

August 2008 Volume 6, Issue 3

Upcoming Events/Monthly Meetings

NEW CHAPTER MEETING SITE. Due to increased attendance and a need for more accessible parking we will be moving our monthly meetings from Nokomis Community Center to Wood Lake Nature Center, 6701 Lake Shore Drive South in Richfield. Our first meeting at Wood Lake will be **Tuesday, September 16** at 7 PM. As in the past social/set up time begins at 6:30. Come early and enjoy the 150 acre natural area dedicated to environmental education, wildlife observation and outdoor recreation. To help entice you to the new site a few photos of the area are included.



Photos by Tim Boyle: For more of his work: <http://Dignature.smug mug.com>

How To Get There: Wood Lake Nature Center is approximately ½ block southwest of Lyndale Ave South and 66th Street. Their website is www.woodlakenaturecenter.org. There will be construction on Crosstown Hwy 62 for the next 12 months or so, but alternative routes may be 66th Street or I-494. Hope to see you all there in ever increasing numbers!

What's Playing: The monthly programs for this coming fall have not yet been finalized. Our president, Roberta Moore, will email you information on these as it becomes available. For those of you without email connection, please contact Julia Vanatta (612-382-2800) or Marty Rice (952-927-6531) for details as the meeting dates for September and October approach

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REMINDER OF SUMMER EVENTS...

19 August & 13 September, Nokomis Historic Walking Tours: Last two chances to catch the interesting tours by Julia Vanatta which focus on the history of the Nokomis Naturescape native gardens (developed through a community volunteer group and the Minneapolis Park Board) and the surrounding area. As the seasons change so does the information provided, so even if you have been on one tour there is more to catch in subsequent visits.

22 - 24 August, Wild Ones Annual Meeting and Conference, “In Celebration of Nature” at the Wild Ones EcoCenter in Appleton, Wisconsin. For detailed information on this conference refer to the July/August Wild Ones Journal or go to their website www.for-wild.org. Should be a great conference and a chance to see National’s new home - and it’s not that far away!!

Meeting Notes

Wild Ones Presentation for April: Shelley Larson: Native Woodland as a Shade Garden Model. Our second of the spring series of presentations brought us up from the waters edge and into the woodlands of Minnesota. Shelley’s vast experience as owner of Hayland Woods Native Nursery has taught her that shady locations can be tough spots to plant. Little turf grass grows in shade and few cultivars prefer shade. However, Shelley points out that there are NO voids in nature and some plant will grow in any and every condition. The trick is matching the right plant to the right spot. Once the right plant is found for your shady location, it will ‘go crazy’ and you can enjoy ‘lazy landscaping’.

Many years of working in the sandy soil of northern lake country with wooded shorelines provided Shelley numerous difficult restoration and planting issues. Her native woodland model outlined two main steps to planting shady plant communities 1) stabilize and 2) restore. Woodland shores must be stabilized before they can be planted. Methods such as live staking with dogwood and willow stakes (12” long, cut before budding and stuck into saturated soil), using downed trees as bio-engineering, and even installing hard armor (riprap) may be necessary to stabilize a woodland slope. The next step is to restore the woodland. To begin choosing plants for your shady area, look for clues in the area: What is there now? What used to be there? Shelley provided resources to find what type of plant community used to be present on your property. The Bearing tree data, available at the county court house, and books like Field Guide to Native Plant Communities of Minnesota, available from the DNR and also sold at many book stores. After you understand what used to be on your land, look for what is missing. Forests are built from layers. Filling in all the layers is necessary to have a healthy woodland or shade garden. Only after all the layers are in place will the sensitive, ephemeral plants thrive.

- The canopy: consists of shade trees and dictate the amount of sunlight reaching the ground
- The shrub layer: consists of young trees, fruiting trees, and shrubs
- The understory: is composed of ferns, sedges, and woodland flowers.

The restoration process begins with the soil. Rich woodland soils are built over centuries by decomposing material. Leaving the twigs, leaves, and debris improves organic matter which many sensitive woodland plants need. This method of ‘lazy gardening’ is a natural way to improve the soil. Mulching with fine wood chips (2-3” layer without weed barrier fabric) allows decomposition in the same way. Picking a quality location with good soils will reduce the amount of work needed to start you planting.

Shelley recommends establishing the trees and shrubs first, then moving on to the understory. Sedges, grasses and ferns should be the background for other flowering plants, much like a painters palette. Sedge and ferns also are necessary for slope stabilization and will start to create quality soils for your woodland community. Next, introducing diversity into your planting is key, for not every plant may survive. Diverse plant communities also provide habitat and food for wildlife and filter pollutants from water and soil. Plant in groups (plants spaced about 6 inches apart) to mimic nature and to protect sensitive plants. The end result should be a 50/50 mix of grasses and flowers. For those of us living in the urban or suburban landscape, Shelley recommends using hardy woodland flowers to begin with until the rich soils and canopy layers are established. Geraniums, columbine, asters, meadow rue and zigzag goldenrod are good tough plants to start with. Later, when conditions are better, more sensitive plants can be added.

Plant recommendations:

<p><u>Shady and Wet</u> False rue anemone Sensitive fern (great for rain gardens) Interrupted fern (fills a lot of space) Marsh marigold Skunk cabbage Spring beauty Graceful sedge Trout lily (wet, heavy soils, slow but easy) Jack in the Pulpit (colonial) Greek valerian</p>	<p><u>Rich Soils</u> Lady Fern Lady slipper Hepatica Trillium Bloodroot Dutchman’s breeches (need thick duff layer) Rue anemone Bishop’s cap Large flower bellwort Phlox Geranium Carex pensylvanica Carex rosae</p>	<p><u>Woodland Edges</u> Woodland aster Large-leaved aster Zigzag goldenrod Geranium Wild columbine Violet Wood sunflower Michigan lily (wet soil) Choke cherry</p>	<p><u>Acidic Soils</u> Bunchberry Bluebead lily Star flower Wood lily Mayflower Nodding trillium (sandy spots) Sarsaparilla (spreads)</p> <hr/> <p><u>Shady Shrubs</u> Northern bush honeysuckle New Jersey Tea</p>
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Wild Ones Presentation for May: The third program of the Twin Cities Chapter Spring Program Series, Three Ecosystems: How to Apply Nature's Lessons to Your Backyard. In this segment, Vicki Bonk and Diana Larson enlightened listeners about the difficulties and rewards of restoring a steep hillside southeast of Nokomis Community Center to native gardens and savannas.

In 1995, it began as a Neighborhood Revitalization Project (NRP). Nokomis was and is a prime amenity, therefore the goal was to improve the park, increase the native plant diversity, rehabilitate habitat and increase education about nature. Vicki and Diana had an idea to restore portions of the Lake Nokomis area to improve the neighborhood, reduce chemical runoff in to the lake, and restore some of Minnesota’s natural history. The process of installing the native gardens and prairie hillside has been a labor of love for Diana, Vicki and other dedicated volunteers from Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA). It required cooperation from NRP staff, Park officials, DNR officials, Kestral Design, BARR Engineering, Prairie Restorations Inc., and Savanna Designs just to name a few! In the spring of 1998, the steep hillside southeast of the Nokomis Community Center was planted in grasses and wildflowers, and three perennial gardens, using only plants native to the area, were installed adjacent to Lake Nokomis.

Over the years they have learned many lessons about maintaining and installing a native prairie. As the saying goes: even the best-laid plans go awry! The biggest issues included keeping plants where they were intended to go, keeping weeds out and remembering how to identify good plants from bad plants. Beyond that, the need for a manicured edge presented itself early on to keep the neighbors happy, since the accumulating soil and mulch near the sidewalk created ongoing concerns.

Vicki and Diana discovered that the plants did not always like where they were planted and often found locations more to their liking. The tall plants such as yellow coneflower, reserved for the back of the demonstration gardens, marched forward blocking the pussy toes. Diana and Vicki learned that prairie smoke (and not pussy toes) were hardy enough to survive the snow plow's path along the sidewalk during the winter. Aggressive natives continued to spread throughout the gardens, such as common milkweed and early sunflower. Black-eyed Susan's, yellow coneflower, and hoary vervain could be found scattered all over the gardens. Although difficult, Vicki and Diana learned that some native plants just couldn't be tolerated (Canada goldenrod for example). Mystery plants accompanied buckthorn, thistle, seedling trees, turf grass and other invaders requiring constant weeding. Meanwhile, wildlife inhabiting the park was reducing the desirable native populations. Wahoo, although a beautiful shrub, is also a favorite food of rabbits. Moles prefer the succulent bulbs of blazing star.

There were pleasant surprises also. The vitality of the demonstration gardens proved that many plants could grow well under sugar maple trees despite the shade. Diana showed the crowd where spiderworts had popped up unexpectedly and could be moved to better suited locations. Virgin's bower and Solomon seal were doing well beneath the cedar grove. And over all the public was responding well to the project. The garden tour was a great demonstration of how successful a neighborhood revitalization project with native plants can be. Although it has required a great deal of work, the gardens have touched the lives of many residents in and around the Nokomis Lake area. NRP members, volunteers and passersby enjoy the colorful flowers and sweet smells and learn about Minnesota's native plants and their importance to Minnesota's natural history, habitat and resource conservation.

Gardener's To-Do List (August, September, October)

- * Stay on top of weeding: just a few minutes a day (depending on the size of your garden) can catch them before they go to seed.
- * Water newly planted additions to your garden during drier periods.
- * Turn compost heap every week or two and don't allow it to completely dry out.
- * Take cuttings to start new plants.
- * The cooler temperatures of autumn are a great time to add plants. Keep watered to help them establish well before winter.
- * Look around the garden and cut back plants that are invading their neighbors.
- * Replenish mulch as needed (2-4 inches).
- * If you plan to gather seeds to share or start more plants yourself, watch seed heads for readiness to harvest
- * Clip off seed heads before they ripen on plants that are too "exuberant" in your garden.
- * Mow a path through meadow and prairie gardens so that you can stroll through and enjoy the plants.
- * Take pictures (and notes) to aid in winter planning for next year - and for your upcoming "show and tell".
- * Consider doing your garden cleanup in the spring: standing plants bring winter interest to your yard and continue to provide shelter and food for wildlife.
- * Determine where you might want to expand your garden and smother the grass with newspaper/cardboard and mulch. By spring, the area will be ready for planting (or winter sow some of your collected seeds.
- * Don't forget to take time and enjoy the wildlife that makes use of your native plants.



Presidents' Message - Roberta Moore, Current President

Dear Members, I am excited about our move to a new location. The Wood Lake Nature Center is a beautiful facility. Marty Rice took me on a tour last winter and I really fell in love with the place. After investigating other options for meeting space; comparing accessibility and cost; and discussing the pro's and con's with the board, it became apparent that Wood Lake would offer us room to grow and a comfortable environment to hold our meetings. Here are some of the questions that were discussed in the process of deciding the move:



Q: Will this affect our support of the Nokomis Naturescape gardens? A: Nope, we will continue to support our sister organization by recruiting volunteers to work in the gardens.

Q: Will WO pay a room rental fee? A: Yes. The room rental is very reasonable compared to other locations that we investigated. The officers felt the fee was within our budget.

Q: What about the road construction? A: The road construction is a temporary issue. There is no guarantee that if we had selected a different location that construction would not become an issue at a later date. This is Minnesota after all!

Q: Parking lot security: A: The parking lot is well lit and there is also a security camera. Members are reminded to not leave any valuables in their cars just as you would in any other parking lot.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the new location in September. A special thanks to all who made this happen.

Roberta

Book Review, Internet Info, You Name It!!

Editor's Note: Once again we have the pleasure of giving you something from the daily journal of John Cady. If you wish to see more of his musings and great photos go to morning.earth@earthlink.net



She is at first, demure and shy,
Petals long, concealing
Then the season grows, and now
the whole glade of lilies hums
for nectar and for seed, for now
White trout lily lifts her skirts for bees.

Featured Native Plant:

Common Names: Sneezeweed, Common Sneezeweed, Fall Sneezeweed, Bittersweet

Scientific Name: *Helenium autumnale*

Family: Asteraceae

IDENTIFICATION

Habitat: Moist, open places such as along stream banks, in wet meadows and prairies and in swamps.

Height: 3 to 5 feet

Leaves: Alternate, somewhat fleshy, stalkless leaves. They are lance-like (widest near the middle and tapering at each end) and are up to 6 inches long and 1½ inches wide, usually with small, widely spaced teeth along the edges. Leaves may be found with numerous small glands on them.

Flowers: Yellow, daisy-like flower heads are on individual stalks. The head is 1 to 2 inches wide, with several long, thin, pointed green bracts beneath 10 to 20 petal-like ray flowers which surround a rounded central yellow disk up to ¾ inches wide. Each petal has 3 to 4 lobes at its tip. Blooms late summer to early autumn (August - October)

Fruit: Four - 5 angled capsule with no fluffy pappus (tuft of hairs). Can collect seeds after the flower fades.

Overall Characteristics: Clump-forming, plants having narrow wing-like green structures extending downward along the stem from the leaf bases. May have been named after Helen of Troy for according to legend flowers appeared where her tears fell. "Autumnale" refers to its blooming period.



Winged Stem

GARDEN TIPS

Good in prairie, meadow gardens

Plant Hardiness: Zone: 3-8

Sun/Shade Needs: Full sun to light shade.

Soil Needs: Average, moist or wet soil.

Planting: Plant 1½ to 2 feet apart. Spread 2 - 3 feet.

Propagation: Can divide the rootball in the spring or fall or grow from seed either by sowing directly outdoors in the spring after the last frost. Barely cover with soil. If starting indoors first use moist, cold stratification, before starting the germination process. It is also possible to grow from basal cuttings.

Care: Does not tolerate dry soils well; however, don't overwater. May need staking. Some consider it weedy and invasive. To help keep it under control (1) cut back in June to reduce height and encourage branching; (2) pinch back the flowers for this purpose - or leave for winter interest; and (3) divide every several years - should do so in any case when the center of the clump is bare.

Companion Plants: Great Blue Lobelia, Obedient Plant

Friends & Foes: Attracts butterflies, bees and birds. No serious insect or disease problems. May be susceptible to powdery mildew, leaf spot and rust. Doesn't appear to be eaten by rabbits.

NOTES

Current Use/Interest: No known current use. Note that parts of the plant are poisonous, if ingested. Because of this, they are avoided by cows, sheep and horses. Some people may have an allergic reaction from handling the plant. Flowers have an oil which has insecticidal properties

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Historic Use/Interest: A dry powder made from the flower was used like a snuff to treat colds, by inducing sneezing which would “loosen” the cold. As a tea it was ingested to treat intestinal worms

Member Spotlight - Joanne Bednarski

Occupation: Recently retired. Formerly principal of St. Andrews Elementary School in Elk River.

Highlight: Joanne may take the record for longest distance traveled to faithfully attend Wild Ones meetings as well as being a great volunteer when the occasions arise. She lives near Anoka and finds our monthly meetings interesting enough to battle the traffic through downtown Minneapolis from her place.

Length of Wild Ones Involvement: 3 years.

1. Question: You were a principal (and I assume teacher) for a number of years. Did you incorporate anything into your school curriculum that was environmentally (and in particular, native plant) friendly?

Answer: Yes. I brought in several speakers and programs specifically geared to natural science and Minnesota flora and fauna. For instance, Wargo Nature Center has this incredible school program where they come out each year to do a presentation on a Minnesota animal. Climb Theater also has a great program on recycling. I tried to establish a culture of respect and interest in our native and natural resources with books, posters, demonstrations, etc. It was great fun when the kids came into my office with some unidentified plant, rock, animal part, leaf, or whatever and we would try to figure out what it was. The teachers knew that science and wildflowers were passions of mine and they too bought into the importance of teaching children the wonders of nature. Point in fact, as a retirement gift the school community planted a native red maple tree on the school yard as a tribute to my service to the school. Also I occasionally was able to get into the classrooms to be a guest teacher for some science units.

2. Question: You were also a Master Naturalist. How did you like this program and how did it further your understanding or interest in native plants?

Answer: I love being a Master Naturalist. It provides opportunities to learn more about the habitats of native plants and in addition to WO members I can meet others who have the same passion for our natives.

3. Question: How did you first become involved with WO and why?

Answer: I found a small announcement in the Anoka Union for a WO National Conference at Bunker Hills in September 2005. It was a wonderful event and I was so excited to find an organization that actually promoted natives that I joined immediately.

4. Question: At a past monthly WO meeting you were part of an impromptu design discussion. Have you implemented any of the thoughts or done any further research based on suggestions given at that time?

Answer: Yes. Last summer my husband and I prepared a large portion of our front yard and a small circle on the side to be wildflower gardens. I have a few plants in the large space - butterfly weed, Joe-Pye weed, and prairie cinquefoil, but I need to go back to redesign the space. There is less sun than I originally thought so I need to rethink which plants will go in. The small prairie garden has grasses: dropseed, June grass and little bluestem; some great harebells, purple prairie clover, spiderwort, wild quinine, coneflowers,

New England asters, alum plant, columbine, prairie phlox, blazing star and a compass plant. This is the second year and it is really gorgeous.

5. Question: Now that you are retired what are you planning to with your additional time?

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Answer: I hope to do some volunteering as a Master Naturalist and in WO programs, continue my garden and find a part time job.

6. Question: What is your favorite native plant and why?

Answer: I love the spring ephemerals and other spring flowers. It feels magical to walk in the woods in the spring and find these beautiful flowers blooming just when the woods is waking up from the long, cold winter. My favorite is lupine -- I just attended a class in June on urban grasslands. We took a field trip out to Crow Hassen Regional Park. It has about 800 acres of restored prairie as well as woods and wetlands. The prairie flowers were extraordinary and several of the prairie areas were covered with blooming lupine. It was breathtaking!!

From the Brown Thumb

My original intention this newsletter was to give some helpful advice based on adventures in my own gardens. However, due to absences from the home front, my efforts this gardening season have been almost entirely in the field of weeding. Not much to learn there! Except perhaps that there are consequences to being gone extended periods of time in April and May - for which I am still paying the price. The only saving grace with delaying weeding until early June is that even I have a better chance of not pulling up a much wanted native. The major invader into my little kingdom, creeping bellflower (*Campanula rapunculoides*) is much easier to spot and eliminate. Three leaf bags-full later I believe things are once again under control.



As I have stated in previous articles, when we first moved in a few years back, while my front yard appeared well groomed and attractive; through several summers of inattentiveness the creeping bellflower had escaped in my back yard and run completely wild. This perennial is not a native but an import from Europe



and Asia. It was thought to make a lovely addition in gardens and is widely distributed in this country. The plant has everything going for it as it thrives on abuse (in that it is able to grow even in the shade and is not terribly hindered by drought conditions); has both a deep fleshy root as well as rhizomatous root system; and produces a seemingly huge amount of seeds (several sources stated that one plant could produce 3,000 to 15,000 seeds annually - not sure how they counted all of these but in any case it is quite a prodigious amount and that kind of success always helps in the survival game). As a result of the relentless spread of this plant it justly deserves its common name “creeping” bellflower. Further, its deceptive ability to look as if it is an erect upper stem rising immediately from the earth, adds credence to its title. For when reaching to pluck it out, one finds the stem has slunk along the ground and is actually anchored to the soil several inches away.

Anyway, I initially struck this plant a substantial blow when I completely dug up most of my back yard in preparing the area for the arrival of native plants. Many a root was removed as I spaded my way down between 6 and 8 inches. Of course in areas where I was unable to dig, such as under trees and shrubs, the bellflower continues to thrive. But in the remainder of the back yard it is a mere shadow of its former robust self. Here plants now come up sporadically and are quite puny looking. Throughout the back yard

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then, I am usually able to dig them out before they gain any kind of advantage and reach a seed producing stage. So maybe I am winning this battle with the creeping bellflower, although I seriously doubt that I have any real permanent long-term advantage that will allow me to relax my guard. Most sources I consulted seemed to agree that this is an uphill battle never permanently won by the gardener. To dig it up one needs to go down at least 6 inches and try and get at the major single root. One can't be deceived by the rather smallish surface roots, thinking that pulling these out is going to rid one of the problem. With an ever-increasing number of natives, I find it more and more difficult to reach among these and spade out their deep root, so I am resigning myself to winning only the insignificant visible battles by removal of the plant and its attached rhizomes.

Perhaps if this plant had not been allowed to totally take over the yard I might feel more kindly toward it, allowing it to occupy a small niche. But now it is a war of total elimination. Even if I am unable to completely conquer this many tentacled being, I hope that my incessant efforts to pounce on every small bud that appears and whack down any flowering plant that escaped my trowel initially will at least keep it at bay. Oops!! Got to close for now. It's time to go out and do daily battle once again!

Members Corner

1. A double rain barrel is seeking a good home for only \$100. The two 55-gallon barrel system (plus a description) can be viewed by going to <http://tinyurl.com/2t8h9p>. Contact information is also on that web page. For those of you without internet access with interest in this please contact Mary Schommer (612-729-5274)

Editor's Note: Got something you want to tell, sell or give away. This space is provided for members who wish to "advertise" anything related to native plants. Some examples of acceptable types of information are plant rescue opportunities, sale of a house that features native plants, plant sales, seminars, and seed/plant give-away. This is offered with the following restrictions

- 1. Each member may enter one "advertisement" per calendar year.*
- 2. The "advertisement" is limited to 75 words or less.*

Welcome New & Renewing Members

As of 1 July 2008 according to the national website, our chapter had 100 active members. Thank you to the recent new and returning members for their support of Wild Ones (see list below of those that joined in recent months). Whether you've just joined or have been a member for several years we look forward to your participation. Besides this newsletter, visit us at www.for-wild.org/chapters/twincities <<http://www.for-wild.org/chapters/twincities>>.

Jamie Aussendorf, Bill & Liz Blood, Kathy Bonnett, Bob Curshall, Heather Devlin, Dean Doering & Lisa Scribner, Joel & Sandra Dunnette, Ronald Hackett, Debbie Hansen, Catherine Harrison, Carolyn & Peter Harstad, Esther Hope, Barbara & Richard Kraft, Diana Lynn Larsen, Elaine Larson, Shelly Larson, JoAnna McKasy, Richard & Diane Madlon-Kay, Jack & Jane Moran, Rose Meyer, Mary & Todd Miller, James Nelson, Douglas Owens-Pike, Molly Poquette, Carmen Simonet, Alex Strachota, Tom Tenant, Michele Vaillancourt, James Wellman, Breanna Wheeler

2007 Officers

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Outreach: **Unfilled**
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Plant Rescue: **Unfilled**
Programs: **Unfilled by end May**/John Arthur
Public Relations: Julia Vanatta
Show Me, Help Me: **Unfilled**
Spring Expo: **Unfilled for 2009 Expo**
Tours: Carmen Simonet
Web: Jim Sipe

MEMBERSHIP

Benefits To You

- Monthly meetings featuring excellent presentation on a wide array of native landscaping topics.
- Receive the new member packet, including our handbook full of information and activities on natural landscaping.
- Receive the Wild Ones journal, with articles and information to inspire and educate you about natural landscaping.
- Free admission to Wild Ones' events, such as our garden tours, and native plant walks and sales/swaps.
- Reciprocity with other chapters' meetings.
- Gather and exchange information and expertise with other gardeners of all experience levels.
- Support for the Wild One's Mission.

Join or Renew

1. Sign up at a meetings, or
2. Call Marty Rice at 952-927-6531, or
3. Access the national website at www.for-wild.org



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OUR 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-
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