

Twin Cities Chapter Quarterly Newsletter

February 2013 Volume 11, Issue 1

Upcoming Events/Monthly Meetings



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Saturday, 2 March, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Plymouth Creek Center 14800 34th Avenue Plymouth, MN 55447

Admission is \$60 per person. This includes morning snack, buffet lunch and afternoon dessert. For additional information and to register go to http://www.designwithnatureconference.org or call 612-293-3833.

NOTE: Discounted admission is available through 15 February (\$50 for WO members; \$55 for Non-Members; \$25 for qualifying Full-time Students).

Landscapes tell us stories. Reading a landscape connects us to that place. We understand the richness of nature and history embedded there. Stone, soil and seasons, water and weather begin the story. Layers of life—from soil organisms and fungi, to plant, animal, and human populations—provide the actors. These elements weave into food webs, communities, and an ecosystem. "Interpreting this reading matter, in place, on the land, seeing living things in their total environment, is an adventure...(in) ecology."* In learning to

read these stories we become better designers and stewards of our

landscapes.

*Reading the Landscape of America, May Theilgaard Watts (1957)

Darrel Morrison, keynote speaker, landscape architect, educator, and author. Professor Morrison is a pioneer in using native plant communities as models for the design of gardens and landscapes. Dawn Pape, environmental educator, author, and photographer who speaks and writes about functional gardening, including growing natives and edibles, and planting to improve water quality. Bonnie Harper-Lore, restoration ecologist, educator, author who has concentrated on federal/state roadside wildflower programs and the management of exotic and noxious weeds.

Diane Hilscher, landscape architect and ecologist who has focused on integrating natural systems and native plants into uniquely beautiful and functional landscape designs.

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MONTHLY MEETINGS

(Meetings at the Wood Lake Nature Center: social at 6:30, meeting to start promptly at 7:00. Free and open to the public)

The monthly programs for March and May 2013 (normally held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month) have not yet been finalized. Information is available via our website as the meeting dates approach.

17 April Meeting. Question and Answer Session: How to Design and Manage Your

Native Plant Garden. This will be a hands-on workshop where all attendees will have an opportunity to gather ideas on planning and plant selection. It will be hosted by Wild Ones Twin Cities Chapter professional designers, growers and experienced gardeners. Roundtable topics will include site evaluation; designing prairie, front yard, boulevard, woodland, habitat and rain gardens; selecting trees and shrubs; transitioning established non-native perennial gardens to native gardens; and tips on managing aggressive yet desirable native plants. People can drift from one table to another where hosts and hostess will be stationed and ask questions pertaining to their particular situation.

Meeting Notes

Nov 2012 Establishing Native Landscapes from Seed, Josh Richardson from Prairie

Restoration. This presentation focused primarily on larger spaces/projects. It commenced with an interesting "tour" of operations at Prairie Restoration. Here all seeds are raised in individual plots. For example Little Bluestem covers one entire area. Once the seeds are ready to harvest they are either hand-picked or collected with a combine.

When developing an area for planting the keys to success are:

- 1. Match species selected to the site conditions
- 2. Good site preparation
- 3. Increased biodiversity more resilient

The seeds are then sent through a cleaning machine which contains multiple screens with air blown through to remove the chaff. Given the wide variety of plants there are various sizes of machines to perform each task. Eventually the seeds are bagged and stored in their warehouse for future sales.

From that initial operational overview, information on seed related topics were given.

With regard to use of seeds rather than plantings (plugs) in a given area, in general using seeds works better on larger projects. Plants work better in shady areas. Many times a combination is implemented. Here seeds are spread first then plugs are added. This is especially true because some species produce too few seeds to broadcast them. In small planting areas, spread the grass seed first and gently rake in, then spread your native plant seeds but don't rake.

The three important steps for planting seeds are:

- 1. Site Preparation. It is critical to get rid of the competition from unwanted plants (primarily weeds). There are a number of suggested techniques that have been more thoroughly covered in previous presentations spraying with herbicides, burning, disking, and harrowing to name a few.
- 2. Seed Installation. If possible think like a seed. For instance give each seed plenty of elbow room; be sure the seed has direct soil contact (this is critical); and don't bury them too deep. The planting of seeds should be done when it is less likely to have weed competition. When deciding when to plant, remember that in early spring there is a lot of weed competition.
- 3. Erosion control (which also has insulating value). It was suggested that the area be covered with wheat or oat straw. One could also use Little Bluestem straw.

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The final topic covered was maintenance. Here the following was suggested:

- 1. Low maintenance/no maintenance should be the goal.
- 2. The maintenance of an area is very important during the establishment period (first 3 years).
- 3. Mow during the first growing season.
- 4. Maintenance actions could include
 - a. Spot mowing, spot spraying, or wicking (application of a small amount of herbicide to specific plants).
 - b. Hand weeding (try to minimize soil disturbance which triggers the emergence of annuals).
 - c. Prescribed burning.
- 5. Consider if watering necessary. One should try to avoid watering if at all possible. However, when you do so, water deeply and less often.

Twin Cities Chapter Election of officers for 2013 (voted at Nov. 2012 meeting)

Co-Presidents: Marilyn Jones and Vicki Bonk

Secretary: Becky Wardell Gaertner

Treasurer: Elaine Larson

Jan 2013 Botanical Wanderings, Michael Lynch. This evening we were taken on a tour of some of the places Michael Lynch has visited in recent years. One driver for this endeavor is his quest to discover remnants of the botanical landscape prior to man's major impacts. What I am listing below are a few of places in Minnesota where he has wandered with the hope that it will inspire you to do the same and discover for yourself the wonders that may be found.

- 1. Minnehaha Park, Minneapolis: An early spring wander (mid-March during the winter of 2011 in which tons of snow lay on the ground) when one would not expect to see any new arrivals popping out of the ground, a skunk cabbage was found poking out of the snow. This amazing plant generates its own heat which melts the snow and allows it to appear much earlier than other natives. Later in the spring you may find in the park lots of flowers are characteristic of the maple basswood forest found there.
- 2. Gun Club Lake, Fort Snelling State Park: This lake is located on the south bank of the Minnesota River within the State Park. It is chock full of



Prairie Flowers, photo by Michael Lynch

- vegetation, including an abundance of water lilies which can make water travel tough going.
- 3. Crosby Park, St Paul: This is the biggest park within the city. One can find mini-gorges cut from the rock as well as native plants.
- 4. Nine Mile Creek park in Bloomington near Life Church in "Central Park". Contains a little patch of goat prairie. A goat prairie is a type of prairie on land that is steep and south facing so that it is too droughty for trees to grow and is also so steep that they say that only goats could graze on it.
- 5. Hastings Sand Coulee: This area is home to the Small-Leaved Pussytoe and is the eastern most edge of its range.
- 6. Scientific and Natural Areas. These are areas under the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources that preserve natural features and rare resources of exceptional value. You can find heron rookeries, prairie landscapes, and representative forests to name a few of the designated areas.

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- a. Lost Valley Prairie, south of Afton, Minnesota: A remnant prairie rich in native prairie grasses. Hill's Thistle may be found here. This is a rare plant that takes 10 years to bloom and then it dies.
 - b. Kellogg Weaver Dunes, south of Wabasha, Minnesota: This is a sand dune complex.
- 7. Blaine Preserve. A wet prairie complex which is characterized by sandy soil, completely flat topography, and a very high water table is found here. This type of habitat is common on the east coast. In Minnesota there are only around six of these areas. Because you can find about 280 species of plants here, it is a place one can



Some botanical wanderers, photo by Michael Lynch

visit at any time of the year and see interesting native plants. One of particular interest is the Cross Leaf Milkwort, an endangered species, which blooms from late summer to early fall.

- 8. Louisville Swamp, Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge, Shokapee. There are Jordon sandstone outcrops to be found here. It is primarily a dry oak savanna which reflects what the Twin Cities used to look like. Of additional interest is a large glacial erratic boulder of granite (which probably originated in the Lake Superior area).
- 9. Blue Mounds State Park, Luverne, Minnestoa: The Fame Flower can be found here. Its flowers only open for a couple of hours in the afternoon and then close.
- 10. Nerstrand Big Woods State Park, Nerstrand, Minnesota. This state park is well known for its spring ephemerals. It is also one of the few places in the state where the Dwarf Trout Lily exists.
- 11. Michael concluded with photos of hikes throughout the state, region and country, giving a sampling of highlights from hikes made during road trips, vacations and trips to other states.

Botanical Wanderings Opportunities (Where to learn more about wanderings)

- a. Michael Lynch's Facebook website: Michael highlighted a facebook group called "Botanical Wanderings" that people can join and share photos and questions.
- b. The Minnesota Native Plant Society has outings and meetings where people can learn about places and plants.
- c. State and national park ranger-lead hikes and lectures.
- d. Volunteer for various environmental groups such as SNA, Great River Greening, Friends of the Mississippi, and municipal parks.

Why should someone wander? Reasons why someone would want to go for hikes to many different areas and seek out natural landscapes.

- 1. To get ideas for what your yard could look like.
- 2. Volunteer and help take care of remaining natural places
- 3. Photography
- 4. Connect with nature

THE NOKOMIS NATURESCAPE *Volunteer Support* Come enjoy gardening by the lake with other native plant enthusiasts and promote our mission! Wild Ones Twin Cities play an essential role in maintaining the Nokomis Natures cape - a 4 acre native planting at Lake Nokomis Gardening season begins at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Annual Earth Day Clean-up on Saturday April 22nd 9:30 - noon. Throughout the growing volunteers meet Tuesday from May – September 6:00 - 8:00 pm. All welcome. For more information or to volunteer contact Vicki at 612-727-3562 or vbonk@usiwireless.com.

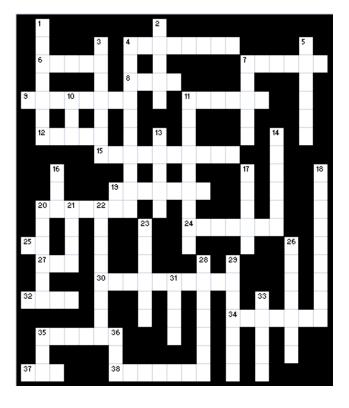
CROSSWORD PUZZLE (Editor's note: This puzzle challenges you to see how closely you read the newsletters of the previous year, since almost all words can be found in newsletter issues from 2012.)

Across

- 4. Second most common weed in Brown Thumb garden.
- 6. Prefix meaning large.
- 7. Alternate or opposite.
- 8. Flower-supporting plant part.
- 9. Factor contributing to bee colony collapse
- 11. Invasive recognized by white milky sap & small yellow flowers.
- 12. Fast growing invasive spotted in Toronto.
- 15. Plants whose flowers close in the afternoon.
- 19. Day to day changes (not climate) in temperature, rain, etc.
- 20. Hardscape that slows water down.
- 24. Hay fever culprit.
- 25. Neuter ending on plant names.
- 27. Pre-eminent pollinator.
- 30. Function plant is unable to do when temperature over 95 degrees.
- 32. One way of learning about invasives.
- 34. _____ or underlining is used when writing genus/species names.
- 35. When photographing keep in mind the rule of ______.
- 37. A plant/garden maintenance method.
- 38. What is overrunning some SNA areas per Scott Letty.

Down

- 1. Tree that resists bending.
- 2. A resource plants compete for.
- 3. Weed classification giving it legal status.
- 4. Factor likely contributing to the decline of bees.
- 5. Bee food source.
- 7. Second resource plants compete for.
- 10. Color bees are not terribly attracted to.
- 11. Shrub considered to be "threatened' in Maryland.
- 13. Bee home.
- 14. Place you find bees living.
- 16. MN DNR areas showing our environmental heritage (abbr).
- 17. Flower used by short-tongued bees.
- 18. Word used in plant naming meaning "spotted".
- 20. One long-tongued bee.
- 21. Number of states without any plant protection laws.



- 22. Material used to amend soil _____
- 23. Country where Western Spiderwort has a "threatened" status.
- 26. SFE winner.
- 28. Bird with magnificent homing instinct.
- 29. Word used in plant naming meaning "weak".
- 31. Wild Ones education program honors this person.
- 33. Common name for invasive *Tanacetum vulgare*.
- 35. Number of seeds in a snowberry fruit.
- 36. Wild Ones program for children.

Book Reviews, etc

Reviewed by: Mary Schommer, newsletter editor

100 Easy-To-Grow Native Plants (for American Gardens in Temperate Zones) by

Lorraine Johnson. As I read the introduction to this book I knew this was a women after my own heart. What is there not to love about a person who states that she had spent a grand total of time on garden maintenance from spring through autumn of three hours and 15 minutes. She could have spent more time working away had she chosen, but did not. Of the 100 plants presented not all are native to this area, but there are enough to give one lots of ideas on what might grow with little effort on one's part. Each of the plants discussed in detail give (1) a description; (2) maintenance and requirements; (3) propagation; (4) good companions; and (5) related species. There was also the usual brief information on height, blooming period, exposure, moisture, habitat and range. Following all this there is a section on an ethical gardener's guidelines and propagation. The book concludes with a quick reference guide for specific conditions such as Plants for Woodland Habitat, Plants for Deep Shade and Plants that Attract Butterflies, to name a few. What I particularly liked about this portion of the book was the fact that a photograph accompanied the named plants. I have already selected potential new natives for the various small ecosystems in my yard.

Native Plant: Black-Eyed Susan

Common Names: Black-eyed Susan. Per Wikipedia it is also known as Brown Betty, Gloriosa Daisy,

Yellow Daisy. Poorland Daisy, Golden Jerusalem and Yellow Ox-eye Daisy

Scientific Name: Rudbeckia hirta

Family: Asteraceae

IDENTIFICATION

Habitat: Common along roadsides, prairies, open

woods, disturbed areas, and fields.

Height: 2 to 3 feet tall.

Leaves: The 3 to 7 inch long, alternate leaves typically are lance-shaped and hairy. There are three parallel veins running along the length of each leaf. In the first year of growth there are basal leaves. Upright branches are produced in the second year with additional leaves scattered along the hairy upright stems.



Flowers: The flower heads are single at the top of each stem branch. Flowers are daisy-like, having 8 to 20 outer yellow petals and dark brown, domed centers. Bloom time is summer through autumn (July - October).

Fruit: The central cones of this plant become brown and dry when the seeds are ripe. They are dislodged easily by twisting. Seeds are approximately 1/5-inch long, black and oblong without tufts of hair. **Overall characteristics:** This is the state flower of Maryland (designated in 1918). Per the USAD this species is found throughout the entire US with the exception of Nevada and Arizona. However, it is most common in central United States. Genus (Rudbeckia) was named after a teacher of Linneaus, Olaus Rudbeck, who was professor of botany at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. Hirta means rough.

GARDEN TIPS

Plant Hardiness: Zone: 3 - 9

Sun/Shade Needs: Full sun to partial shade.

Soil Needs: Well-drained, moist.

Planting: Plant 1 foot apart. Spreads 6 to 18 inches

Propagation: Propagate by division (in spring or fall), seed, or cuttings. The seeds require stratification for germination (3 months). If sown directly, germination takes place in the spring after about 2 weeks of temperatures between 65 and 75 degrees. Sow them at about 1/3 inch depth. Even if not done for propagation, it is good to divide them every few years to keep them neat and to encourage flowering.

Care: Easy. Short lived. This plant grows best with regular watering - existing in soil that does not completely dry out. One can deadhead to encourage flowering or to prevent/reduce self sowing. It may become weedy in the garden.

Companion Plants: Good companions with New England aster, purple cone flower, butterfly weed, and wild bergamot.

Friends & Foes: Attracts birds and butterflies. The nectar is used by bees, butterflies, and insects. Seeds are eaten by certain birds. Can be susceptible to powdery mildew and aphids

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NOTES

Current Use/Interest: None Known.

Historic Use/Interest: Tea made from leaves was used in folk medicines. The roots contain an astringent

which was used as a warm infusion as a wash for sores.

Gardener's To-Do List (February, March, April)

* Prune trees and shrubs of dead or damaged limbs, shoots or waterspouts while they are still dormant; also shrubs that need shaping and rejuvenation. Best to trim up to 1/3 of the branches all the way back than to shorten all the branches.



- * February/March is a great time to start winter sowing hardy plant seed.
- * Start a compost pile in March/April.
- * Prevent soil damage by using coarse sand to provide traction and make sidewalks and driveways less slick. If that doesn't do the trick, try de-icing products from calcium chloride or calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) salt-free melting agents.
- * Finalize your garden plans for this year. Order seeds or make a list of plants to pick up at garden nurseries.
- * As the weather warms up, put away suet bird feeders; the suet doesn't keep and birds are switching to their warmer weather diets. Also clean up birdseed shells, since build-up can hinder growth of plants and become moldy.
- * Pull off mulch as it thaws (but be ready to put it back on if there's another deep freeze)!
- * Apply corn gluten meal to hinder weed seed germination in late April/early May. Spread it at a rate of 20 pounds per 1,000 SF. Water it lightly to activate it. It will remain effective for 5-6 weeks. (Note: will affect any seed it contacts)
- * Sort your seeds by the date each needs to be planted, if starting indoors. We're fast coming up on the time to start them, especially ones that need cold, moist stratification.

Presidents' Message - Marilyn Jones, Co-President

I really enjoyed Doug Tallamy's article in the Fall/2012 *Wild Ones Journal* – did you? And how about that word "crepuscular" which sent me to the dictionary to discover I had much experience with crepuscular echoes of spring peepers when I lived adjacent to a protected wetland in upstate NY. I miss those crepuscular echoes on my city property but I can revisit them at Wood Lake Center. The monthly meetings this Spring should provide perfect timing.....see you there, we'll have our ears open.

But before we listen for the crepuscular echoes of Spring, we can fill our minds with another annual Design With Nature Conference. Saturday, March 2, 2013, we will have four superb speakers addressing "Reading Our Landscape." Reading our Landscape reveals the nature and history of the land, guiding us to connect our spaces into the natural patterns of lands and waterways. Every speaker will give us ideas that we can implement in our own yards and gardens. As I wrote last year, it's a mid-winter feast for our brains. We need about 30 people to volunteer for various duties during the conference. Be sure to note your willingness to volunteer when you register for the conference. See you there...we'll have our minds open.

Brown Thumb

Many of last year's presentations at Wild Ones' meetings as well as our conference gave me loads of information on climate change/weather and how to contend with the predicted future in our gardens. While listening, I always patted myself on the back, thinking "no real problem at my place". My back yard and boulevard are almost completely devoted to native plants with the exception of a very small area where herbs are residing, while the remainder (my front yard) has tons of shade. So typically we may water once a year. For years my policy has been (1) to water all new plants diligently for the first year of their lives; (2) to inspect them the second year and water as needed; and (3) thereafter to let nature take its course and offer no liquid assistance. From my perspective this past summer was the first real test of that view. It seemed as if Mother Nature threw everything our way from a record drought year to numerous torrential rains with screaming high winds - and I do mean screaming as one night it sounded as if a freight train was coming through my bedroom window. In the morning there were lots of trees down in our immediate area. Proof of the ferocity of these weather events.



Wild Ginger before & after watering



Anyway, as summer progressed into fall and the endless days of high temperatures, constant sun, and windy conditions

continued; I realized I needed to rethink my non-watering policy. The upper levels of soil were as dry as a bone. In the front my only concern was for a very old birch tree that I really loved. Our local arborist had already said that it was showing signs of stress and needed all the help it could get. Given this, watering here once a week became a priority starting in late August as (in his opinion) non action in times of scarce water in the recent past had not helped that poor birch much. With regard to the areas where native plants and shrubs presided, the ability of species to withstand the lack of water was somewhat of a mixed bag. It seems as if a Black-eyed Susan cultivar withstood the elements the best. It bloomed for a very long period of time and looked quite perky out there for most of the season. Earlier bloomers such as the spiderwort, Golden Alexander and bee balm also fared well. My late August/September arrivals appeared per usual in mid September - mostly goldenrod and asters. So I can report that everything bloomed, but also note that the length of bloom time of the mid summer and later flowers seemed greatly shortened. With the exception of my New England Aster (which continued to flower way into October) flowers barely appeared and then started going to seed about a week later. A few other plants have really struggled in the weather. My lovely Wild Ginger lay prostrate after a few days of no water. Canadian Anemone which I thought could withstand anything thrown at it was sparse and turned brown way too early. The various species of ferns of course turned brown when no water was forthcoming as did my Large Flowered Bellwort. Seeing the sad state of these latter plants I finally gave in and began watering the flower gardens as well. Although it was too late for most of these plants, it was amazing what a bit of water could do to perk up the Wild Ginger.

So as the season ended I began to wonder if I needed to reconsider my watering regime in the coming year given similar weather conditions. Right now I think I will keep a better eye on the Wild Ginger, Bellwort and ferns, watering them individually with either whatever is in my two rain barrels or from grey water that I

can collect from activities within my house. The remainder may stay on my tough love policy. I may also spend the rest of this winter thinking about other plants that might better withstand these adverse conditions. I will also re-evaluate my position this coming spring and early summer as I check to see if there is any noticeable reduction in the number or variety of plants that appear in my gardens. Anyway, for the most part the natives did quite well given what they all had to contend with. In my mind, watering in these areas really comes down to the question of whether I want a nicer looking garden or not. I am quite sure that these hardy survivors will return next year and the year after in spite of what they are going through. If one can stand looking at plants such as the Wild Ginger lying prostrate in the garden with a lot of the others drooping sadly, then the no water policy could remain. However, I think I learned this year that I don't really want do that.

Wanted: Board Chair Assistants

Outreach Committee assistance: Our chapter participates in approximately ten Outreach activities each year, from co-chairing Landscape Revival each June to the Monarch Festival at Lake Nokomis and others. All fun events. We're looking for help setting up/taking down our display, making sure we have the WO flyers, etc. If of interest or have questions, contact Marty Rice, 952-927-6531 or JCRMFR@msn.com.

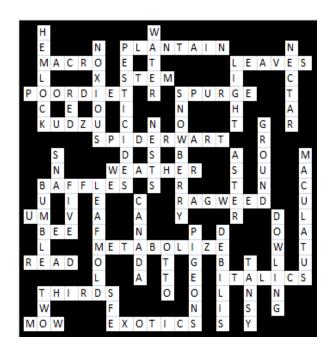
Tour Coordinator assistance: Our chapter hosts three to five tours each growing season. I would love help gathering suggestions of gardens to tour, possibly previewing them, setting up dates, and communicating with members and news outlets to publicize tours. If interested, please contact Marilynn Torkelson, 952-906-1482 or tmjt4@aol.com

Hospitality assistance: At each monthly meeting snacks are offered to those present. These consist of drinks (such as juice or coffee) and some food (cheese and crackers, dips, cookies, and/or cake), which are either purchased at a store or home-made. Our hospitality board member, is not available for the March and April meetings. Note that reimbursement for purchased items is possible. If interested, please contact Marilyn Jones through the chapter message center, 612-293-3833.

Monthly Programs assistance: Our chapter has seven monthly meetings every year (January, March, April, May, September, October and November). The major tasks are identifying topics, developing events and finding speakers. If you are interested in assisting or have questions, please contact Carmen Simonet at 651-695-0273 or carmen@simonetdesign.com

Newsletter assistance: A quarterly newsletter is published by our chapter each year. Looking through this current publication, you can get a good idea of what is included. Assistance with any of the standard articles (or any additional content) would be most welcome. Of particular interest would be someone to assist in summaries of monthly meetings. However, contributions to other articles would also be wonderful. If interested please contact Mary Schommer (612-729-5274) or rmschommer@hotmail.com.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWER



2013 Officers

Co-Presidents: Marilyn Jones & Vicki Bonk

Secretary: Becky Wardell-Gaetner

Treasurer: Elaine Larson

Board Members

Annual Conference: Julia Vanatta

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Outreach: Marty Rice & Sydney Campbell

Programs: Carmen Simonet

Public Relations: Marilynn Tofkelson Tours: Marty Rice & Marilyn Torkelson Volunteer Coordinator: Bill Blood

Website: Heather Holm

WO Phone Inquiries: Tammy Argus

Chapter Message Center: 612-293-3833

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 meetings, or
- 2. Call Marilyn Jones at 518-928-7819, or
- 3. Access the national website at www.WildOnes.org



Twin Cities Chapter c/o Marty Rice 4730 Park Commons Dr. #321 St. Louis Park, MN 55416 www.WildOnesTwinCities.org

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-profit environmental education and advocacy