



Twin Cities Chapter Quarterly Newsletter

November 2014 Volume 12, Issue 4

Upcoming Events/Monthly Meetings

MONTHLY MEETINGS *(Meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month at Wood Lake Nature Center: social at 6:30, meeting to start promptly at 7:00.) Free and open to the public*

Tuesday, November 18, 2014. Annual Membership Meeting, Potluck, and Officer Election. As per usual this is the final meeting for 2014. We meet to share food, participate in election of our new officers for 2015 and listen to a presentation. As this is a potluck, please bring something to share with others. However, the pleasure of your company is quite enough, if this is not possible. The speaker this evening is Peggy Knapp (Director of Programs, Freshwater Society). Non-point pollution is the single greatest threat to the health of Minnesota's waters. Everything on city streets flows to our water - bacteria, salt, litter, sediment, fertilizer. Increasingly large volumes of polluted runoff reach our lakes and rivers faster, carrying ever larger pollutant loads, and causing flooding downstream. Reducing urban runoff is a watershed-scale problem that requires a whole-community effort. In 2012, the Freshwater Society partnered with Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to launch the Master Water Stewards program. Funded by a Clean Water Grant, the Master Stewards program recruits, educates and certifies community leaders who work to increase water infiltration on private properties and educate neighbors about practices and decisions that reduce runoff. In this presentation, Peggy Knapp will lead an exploration of a variety of ways we can all work for water.

Tuesday, January 20, 2015. Second Annual Native Plant Winter Sowing and Seed Exchange. Speaker Carmen Simonet of Carmen Simonet Design, LLC.

Tuesday, March 17, 2015. Pollinator Revival's Mission, Speakers Julia Vanatta and Marilyn Jones

SAVE THE DATE!! SPRING DESIGN WITH NATURE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This is a reminder that the 2015 Wild Ones Design With Nature Conference will be held Saturday, February 21, 2015 at Nicollet Island Pavilion, Minneapolis

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Meeting Notes

September 2014 Establishing, Growing and Maintaining Native Plants in Shady Areas and on Shorelines, Shelley Larson, Hayland Woods Native Nursery

(<http://haylandwoods.com/>) Every water user in MN impacts a shoreline. From every street, water goes directly into a body of water – there are no filters. Think about the impact of everything you do on the land. A study of rain gardens in Burnsville showed that 90% of run-off was taken up by the rain gardens, and that after three to five years, no nutrients were detected coming off of the rain gardens into bodies of water. Amazing results!

Shelley lives near Long Lake, around which there are lots of impervious surfaces (including lawns which do not take up anything and have 0% filtration). Long Lake's water quality is not good. Soils in MN naturally have a huge amount of phosphorus. So even if one doesn't use fertilizers, soil run-off adds phosphorus to lakes and streams. 90% of all lake life is born and raised in the area where land and water meet.

Research on shoreline buffer zones shows (Note that a boulevard can be considered a buffer zone.):

- A 50 foot buffer zone removes 100% of nutrients and pollutants from the water.
- A 20 foot buffer zone removes 80%
- A 10 foot buffer zone removes 60%

Why Native Plants? (Shelley does not use any cultivars.)

- Reducing water use
- Minimizing inputs
- Saving time and labor
- Protecting soil from erosion because of root systems (Prairie plants as well as sedges on a shoreline have up to five foot long roots. About one-third of the plant dies every year and leaves root channels for water to filter through.)

How do you know what to plant? Answer – match plants to the site. Following are comments on different ecosystems

Dry hardwood forest: (A typical comment she hears with regard to this habitat is “I can't get anything to grow under a pine tree.”. However, Shelley had numerous ideas)

- Sedges are great. They have a fixed height to give a neat look. Use as a base for woodland plants.
- Good planting strategy – start with a palette of sedges and ferns and after they get established, add other woodland flowering plants.
- Two sedges that Shelley most often uses – Beaked Sedge and Pennsylvania Sedge. Neither needs mowing. Be careful with Beaked Sedge as it can spread aggressively.
- Ferns are wonderful. Lady Fern is a good one for dry areas.



Beaked Sedge

- Suggested flowering plants
 - Large Leaf Aster is a good flowering plant – its large leaves disperse rain.
 - Bush Honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*) – good for shorelines that are under trees. It has wonderful fall color and stays low. It's a fine shrub for a slope going down to the water.
 - Columbine and Asters are examples of flowers to add once sedges and ferns get established.
- Be patient - woodland plants are slower to spread than plants in sunny spots.
- Plants for woodland edges – Columbine, Zigzag Goldenrod, Asters
- For planting in a situation where there are a lot of tree roots - use tiny plant plugs.
- In a woodland area try to build the duff layer. Do not rake up fallen leaves, and maybe even bring in more debris to create a thick duff layer.



Large-leaved aster



Columbine

Plants for prairies

- For dry areas: Butterfly Weed, Black-eyed Susan, grasses such as Little Bluestem
- For moist areas: Indian Grass, Big Bluestem, and there are many, many types of flowers

Rich Mesic Forest

- Sensitive Fern
- Marsh Marigold

Shoreline – Emergent Plants. These protect the shoreline from waves.

- Water Plantain
- Bulrushes

Shoreline restoration and stabilization

- Look for clues on the shoreline to see what did grow there in the past in order to determine what plants to put back.
- Willows work well for stabilization. They are readily available as they grow everywhere.
- Putting rock along a shoreline is the worst thing to do, because rocks provide no filtering and zero habitat. Also rock heats up in sunshine and contributes to algae bloom. It's no longer recommended to use rocks.
- Wet meadows grow quickly. Swamp Milkweed is one good plant to use in a wet meadow. Spirea Alba (Meadowsweet) is a wonderful plant in these areas.
- Reed Canary grass issues: This is an invasive plant that arrived when it was planted for cattle to eat during the Dust Bowl. Shelley shared an example of a project where Round-Up was used to kill Reed Canary grass and sod. Then she planted into the area to create a wet meadow.

Examples of projects Shelley has worked on a number of projects. The ones below give further insight on possibilities for planting in certain areas.

- **Milaca Library.** Here she put in a rain garden and a swale. Seeded a short grass prairie in the swale with the idea that it would look like a lake edge. Used Woolly Sedge and Lake Sedge – great plants for a “sweep”.

- **Shoreline restoration project** for lake home owners. Created a “Willow Wall” by tying together willows, putting them down along the lakeshore (in the water just out from the shore) and then planting behind the willows. This is a way to counter soil loss. In this project, five feet of shoreline was regained. If you want the willows to root and grow, then cut them in early spring or late fall. If you cut them at other times, they will not grow. Blue Flag Iris is a native plant that works great along shorelines. Shredded bark works better than wood chips near shorelines because shredded bark will not float away as wood chips do.

Questions:

- How can you replace an asphalt driveway? Answer from Shelley – pervious asphalt is very expensive. An alternative is “Geocell”, which is a plastic product with cells. You plant into the cells and you can drive over this. Check the erosion control section at the ‘Brock White’ web site (see resources)
- How can you attract butterflies to a shady area? Answer from Shelley – Plant Swamp Milkweed, Tall Blazing Star, Cardinal Flower

Hayland Woods links to resources for shoreline restoration:

- Lake Phelan Shoreline Restoration Walking Tour and Plant Guide, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District http://www.rwmwd.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={C9CD90B9-75C1-4678-AFFD-AEE1224FD7AD}
- Common Lake Shore Weeds – Second Edition: A Guide for Identification and Control in Lake Shore Stabilizations
- Raingardens and any Native Planting., Sherburne County SWCD <http://www.sherburneswcd.org/>
- Crow Wing SWCD (Soil and Water Conservation District) <http://www2.co.crow-wing.mn.us/swcd/>
- “How To Install Shoreline BMP’s” videos, MN DNR website <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/shorelandmgmt/index.html>
- Look for “Restore Your Shore”, online planning resource for shoreline restoration, permit information, and other resources; MN Extension Shoreland Education program <http://www.extension.umn.edu/environment/shoreland/>
- Erosion control materials source: Brock-White <http://www.brockwhite.com/>

Book Reviews, etc.

A Weed - or not?? Name that plant; or What is a Weed? and Why Does it Matter?

*Now 'tis the spring, and weeds are shallow-rooted;
Suffer them now, and they'll outgrow the garden,
And choke the herbs for want of husbandry.*

William Shakespeare, Henry VI, part 2, act 3

This began rather innocuously this summer when I wanted to know the name of a plant in my yard. A plant, incidentally, that I had put there. It was given to me by a friend, who told me what it was. An easy-to-remember name; I forgot. I saw her a second time and asked her again, same thing. I forgot. The third time, I was embarrassed, plus, she was out of town and not available by phone. So I decided to try to figure it out by looking through my plant books. By this time, the plant was not blooming, so I struck out. So I asked my really plant-smart neighbor, who didn't know. I was becoming desperate, so I gave a clipping to a friend who works at Bachmans. The definitive word came back: "It's a weed, tell her to pull it up."

I was, of course, not going to accept that, but it did point me in a different direction – books on weeds! The best one I have has a rather difficult key, so I just sat down on my front steps one nice day and went through it page by page with a glass of wine by my side. Fortunately for my wine consumption, it was about one-third of the way through the book. (I will reveal the all-important answer later).

All this research made me start thinking. First of all, what is a weed? My father would have said it was something he didn't plant. He didn't plant anything except vegetables in the summer, and our yard was full of wonderful things planted by the previous owner, so that didn't bode well for the yard except that he only rarely had time to "weed". Part of my answer would be: something that is not native that crowds other things out. But there are almost as many answers to this question as there are gardeners. Which brings me to the first book I want to recommend.



Mystery Plant

Weeds of the Midwestern United States and Central Canada, edited by Charles T. Bryson and Michael S. DeFelice, University of Georgia Press, 2010.

This is a wonderful book for identifying things you did not plant (or did plant and can't remember). There is a full page on each plant, including photos and range maps. Many wildflowers are in here, and it has quite a good section on grasses, including nice diagrams showing the part of the stem where the leaf emerges, with sheaths, auricles, and collars, which is important for grass identification when you do not have the seed head. (Personally, I wait for the seed head.)

This is worth the price (almost) just for the introduction, which explains "what is a weed". They point out that one person's weed is another's wildflower, and go on to their definition of weed, which is "Most weeds are plants that grow spontaneously and prolifically in habitats that have been modified by human activity".

Which brings us to the next question: why does it matter? Why do humans need to name things?

Every living thing: man's obsessive quest to catalog life, from nanobacteria to new monkeys, by Rob Dunn. New York: Harper, 2009. This book does not have all the answers, but it is a delightful book to read and you will get a nice overview of the history of science as it pertains to classifying and naming things in the natural world. Originally, naming things was a way of identifying useful, harmful, or dangerous plants and animals, presumably to communicate that to others in our community. And even before Linnaeus developed the binomial classification system in use today, common names were often (and still are for the most part) binomial: one word for the general group and another for the specific type

that is biting you on the ankle. So, for instance, you would have ant for the general group and biting for the one on your leg.

I also believe there is a psychological component to naming things as well – the need to try to impose order on the wonderful chaos of life around us – the need to make our own systems in our heads, to figure out life.

And, for an interesting perspective on the question of native versus non-native, you will want to dip into this book.

Rambunctious garden: saving nature in a post-wild world, by Emma Marris, New York: Bloomsbury, 2011. As Marris points out, there is no place on earth that does not show some of the effects of man’s intervention. Even the “last great wildernesses” are showing changes because of climate change and increasing CO2 levels. But she refutes the fact that all is lost – she feels we need to get more in touch with nature as it exists – in our back yards, in highway medians, in parking lots, and of course in those beautiful places that remain more untouched. This is not a book full of prescriptions – many different approaches will be necessary to preserve species, and species diversity – even tolerating or encouraging species that are not native in some cases. For example, we cannot return “nature” to a point before man. Some scientists are talking about Pleistocene “rewilding”, which involves introducing animals that are endangered where they are currently living into other habitats which may be more welcoming as “proxies” for the animals that lived during that era.

However, the initial reason I read this book was for the chapter “Learning to Love Exotic Species”. It definitely made me feel differently about the world around me – full of house sparrows, creeping charlie, mulberry trees, buckthorn and garlic mustard!

And now, the “mystery plant”

It is a comfrey. Big, big leaves and tiny, tiny flowers. Spreads easily, can regenerate from even a small piece of root. One book said it is Eurasian, another said it is from Europe. It is used medicinally, mostly for wound healing and prevention of scars, which may be why someone brought it here originally. So I can understand the rationale for calling it a weed. Should I pull it up? I bet that even if I do pull it up, it will come back. Maybe in 200 years my yard will be a new ecosystem based on comfrey and the insects that depend on it, in turn bringing in some of the new species of birds that will have evolved from house sparrows. And maybe those new species of sparrows will eat emerald ash borers ...

Above provided by Susan Tertell (Assistant newsletter editor)

Brown Thumb

Hive Alive. We have had a number of presentations at our monthly meetings on bees and their importance in pollinating flowers. Our Twin Cities chapter library also has references that further our knowledge on the key roll they play in our lives. While working abroad this past summer I happened upon a BBC television program called “Hive Alive” that gave further evidence on how fascinating they truly are. Per this presentation:

1. A bee visits about 2,000 flowers in one day and 22,000 in their lifetime.



2. When a bee visits a flower gathering pollen, this action changes the electrical charge of the plant for about 100 seconds. This difference is noted by the bee and it then passes that flower in its search for further nectar, saving the bee's energy (not worth looking at). It is not yet known how the bees can detect this change but it is felt it may involve bee hairs.
3. Bees need to keep their hives at a fairly constant temperature. In the formal hives built by humans to keep the hive cool in hot weather, the bees fan their wings to produce air power. Additionally they regurgitate water to cool their bodies as well as the hive. To maintain warmth they disconnect their flight muscles from their wings and vibrate their muscles.
4. In England there are few wild bees. These are called "feral" as the bees that were common to the country prior to the formal raising of bees are essentially lost.
5. Bees do a wobble dance to transmit information to others such as the distance and direction to a nectar source. The orientation in which the dance is performed gives the direction and the length of the dance gives the distance. A wobble dance was filmed on a bee that was labeled. Using this information a small man-made flying machine flew to the presumed source based on their understanding of the wobble dance's movements – and there was a new nectar source and the bee! Amazing. This communication is one of the most sophisticated performed by non-humans.
6. Although the queen is primarily an egg laying machine with no control over the activities with the hive, she does decide when to abandon a hive. If she feels threatened due to something such as a lack of food or the weather she will leave the hive and seek another place of safety with the bees in the hive coming with her.

All these tidbits on the lives of bees in England I found amazing. I am not sure how this translates to bees' lives in the United States, in any case I thought it utterly fascinating.

Nokomis Naturescape/Monarch News

Wild for Monarchs at the 6th Annual Minneapolis Monarch Festival. September 6th, 2014 was a beautiful day at Lake Nokomis Naturescape. Over 10,000 people of all ages and backgrounds came to celebrate the Minnesota/Mexico connection to the spectacular monarch migration. Once again, the monarch butterfly proved to be the most amazing ambassador for native plant gardening. We found the monarchs were at the festival grounds before us, having roosted overnight in the nearby trees. Delightful! It was a day of fun and inspiration with music, dance, Monarch Lab, Monarch Joint Venture, Science Museum of Minnesota, Heart of the Beast Theater, plant printing, costume contests, kid's run and more. To learn more about the activities and participants visit <http://www.monarchfestival.org/>.

A big heartfelt THANK YOU to all the Wild One's members who helped get the Naturescape Prairie Gardens ready for the occasion and who volunteered at the festival. It is a summer-long endeavor to showcase the native plant gardens to best encourage people to “go native”. WO's participation in the festival is vital to it's mission of helping preserve the monarch migration.

Wild One's Twin Cities shared the Habitat Tent with Grow Monarch Habitat & the Naturescape Gardeners, Minneapolis Audubon and Pollinator Revival. We met a very interested, aware public ready to learn how they can create habitat in their yards and find other ways, as well, to rally for pollinators. We offered useful resource information providing what people need to act, including The Wild for Monarchs brochure, a terrific introductory guide to gardening for monarchs. Heather Holm was nearby highlighting her book, *Pollinators of Native Plants*.

The Habitat Tent also had engaging activities for festival participants including a flower face photo op, a drawing for Wild One's membership, a native plant root pull display, monarch chrysalis, milkweed and nectar plants displays. Noteworthy, all three participating native plant vendors kept busy all day and next year another vendor will be added. The top selling plant, (besides the milkweeds), was liatris, which attracted monarchs continually throughout the day. No surprise to us! We know native plants make for a happening place. Now, thanks to the monarch, so do many others.



Grow Monarch Habitat and Collect Milkweed Seeds!

Plant some, give to others, bring to Wild One's Twin Cities January 20th meeting. Help us provide milkweed seeds at all of our events to an ever-growing interested public.

Gardener's To-Do List (November, December, January)

- * Fall is a busy time of year. Just a few chores done now will pay off in a tidy garden come next spring, and that means less work before you get in there and start digging in the dirt again.
- * Last call for weeding. Remove tough perennial weeds and you'll thank yourself in the spring. Throw away any seed heads, also any quack grass or bindweed (they continue to grow in your compost pile): the rest can be composted.
- * Cut back perennials if you find yellowed or frost damaged foliage too unattractive; though if they're not diseased you can leave them upright to help trap insulating snow and provide shelter and forage for wildlife.
- * Clean and organize your garden tools, including draining garden hoses and sprinklers.
- * Sketch your garden for winter-time planning for expanding your gardens. Try to find room for a rain garden.
- * Prairies may be cut or burned either now or in the spring.
- * Apply winter mulch as needed once the soil begins to freeze, or by late November. Most natives should do fine without this.
- * Add compost to newly planted perennials as you put your garden to bed for the winter.



The following is a handout, the Naturescape Gardeners had at the Minneapolis Monarch Festival. (Minneapolis Monarch Festival) www.monarchfestival.org

Plant It - Butterflies Will Come!

Supplies:

1. A small container with a lid
2. Sandwich bags
3. Shovel
4. Containers and peat-based growing mix (for spring planting)

Collect:

Look for milkweed seeds in the fall after the first frost, when the milkweed pods have burst open. Collect the pods, remove the white fluffy “parachute” seeds and put in your container. Later, away from the wind, separate the brown seed heads from the white fluff. Save seeds in the sandwich bag. Do not over collect in any place - leave seeds for nature to spread.



Fall Planting:

1. Find a sunny, wild, garden area.
2. Prepare the soil by turning over with a shovel.
3. Scatter the seeds on top of the soil, then sprinkle soil over them.
4. In the springtime, look for your seedlings
5. Water the new seedlings, if needed.

Spring Planting:

1. Store seeds collected in a cold, dark place (such as refrigerator crisper drawer) for two months or more. This step is important.
2. In early spring, plant your seeds indoors in peat pots or pots/containers filled with damp, peat-based seed-starting mix. Plant the seeds about 1/8” deep. Cover lightly with extra peat mix. Place your seed pots in a sunny, warm window.
3. When the weather is warm and no frost warnings are likely, carefully plant seedlings in your prepared garden (see Fall planting, above). Water.
4. Watch your milkweed grow!
5. Water them when needed.
6. Watch for the butterflies to visit!

Help Seeds Sprout

The tough outer skin of the milkweed seed can make it difficult for the plant inside to sprout. To give the plant inside an easy place to grow out of, have a grown-up carefully cut off the smooth, outer edge of seed with a razor blade.

2014 Officers

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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.
- Receive the bi-monthly Wild Ones Journal, with articles and information to inspire and educate you about natural landscaping.
- Free admission to most Wild Ones' events, such as our garden tours, native plant walks and sales/swaps.
- Reciprocity with other chapters' meetings.
- Share experiences and expertise with other like-minded native gardeners.
- Access to the Wild Ones library of native landscaping books.
- Support for the Wild One's Mission.
- Membership dues and donations are tax deductible

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.wildones.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-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.