizen science projects, but the biggest benefit to me is knowing I'm helping collect the information we need to leave a living planet to our children.

Karen Oberhauser and Michelle Prysby of the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project refer to citizen scientists as "a research army for conservation." So join me in this "research army" this year.

Read more about my citizen science projects on Our Habitat Garden website at <http://www.ourhabitatgarden.org/act/citsci.html> 🐦

## Website Update

Website is constantly being Updated; please keep checking

### Wild for Monarchs Butterfly Garden Recognition

As part of the Wild for Monarchs Campaign, the national Monarchs Committee recommended that Wild Ones have their own Butterfly Garden or Habitat Recognition Program focusing on the use of native plants. All Wild Ones members are welcome to certify their hard work and become a recognized Butterfly Garden, provided they can answer these two questions with a yes,

Is your garden at least two years old?

Does your garden or habitat contain at least 75% native plants?

If you answered "yes" to these questions you are well on your way, there are just a few more easy questions. If your garden or habitat is already certified as a Monarch Waystation through Monarch Watch or registered as a Butterfly Garden through North American Butterfly Association it will be even easier. All you need to do is give us your certification number(s) and provide some photos and a list of your plants.

You can quickly be recognized by the Wild Ones Butterfly Garden/Habitat program. As part of your successful registration, you will receive a colorful Aluminum sign to post in your garden to let everyone know you are helping butterflies. Your site location will also be listed on a Wild Ones location map, upon your request. Help us locate all the Wild Ones native plant butterfly gardens and habitats in the USA and Canada. Consider registering your garden right now.

### Wild for Monarchs

Check out the new Wild For Monarch webpages now on our website . We have expanded the background information on monarchs, milkweed and nectar plants, and what you can do to help the monarchs. [www.wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs/](http://www.wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs/)  
**Beyond the Birdfeeder**

Author Mariette Nowak (Kettle Moraine (WI) Chapter) has also updated her two brochures for Beyond the Birdfeeder <http://www.wildones.org/learn/native-plants-and-landscaping/beyond-the-birdfeeder/>

Created in conjunction with her work with the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc, the information presented is suitable for the northern Midwest area.

### Wild Ones Blogs

And don't forget to stay up-to-date on our various webpage blogs. Although the individual chapter blogs are not ready for use yet, we have started listing some member's blogs that are online: Go to <http://www.wildones.org/resources/native-plant-blogs/> to find the one you want.

If you would like to have your blog listed here please submit information to [marketing@wildones.org](mailto:marketing@wildones.org)



## Communicating Ideas

It is by sheer happenstance that this issue of the Journal appears to be following a theme of sorts: Citizen Scientists.

Stephen Packard is the epitome of a citizen scientist. For nearly four decades he has worked for the conservation, restoration and appreciation of nature.

In the early 70s, unbidden, he explored remnant prairies listed in a publication of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. He learned plants from Peterson's Guide to Wildflowers and identified prairie species from a small book of Torkel Korling's photos. This little book (*Prairie—Swell and Swale*) carried an introduction by Robert Betz, a biochemist at Northeastern Illinois University, who had just embarked on the prairie restoration that is now known as the Fermilab Prairie. Entranced by Betz's writing Packard was soon reading all he could lay hand on about the prairies.

On land owned by the Cook County Forest Preserve District he found seven prairie openings along the North Branch of the Chicago River. He established this to his own satisfaction by finding species of prairie plants pictured in Korling's little book. He chose to dedicate himself to saving and restoring the Forest Preserve prairie remnants to ecological good health.

Though an educated man (with a BA from Harvard), Packard was not an ecologist by training. But he did know how to learn, and how to talk to people, to influence their decisions. He went on to serve for fifteen years as the Illinois Director of Science and Stewardship for the Nature Conservancy. The Volunteer Stewardship Network formed under his leadership during that time. For the past twenty years Packard has been the director of Audubon Chicago Region.

With Cornelia Mutel, he edited the *Tallgrass Restoration Handbook for prairie, savanna, woodland and wetland ecosystems*. He blogs at [www.vestalgrove.blogspot.com](http://www.vestalgrove.blogspot.com)

For more stories on the early days of restoration and the ecological adventures of Stephen Packard please consult *Miracle Under the Oaks: the Revival of Nature in America* by William K. Stevens.

**What's with "aliens" and "invasives"? — definitions can change how we see the world, and how we respond to it.**

## Are Weeds Good?

By Stephen Packard

Weeds in nature are valuable plants that deserve respect. Be clear, however, that the ecological definition of "weed" is different from the traditional gardener's definition.

A weed patch in an ecosystem often functions much like a scab on a mild wound that you or I might suffer. Weeds are an ecosystem's response to an injury: the scab that helps the wound heal. Weeds help ecosystems heal. They prevent erosion and start a succession process that in nature is likely to end with the diverse perennial plant species that were there before the wound.

Weeds pop up quite readily and are often annual or biennial. Classic native prairie weeds include black-eyed Susan, daisy fleabane, and common evening primrose. These days, the "healing scab" species may also include aliens like wild carrot, ox-eye daisy, and chicory. These "alien" species are long naturalized to North America and function like the native weeds. They should not be seen as problem species.

**A true simple classic weed goes away with time and doesn't leave a scar.**

Many people worry needlessly (and sometimes counterproductively) about weeds in natural gardens or restoration areas. Relax. Welcome them. Some people say authoritatively, "Oh, yes, wild carrot is a problem. I've seen it be very invasive." But they haven't. They've seen it become very common. That's just a phase, and a step forward for the ecosystem. All these species are easily outcompeted by quality native species within a few years. This is true in either a natural area or in a "wild garden" – if diverse native plants are nearby or have been interseeded.



Prairie restoration after several interseedings and controlled burns. Note the lonely ox-eye daisy--not a problem.

Spraying herbicide on wild carrot or bull thistle may do more harm than good. The herbicide will also likely kill the desirable young plants that would otherwise have out-competed the weeds. In response to herbicide, a new generation of weeds – or possibly more damaging "invasives" – may well fill the herbicide-created void, instead of the young native plant that otherwise would have been thriving in a year or two. Of course, in your yard you may choose to pull unsightly weeds (or allergy-provoking ragweeds) without waiting years for succession. It's a person-by-person and site-by-site choice.

### What is Invasive?

In the early days of ecosystem restoration, we often used the word "alien" as the standard word to describe species that degraded ecosystems. At first, that word seemed to work well, as many people quickly supported the need for remedies when it was used. "Alien" was partly accurate, since most of the problem species then recognized were from other countries. Many members of the general public (who were basically too busy or not interested enough in ecosystems to spend a lot of time learning about problem plants) seemed to understand what we were talking about through the metaphor that mixed the fun fear of space aliens with the now-politically-incorrect-in-progressive-circles



concern about “outsiders.”

But that word failed for two reasons. The first was that some people increasingly used it as an opportunity to argue politics. Attempts at scientific discussion were regularly hampered by totally unrelated Republican-Democrat arguments, especially as America became increasingly divided over the “undocumented.”

More importantly, it became clear the “native” and “undocumented immigrants” wasn’t really the issue. Most non-native species were no problem. And, in the modern context, many native species were very much so. Unburned prairies would die in the shade of native gray dogwood or green ash as surely as they would from the shade of alien buckthorn.

Many of us started using the words “invader” and “invasive” for what we once called “weeds” or “aliens.” This approach worked better. It described the real problem better (but not well enough?).

I remember reviewing a draft policy of the Carter administration that would discourage planting alien species in government projects. I commented that “invasive” was a better word, and explained. Apparently someone in that administration was convinced. When the official policy was published, “alien” was edited out and “invasive” replaced it. (Does our political system actually work? Perhaps many people made that recommendation.) The new language also continued in some later administrations’ policies.

And, yet, while a great improvement, “invasive” was not really quite the right word.

In savannas, although gray dogwood/box elder/sumac could indeed degrade the system in the absence of fire, they did not “invade” from outside. They were natural components that could become lethal to the basic ecosystem. There’s a parallel with animals. Zoologists wondered why some species of turtles, snakes, and ground-nesting birds were disappearing from small preserves. It turned out that overabundant mesopredators (like raccoons and opossums), in the absence of large predators (like wolves, that keep raccoons in balance) were seriously depleting the natural diversity of the ecosystems of which they’d long been part.

I began to recommend using “in balance” and “out of balance,” but many people found the “balance of nature” concept old fashioned. They thought it misleadingly static sounding.

### Benign and Malignant

Increasingly, many of us have begun to compare the health of the ecosystem to the health of the human body. It’s a fairly easy model for most people to understand. The parallels are substantial.

In this metaphor, the “problem species” is the microbe or the cancer cell. Just as a perfectly respectable cell from my own body can start multiplying uncontrollably and kill me, just so, a formerly “in balance” member of an ecosystem can reproduce out of control and cause the loss of other species. That’s ill health, from a natural community perspective.

In the absence of fire, maples can invade a bur oak woods and wipe out most of the natural diversity of animals and plants. Okay – it seems fair to call the maple an invader or “invasive” in that scenario. But box elders and wild black cherries (when “in balance”) are constituents of oak woodlands. Natural fire keeps them in check. But in the absence of fire, those same species can create a malignancy of shade. How should we refer to them in that case? They didn’t invade. Perhaps “out of balance” and “malignant” are the best words our language has.

Severely overpopulated native white-tailed deer can erase most species of wildflowers, shrubs and saplings from a savanna or woodland; they can also seriously deplete many bird species in this process. They’re native, beautiful animals and have rights, but they also may have a malignant impact in the absence of equally admirable predators. As Leopold’s Land Ethic makes clear, ecosystems deserve our respect and affection – and they also have rights, if they are to persist.

Conservation requires public support. Thus, we need clear language to describe problems and solutions. Most people care about nature but have only so much time, or inclination, to study intensively. Those few of us who are impassioned about the mission will want to use the words that will best communicate to the many who will take their cues from us, if we communicate well. 🌿

**Stephen Packard will be Keynote speaker at a conference sponsored by the Milwaukee chapters on Nov. 9, 2013. See Mark your Calendars.**

**Note:** These lists are from my experience on rich soils in northeastern Illinois. Any of these species may behave differently in others climates and on other soils.

**Benign aliens and native “weeds” (Harmless species that often worry wild gardeners and ecosystem managers unnecessarily.)**

Bindweed (*Convolvulus sp.*)  
Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare* – and all alien thistles, in my experience)  
Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)  
Dandelion (*Taraxicum officinale*)  
Horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis*)  
Fleabanes (*Erigeron sp.*)  
Knotweeds (*Polygonum sp.*)  
Lamb’s quarters (*Chenopodium album*)  
Queen Anne’s Lace (*Daucus carota*)  
Ox-eye Daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*)  
Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*)  
Smartweeds (*Polygonum sp.*)  
Velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrasti*)

**Malignant or “invasive” species (In sites where conditions are right for them, they can wipe out most everything else if they’re not controlled.)**

Bird’s-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)  
Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica* and *R. frangula*)  
Sweet Clover (both white and yellow) (*Melilotus species*)  
Crown Vetch (*Coronilla varia*)  
Garlic mustard (*Aliaria petiolata*)  
Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)  
Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)  
Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)  
Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)  
Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)  
Cat-tail (*Typha sp.*)  
Silver Poplar (*Populus alba*)  
Teasel (*Dipsacus species*)

**In prairie:** All trees

**In oak woodland:** Most trees other than oaks and hickories. (But save the little “thicket trees” and shrubs like hazelnut, wild plum, Iowa crab apple, dogwoods, viburnums, hawthorns, etc.)

**Note on alien grasses:** Almost all of them fade out over time with regular burning and inter-seeding – once the grasses have thinned enough that sunlight gets down to the seedlings all summer long. Two to four consecutive late-spring burns will do this for most species. The conspicuous exceptions are reed canary grass and common reed, which are emphatically malignant and are best herbicided.

## Wild Ones Mentoring Programs

Membership in the Wild Ones offers many opportunities to learn more about native plants and natural landscaping. Beside the national and chapter newsletters, the Rock River Valley chapter of the Wild Ones offers diverse and interesting speakers at our monthly meetings, an ever-growing chapter library and Show Me/Help Me events where members can receive direct input on their own property as well as seeing what others are doing with their native landscapes. And there is still another learning opportunity: the Mentor Program.

In the Mentor Program, less experienced members are matched, one on one, with more experienced members. An effort is made to find a knowledgeable person in the area willing to visit the property and provide advice and encouragement (not labor). The time commitment is up to the parties involved, but the recommendation is for two visits for the growing season, to be extended into another year if desired by both parties. Mentors don't have to be experts and don't have to pass any tests, just knowledgeable and experienced enough to help someone less experienced. And by passing along knowledge to others, mentors find they are also learning. It is said that you don't truly learn something until you teach it.

In my own personal experience, I began with a wooded lot bare of any recognizable landscape because of new construction. I was new to natives but had such a natural setting that I thought natives would be the way to go. Since I didn't know a native plant from a weed, I needed help. My mentor, Kim Risley, made several visits over the course of two growing seasons to help me recognize the good guys from the bad guys. I was also able to visit her woodland garden and see plants in different stages of development. With her help and encouragement, the purchase of plants from our woodland plant sale, and the resources of our chapter library, my native garden was much easier to shape than I originally thought. When a new plant pops up in my garden, I now know whether it is a keeper or destined for the compost pile. I recognize the characteristics as far as height and width of the plants I want to grow and am astounded how much I have learned and how wonderful my landscape looks. My garden was even invited to be in our area's garden walk.

The Wild Ones offers so many learning opportunities and the Mentor Program is one of the best.

Barbara Kuminowski  
Rock River Valley (IL) Chapter

## Chapter E-mail Lists

Chapter e-mail lists also present opportunities for rapid-fire exchange of information, mentoring, and actual plants.

John Russell posted this on the Ann Arbor (MI) Chapter list: I have dozens of seedlings of Red Oak, Walnut, Hickory, and Catalpa in my lawn (and possibly a few Bur Oak.) Call me early in AM or late in evening. Dig them up this weekend. Shovels provided!

On the same list, Jan Grichor tells us she has lost 13 ash trees in her yard and as a result is looking to expand her native planting. She offers to trade grey's sedge, of which she has plenty. Cathy Tartaglia answers by offering woodland sunflower, aromatic raspberry (*Rubus odoratus*), which has come to "look like Jabba the Hutt, which doesn't work in a small space", further offers to stop "pulling heart-leaved aster by the bagful" if Jan would like some—along with wild strawberries.

On the SE Michigan Chapter list, Sandie Johnson posts a photo of a plant she would like identified. Fred Kaluza responds with an ID, prompting Sandie to ask "how did you know this non-native so readily?"

Fred gently tells her: "No magic Sandie...just day-to-day observations. Back in 2007 we did a "restoration" here. The bulldozer scraped-off a lot of soil and gave me a chance to start from "square-one". As time progressed, I would steel myself for the rigors of each coming day at my high-stress job by taking a little 15 minute tour of the excavated area before getting into rush-hour traffic. When you spend a few minutes each day going over the same area, you get a good feel for the variety and pace of change. Some plants come and go so fleetingly that if you don't see them immediately after a rainfall for example, you can miss them entirely for the season in just a few days.

In this case, the seed-bank near the edges of the disturbed areas revealed Blue-Eyed grass, Moth Mullein, Deptford Pink and others that all made me wonder about their origins and just how-long they'd been sitting there waiting for a chance to "show their stuff".

Just keep looking (and smelling and tasting) and gradually, over time and seasons, you get to know familiar leaf shapes, habits, forms, colors etc. When something new crosses your radar, it stands-out. That's a big part of the fun for me...seeing new stuff and making mental "collections".

Imagine my embarrassment when John DeLisle (Southeast Michigan Chapter President) had to point-out two giant non-natives I had been unwittingly cultivating here the other day...Baby's Breath and the biggest Spotted Knapweed he'd ever seen. Sometimes, plants seem to be something else when they pop-up in unfamiliar areas. Funny thing...the human mind."

In conversation Fred adds that: "our chapter doesn't have a formal 'mentoring program' but skills, talents and information are exchanged on every field trip. I am inspired by the interest people have in plants—it's rewarding in both directions, to the trainer and the learner."

The capability for exchanges like these is available to all chapter members through their local chapter blogs and group e-mails and discussion groups. E-mail your chapter president or contact to be added to the lists. (See contact information on page 20 of this Journal.)

Regardless if you are a chapter member or a PAL (Wild Ones Partner-at-Large) you always should feel free to join the national discussion group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wildonesnativeplants/> or comment on one of the many blogs available through the Wild Ones website <http://www.wildones.org/resources/native-plant-blogs/>.

## Wild Ones is on Facebook

To access the Wild Ones Facebook Page, click on the Facebook icon on the bottom of the Wild One web page or by going to facebook.com and searching for "Wild Ones Native Plants." If you have already signed up on Facebook, you will be taken to our page. But if not, you will need to "sign-up" on Facebook in order to see the Wild Ones page. Remember to "Like" us.





## Plan for 2014 Wild Ones Photo Contest

Remember that we have a photo contest every year with a deadline in early August. You have an entire year to prepare.



Scenery - 2012 Wild Ones Photo Contest  
1st Place and People's Choice - Morning Mist on the Wet Prairie  
By Marlene Frisbie, Lake-to-Prairie (IL) Chapter

## Nurse Crops: A Lesson Learned

Chuck Grimes of Grasslander Nursery in Hennessey, Oklahoma brought to our attention an error printed in our Wild for Monarchs (WFM) flyer. Chuck wrote:

"Annual rye is not a good nurse crop. It grows tall and rank and has to be mowed or causes a significant shading factor. I have sown native seed mixture in rye cover and got nothing good to speak of. Scuttle-butt has it that the rye produces toxins that discourage other plants from growing. I have seen some extension reports to this effect. I suggest using annual oats. They are low growing and you can sow in them without mowing and provide good cover. 10-20 lbs/acre will give you 4 to 7.4 seeds per sq ft."

We sought a second opinion just to make certain that this same problem applies to the more northern states as well. This is what Neil Diboll of Prairie Nursery (a Wild Ones Business Member), in Westfield, Wisconsin wrote:

"You have to be extremely careful when you specify using "rye" as a nurse crop. There are three types of rye and common names are confusing:

- 1) Grain Rye or Winter Rye (*Secale cereale*) – Also an annual crop but definitely a BIG NO NO, because this annual crop is highly allelopathic, grows big and tall, and can lead to a failed planting or greatly compromised planting when used as a nurse crop. The toxins can remain in the soil for months after the rye has gone to seed and died at the end of its life cycle. Scientific studies have indeed shown that Winter Rye is highly allelopathic. This is not just "scuttle-but."
- 2) Perennial Rye (*Lolium perenne*) – This is a component of some lawn grass mixtures. It grows fast and will compete heavily with prairie seedlings. It is NEVER recommended for use as a nurse crop with prairie seedlings.
- 3) Annual Rye (*Lolium multiflorum*) – This is the ONLY RYE we recommend using as a nurse crop for prairie seedlings. It has been shown to be slightly allelopathic (creating soil toxins that discourage germination of other seeds), but I have not had any problems when it is used at the recommended rates of 5 pounds per acre in spring planting, and 15 pounds per acre in fall planting. It grows 2-3 feet tall, does not create an inordinate amount of shade, but holds the soil and place and helps to discourage the growth of weeds.

We also use oats (*Avena sativa*) as a nurse crop in prairie seedlings, planted at 64 pounds per acre in spring and 128 pounds per acre in fall. Oats will winter kill in fall seedings, but the dead roots and stems help to hold the soil in place over winter"

All of this information is listed on our website in our Prairie Seeding Procedures at this link:

<http://www.prairienursery.com/store/prairie-establishment-guide-ezp-21.html> Here is a copy of the section on nurse crops: 'Nurse Crops: Nurse crops, such as annual rye and oats, can be planted with the prairie seed to stabilize the soil and reduce weed growth. When planted at the recommended rates, these annuals grow rapidly without competing with the wildflowers and desirable grasses. Nurse crops occupy the ecological niche that would otherwise be taken by annual weeds, thus reducing weed growth. Nurse crops generally do not reseed themselves.'

In conclusion, we have changed our Wild For Monarchs flyer to read "only use annual oats for a nurse crop". We thought this would avoid any confusion. A lesson well learned that we now share with you. 🐛

# Making a difference in your yard - swap out invasive common buckthorn and try a native plant instead

By Rick Meader

Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) berries are green now, but soon they'll be black and ready to pass rapidly through the digestive system of birds near you!



If you want to do something relatively simple in your yard that will help birds and make your yard a bit prettier, I have a suggestion for you. Trade out all of your buckthorns for some native, fruit-bearing shrubs.

As I observe many, many yards, I am struck by how many are lined with, or at least have a few, buckthorns at their edge, probably Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). It's certain that those buckthorns were not planted deliberately.

They came via the very birds you'd like to help. They ate some berries from another buckthorn and shortly thereafter, with bad indigestion, sat on your fence or in the tree above where the grown buckthorn is now and deposited a fertile seed in your yard.

Soon after that, the tree slowly began to grow, an innocuous oval shaped deep green-leaved seedling, then a sapling, and not too much later (perhaps as little as a few years, depending on the sun it gets), a fruit-bearing small tree. As it grows on the edge of your yard, or in a remote place, you may not have even noticed it, but its impact on its environment had begun. According to research, and observation, here are some of the effects this tree might be responsible for:

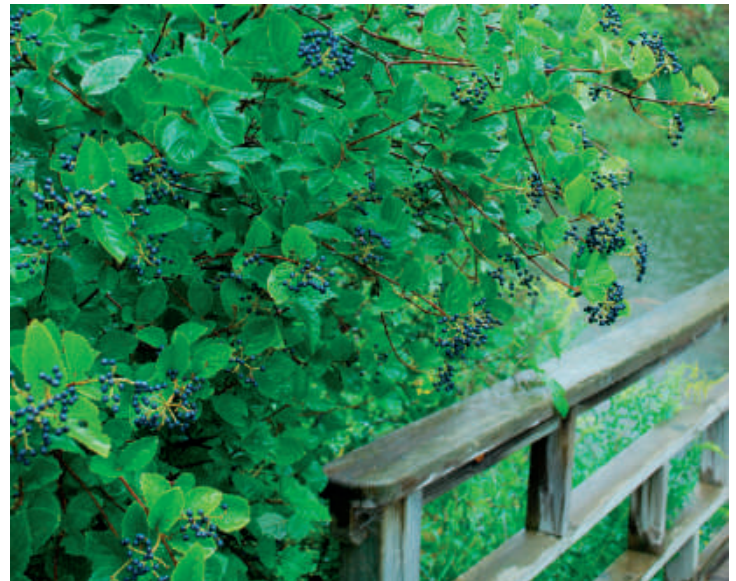
- Shading out ground that previously supported wildflowers in the spring. Have you noticed that they aren't as plentiful in your yard as they once were? Shade is not the friend of spring ephemerals — they grow and bloom quickly, before the shade of the native tree species above them leaf out. They may be found in a shady forest, but they do their real work in the early spring, while the woods isn't shady. Buckthorns leaf out well before native trees, creating unnatural, early shade in the woods, preventing the native wildflowers from getting the sun energy they need to grow and bloom
- Changing growing conditions of young trees in the

woods where you find them. Along with shading out wildflowers, they also shade out young oaks and hickories in those woods. If you go into a buckthorn-infested woods, you'll see very few small oak seedlings. There isn't enough sun for them.

- Changing soil conditions. Research has shown that buckthorns actually change the chemical makeup of the ground where they grow, particularly the soil moisture and pH. This can make the ground more suitable for new buckthorns and other weeds and less suitable for some native species to grow, particularly those that compete better in drier, poorer, more acidic soils.

- Crowding out native species. Buckthorns spread quickly, crowding out native shrubs or small trees that might otherwise be found in the habitat where the buckthorn grows. Understory trees and shrubs like dogwoods (*Cornus spp.*), Ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*), Musclemwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*), Prickly Gooseberry (*Ribes cynosbati*) and Serviceberry (*Amelanchier spp.*) to name a few, might not be able to get started or have a significant presence in woods that are crowded with buckthorn.

- Harming amphibians. This one I just heard about. Apparently, buckthorns exude a chemical called emodin that is toxic to amphibians. As you may know, amphibians are decreasing in number for a variety of reasons, and if you can do something to help out Kermit and his amphibious friends, that would be a nice thing to do.



Viburnum berries are great food for birds, and don't add harmful invasive plants to the environment.

So, what can you do? You can make a difference in the world around you by removing every buckthorn tree, sapling and seedling on your property, and planting native, fruit-bearing shrubs in the area. Even one new bird feeding plant



will make a difference.

By removing all of your buckthorn, and keeping after them to make sure they don't come back, you'll improve the habitat in your yard. And by removing the source of seeds you'll reduce the negative effect on natural areas and neighboring yards that have been coming from your buckthorns.

There are many fruit bearing shrubs that are native to and suitable for Northeastern and Central US. You can choose from: viburnums (*V. acerifolium*, *V. dentatum*, *V. lentago*, *V. prunifolium* and *V. rafinisquianum*), dogwoods (*Cornus alternifolia*, *C. amomum*, *C. florida*, *C. foemina* (*racemosa*), *C. rugosa* and *C. sericea* (*stolonifera*), and serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea* and *A. laevis*). These native replacements will still provide a food source for birds and will add beauty to your yard when they flower. Buckthorns have tiny green flowers- not particularly noticeable or attractive.



Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*) and Alternate-leaved Dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*) are both beautiful, fruit-bearing native small trees that would be great trade bait for Common buckthorn.

Of course, by planting more than one species of native tree you'll amplify the beauty in your yard and add more food to the pantry of your feathered friends. Plus, when the birds leave your home all fat and happy and go to sleep it off in your neighbors' yard or the nearby forest, they'll be depositing native shrub seed instead of buckthorn seed.



To make your impact even greater, tell your friends what you have accomplished and encourage them to do something similar in their own yards. Sometimes it can get frustrating to see how much we can't change in our life space. But—you can make a world of difference, in your part of the world with a handsaw and a shovel. Think about it.

Rick Meader is an Ann Arbor landscape architect who specializes in creating designs for homes and businesses. He favors using native plants wherever he can. 🌿

## Great Stuff at the Wild Store

### Wild for Monarch T-shirt



The full-color graphic on this natural color shirt highlights native wildflowers and America's favorite butterfly—the monarch. The design was drawn exclusively for us by a very talented member for our Wild for Monarchs program.

Available in S-M-L-XL **\$20**  
(Other sizes available upon request.)

### Long-Sleeve Roots T-Shirts



The roots of native plants grow deep, and here's a great way to show off that important fact. Display your "wildness" with "Roots" silk-screened on the front, and the Wild Ones logo on the back.

Cool and unique.

Available in short-sleeve too!  
Currently in S-M-L-XL **\$22**  
(Other sizes available upon request.)

### Order Online

For more information, contact the National Office at 877-394-9453. Send checks payable to Wild Ones to Wild Ones Merchandise, P.O. Box 1274, Appleton, WI 54912.

Prices include shipping and handling. For maximum convenience, order online at [wildones.org/wild-ones-store/](http://wildones.org/wild-ones-store/)



## Shaded gardens with special features

By Pat Hill

Pat Hill describes this as one of her favorite designs. The clients wanted no gutters or downspouts on their new glass sunroom addition. So Pat gave them channels to catch the rain water cascading off the roof, and to let the water slowly filter into the soil, pools to hold a heavy down pour, and spillways through the brick terrace to carry the rain to surrounding gardens. She planted sedges where water might sit for a while, and moisture tolerant plants in surrounding flower beds.

Where slate is seen in paths across the brick terrace, there is more going on than meets the eye. The visible slate is actually two layers of slate, one on top of the first, permitting water from the detainment pools to seep into the surrounding soil.

The natural surrounding landscape lends itself readily to summer shade gardens, where texture in the greenery holds the eye. Some of the plants chosen were ones that bloomed early in the spring before the trees leafed in. Soft sedges and wild strawberries fill shady gaps. If one looks closely into the greenery, rocks may be found hiding. These add visual interest to the gardens after the first hard frost in the fall, and testify to the designer's attention to detail through the seasons.

Visit Pat's blog at <http://naturalmidwestgarden.com/archives/2941> for more pictures and information on this site design, or take a look at her book *Design your Natural Midwest Garden*. 🌿



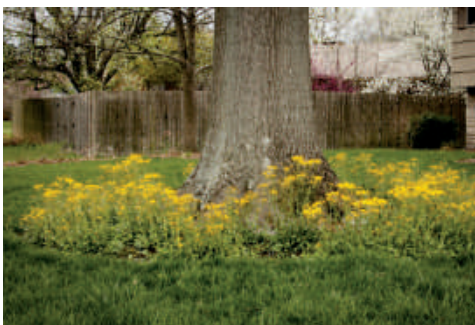
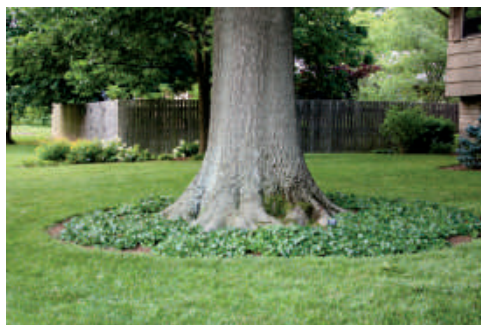
## Golden ragwort—a four-season plant

By Betty Hall

This is an outtake from Betty's blog ([www.bettyhallphotography.com](http://www.bettyhallphotography.com)). It's an attractive idea. With Betty's permission it is shared here.

Last spring (2012) I planted several plantlets of golden ragwort (*Senecio obovatus*, recently renamed to *Packera obovata*) in a mulched area under a pin oak (*Quercus palustris*) in my back yard. I have been surprised at how quickly they have filled in the area. While I was primarily interested in the dark green basal leaves as an evergreen ground cover, the bright golden spring blossoms are certainly an added bonus—especially in the dry shade of the tree.

The rate at which it filled in this small area tells me that I'll have to be cautious about introducing ragwort to other parts of my garden that are not immediately surrounded by mowed grass. I imagine the flowers would be quite spectacular in a wild area where other strong plants would keep these plants in check. 🌿





# Kane is Wild for Monarchs

By David Poweleit, Northern Kane County Chapter President

Here in northeast Illinois, our chapter's board decided to get the Wild For Monarchs campaign started with a bang by providing a free milkweed plant with each purchase at our first chapter plant sale.

We chose to give away butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, for its showy orange blossoms, smaller stature, and its exceptionally slow spread through rhizomes. While common milkweed is greatly preferred by monarchs, and has a splendid perfume, we wanted to make certain we did not turn off any people who were new to natives. We opted not to give away swamp milkweed because of its need for wetter growing conditions, and ran into similar reasons of this or that for other *Asclepias* species native to the greater Chicago area.

Our chapter's booth focused on monarchs and the Wild For Monarchs literature was available to all.

Our first plant sale was a terrific success! The icing on the cake was that over 100 customers walked away with a new butterfly weed for their gardens. We know the plants went to good homes and now provide new opportunities for monarchs coming to or passing through Kane County.



Member Charlene Breitlow at her monarch booth set up.  
Photo credit Herb Gross

At several venues we are attending this year, we are fortunate to have our member, Charlene Breitlow, setup a monarch booth. At our sale, the booth was strategically located between the plants and the checkout, giving everyone an opportunity to see and learn about monarchs before receiving their butterfly weed. Charlene's booth incorporated the Wild For Monarchs posters, a tri-fold display with pictures and information, a binder stuffed full of anything and everything about the monarch, additional show pieces such as a sheet of monarch tags, and bags with a beautiful monarch bookmark and milkweed seeds as a giveaway. Charlene is a life coach and has taught self-improvement workshops at local community colleges and business groups for 20 years. She found out about Monarch Watch and contacted the University of Kansas, which then led to raising monarchs, tagging and teaching. She teaches a summer camp for children on monarchs at the local community college. Her tagging effort helps researchers learn about the monarch's 2,000 mile migration. One could say Charlene has been running her own Wild For Monarchs campaign for the past two decades!

One additional effort was with my daughter's Daisy Scouts troop. We celebrated Earth Day by talking about the milkweed 'truffula' tree.

We discussed the different life-stages of the monarch, its anatomy, how it migrates, and why the monarch needs our

help. After watching a short video on tagging, the girls went to work on making their own monarch wings. Making wings is a fairly easy craft project using two metal hangers. They are held together with

electrical tape, bent slightly upwards and slightly reshaped to be wider at the top of the wing. Two loops of elastic cord enable the wings to be worn over the arms.

Thanks to the handiwork of my dad, the wing frames were ready to go so that each 7-year-old only needed to use glue sticks to design their wings with pieces of orange and black tissue paper and some white dots. Two pieces of tissue paper for each wing were



7 year old Daisy, Abbie Poweleit.  
Photo credit Kristin Voris

glued together with Elmer's Glue, and the wings were ready for flight. While the girls worked, I read "The Lorax" (by Dr. Seuss), and made the connection of Seuss's truffula tree to the milkweed and the monarch's need for our help. The meeting concluded with each girl getting a bag with the Wild Ones' Wild For Monarchs bookmark Wild For Monarchs and a small stone with 'UNLESS' painted on it. As I reminded them of the line from the story, I gave them each a couple of milkweed seeds, and you could just tell that every girl felt a connection at that moment. Later, each Daisy was given two local ecotype butterfly weed plants that were donated by Midwest Groundcover.

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*We are excited that the monarch offers a terrific opportunity to connect folks around Kane County with the critical value of native plants.*

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In Kane, we are getting the word and milkweed out, with the hope that we are helping the monarch for generations to come. Charlene Breitlow and Maureen Zwier have formed our chapter's Wild For Monarchs committee. We've discussed a multitude of ideas including partnering with a local butterfly house, and making local contacts with both the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network and master gardeners. There has been interest in monarch waystations and an event to tag monarchs to connect with the public. We've purchased a copy of "The Incredible Journey of the Butterflies" that was broadcast on Nova and it can be viewed on-line at <http://video.pbs.org/video/1063682334/>. Finally, we discussed doing a program at our monthly chapter meeting and offering a monarch presentation at local venues, such as libraries. We were extremely successful with this approach when we showed the Doug Tallamy video last year and then had a panel answer questions.

We are excited that the monarch offers a terrific opportunity to connect folks around Kane County with the critical value of native plants. 🦋

## Airplanes in the Garden: Monarch Butterflies Take Flight by Joan Z. Calder

By Barbara Bray

If you are looking for a good book about Monarch butterflies geared towards young children, this is the perfect choice. From the inviting title to the cute story, Joan Calder draws the reader (and listeners) into the relationship between a young girl and two monarch caterpillars on a milkweed plant. The story begins in the family garden. Bonnie, the young girl in the story, loves monarch butterflies and imagines they are airplanes. When her mom points out the eggs on the milkweed, Bonnie returns every day to watch the eggs until caterpillars emerge. Then she "adopts" two of them and lovingly bestows the names, Sergio and Stanley, on them. Excitement builds as the caterpillars grow larger. Then one day they disappear. Bonnie, upset at first, soon discovers Sergio and Stanley on the verge of changing into butterflies. She watches each of them form a chrysalis, develop inside, and eventually emerge as adults.

"Airplanes in the Garden" is more than just a good story, though; it is a work of art and a wonderful source of information that grows with your child. The illustrations, by water color artist Cathy Quiel, help the reader to see what young Bonnie sees: monarch butterflies as airplanes and flowers as airports. The illustrations are full of details that complement the story. Children will love the image of a monarch "airplane" filled with bug passengers! They will also fall in love with Sergio and Stanley, who look so cute munching on their milkweed leaves. The combination of a great story and beautiful pictures is what will keep the interest of preschool-aged children. As children get older and ask more questions, the book presents information about the life cycle of the monarch butterfly, migration routes, and butterfly gardens.

I recently had an opportunity to read this book to a small group of children, ages 4-6. After the story, I asked the kids whether they liked it, and it was unanimous! All eight children said that they liked the story a lot. One little girl said that she especially enjoyed it because it was about a butterfly. The story and pictures helped keep the youngest ones engaged, while the older kids enjoyed the details. A favorite part of the story occurred when the mom was telling Bonnie about the life cycle of a monarch. After listening to her mom, Bonnie finally says, "I'm going to call this 'the-plant-that-grows-butterflies'". All the kids thought that was pretty funny.

All in all, "Airplanes in the Garden", is a fun and informative book that will entertain as well as educate children from preschool age to early elementary school age. I highly recommend this book. 🐛

*We now have signed copies of this award-winning children's book available for purchase at the Wild Store. Cost is \$22 which includes shipping and handling.*



We take this opportunity to mention that the author of this book review, Barb Bray, wrote The Next Generation articles for the Journal, starting in 2004. Many of her articles were based on lessons she had taught to children at the Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve in Rochester MI., where she had been a teacher and naturalist since 2002. Kindergarten through third grade was her specialty.

She served as a co-president of the Oakland (MI) Chapter in 2004, and as president from 2005-2010.

Many of you have noticed that The Next Generation has not been printed in a while. For the past two years Barb has been very preoccupied with family matters. She and her family recently relocated to Corning, New York. We hope that when her life settles she will return to writing her column. Until she submits her resignation she remains a valuable contributing editor for the Journal.

## Monarch Joint Venture

Hosted by the University of Minnesota Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, the Monarch Joint Venture (MJV) is a partnership of federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic programs that are working together to support and coordinate efforts to protect the monarch migration across the lower 48 United States. Wild Ones was invited to become a partner in MJV during the fall of 2012. In doing so, we have joined such well-known organizations as Monarch Watch, US Forest Service and US Fish & Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, North American Butterfly Association, Pollinator Partnership and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, many of which offer excellent Citizen Science programs.. For a complete list of partners go to <http://www.monarchjointventure.org/about-us/partners/>

We are grateful to have become associated with such a worthwhile group of organizations and look forward to a long a beneficial partnership. 🐛





# Imagine your fall yard a field of blue-bottle gentians

By Dorothy Boyer

Bottle gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) is a lovely, blue-violet perennial which is native to Wisconsin's wet-mesic prairies and which will also thrive in ordinary garden soil. It grows one to two feet high and blooms from September through October. Bottle gentian, late blooming heath asters, New England asters and big blue stem are richly colorful companions which can resist fall nighttime temperatures as low as twelve degrees Fahrenheit.

Bottle gentian does best in soils which are distinguished by a balanced supply of moisture tending to be a little on the wet side (watch to see if the ground puddles after a rain.)

**Propagation by Plant Division:** Separating mature plants is the easiest way to propagate bottle gentian. This is more successful if done in the fall. Never dig native plants in the wild unless they are in danger of being destroyed by a developer and you have permission of the owner. Perhaps you have access to nursery propagated bottle gentian, or a friend with an established prairie garden is willing to share stock.

Cut apart a fully developed plant so each portion has several roots and a bud from the crown. Keep as much soil around the roots as possible, plant in an appropriate area, and water thoroughly. Some sources suggest trimming small portions of the root system to encourage growth.

Establish a colony by setting plants 12 inches apart. Under the right conditions, it will thrive and reseed the area. Imagine a beautiful mass of bottle gentian showing off its blue-violet flower cluster in the fall sunlight!

**Direct Seed Sowing:** It takes patience and time to propagate the plant from seed, but the challenge and results will be gratifying. Again, be sure to have permission to gather seeds. In the upper Great Lakes region, October through November is the time when the top cap of the flower will open to expose ripe seeds. Shake seeds loose from flower head into an envelope and sow at once

Select a site that is in full sun at least half the day. Cast seeds directly onto the soil and press in. Cover the area with leaf mulch until spring. In southeast Wisconsin bottle gentian sprouts in April. At the first sign of sprouting seedlings remove the mulch. Be sure to mist every day and lightly cover with a clear, polyethylene sheet so young plants will not dry out. The plants will be very small the first year.

**Raised Nursery Bed Method:** Babette Kis, who has done years of research on seed germination has found great success germinating bottle gentian outdoors. She recommends equal parts of unsterilized peat moss, perlite, topsoil and vermiculite with a pH of 6.5 to 7.5. A raised bed filled with rich garden loam will also encourage growth. Press seeds into soil and cover with leaves to winter over.

At the first sight of seedlings remove mulch cover. Leave in the bed for two years. As in the other method, be sure to keep soil moist. Cloche plants with a polyethylene sheet.

Bottle gentian propagated from seed will bloom the third year, and the bed will be full of flower heads by the seventh year. Imagine how gratifying that will be!

Sources consulted for this article you'll want to check are: The New Seedstarters Handbook by Nancy Bubel; Vegetation of Wisconsin by John T. Curtis; "Germination of Prairie Plants under Ambient and

Controlled Conditions" by Babette Kis in The Michigan Botanist, Vol. 23; Growing and Propagating Wild Flowers by Harry R. Phillips; Growing Wildflowers by Marie Sperka; The Prairie Garden by Robert Smith with Beatrice S. Smith; and Prairie Propagation Handbook by Harold W. Rock.

Reprinted from The Outside Story: 1994 Vol. 7, #1 Page 4. 🐝



Bottle Gentian has deep blue flowers that never actually open. Hence the bottle-like appearance. The blooms are pollinated exclusively by bumblebees, which are strong enough to pry open the flowers to gain entry to the pollen and a bit of nectar.

Photo Credit Carl Kurtz

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August 16, 2013

Wild Ones third quarter Board Meeting, Wild Ones Board Development Workshop; Evening Reception Annual Membership Meeting/Chapter Workshops

August 17, 2013

Wild Ones Annual Membership Meeting and Chapter Workshops; Evening Bar-B-Q; "Wings of Life" showing

August 18, 2013

Wild Ones Chapter Development Workshops

November 2, 2013

Landscaping with Native Plants, hosted by the Wild Ones Milwaukee chapters at Cardinal Stritch University Kleibhan Conference Center, 6801 North Yates Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Keynote speaker: Steve Packard

<http://landscapingwithnativeplants2013-es2.eventbrite.com/?rank=1>

November 9, 2013

Wild Ones fourth quarter Board Meeting, Wild Ones Board Development Workshop; Evening Reception for Annual Membership Meeting/Chapter Workshops



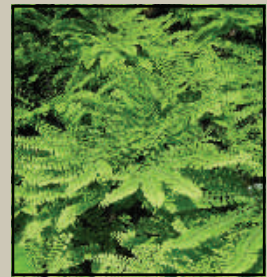
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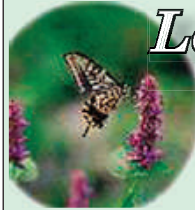




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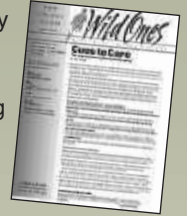
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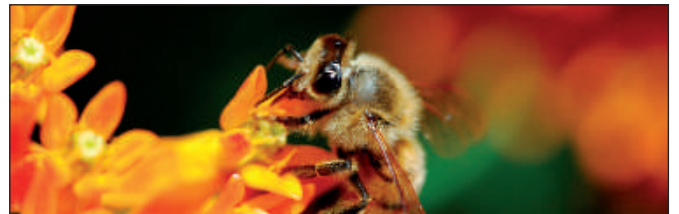
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