



## Twin Cities Chapter Quarterly Newsletter

November 2013     Volume 11, 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 19, 2013. Annual Membership Meeting, Potluck, Seed Exchange and Officer Election.** This is our final meeting for 2013. One in which we typically gather, share food and native seeds and participate in election of our new officers for 2014. If....:

- A. you have the time and inclination, please bring a dish to share.
- B. this is not possible, of course the sharing of your company is quite sufficient.
- C. you have seeds to share, please label them. We'll provide envelopes so people can help themselves.

**\*\*\* Note:** Additionally there will be slide show of members gardens. It's not too late to take pictures of your native plant gardens. To be included in the show, send up to 7 pictures anytime between now and the first of November to Carmen Simonet, program chair. Send by email (carmen"at"simonetdesign.com).

**Winter 2014.** Presentations for the upcoming monthly meetings have not been finalized. Please visit our website to find information on what will be presented as the meeting dates approach. For those without an internet connection, please contact Marilyn Jones (518-928-7819) or Carmen Simonet (651-699-3029).



### **SPRING DESIGN WITH NATURE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

This is a reminder that 2014 Wild Ones Design With Nature Conference will be held Saturday, February 22, 2014 at the Plymouth Creek Center; Plymouth, Minnesota. The theme is Bringing Ecology Home.

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# Meeting Notes

## November 2013 Climate Change & Native Plant Gardening, Dr. Chester Wilson, Botanist and Greenhouse Manager at St Thomas University.

At the beginning of this presentation, to set the stage for what would be his conclusions, Dr. Wilson referred to his own garden decisions and in particular to the fate of two natives that happened onto his property. Beggarstick (*Bidens frondosa*), which is a prairie plant with seeds that cling to clothing, he embraced and allowed to continue to reside in his yard. Whereas Hog peanut (*Amphicarpaea bracteata*), which he considered to be sort of a mild mannered Kudzu plant, was **GONE**. More later on the connection between his actions and ours.



Beggarstick (Photo by Dr. Wilson from his garden)

Looking at this past year, the effects of climate change were in evidence as reflected in comments and actions from several sites around the country. At Monticello (Jefferson's home in Charlottesville, Virginia) hotter summers, more bugs, rampant weed growth, and a greater incidence of diseases in garden plants were observed by the gardeners working there. The Nature Conservancy has remarked on the noticeable effects of climate change: bigger more frequent wildfires, the die-off of conifers, and an increase in insect infestations. They are also starting to plant trees which they expect will be able to survive upcoming altered conditions, i. e. a warmer, drier climate.

The question then arises: can our native plants cope with environmental change? This depends on their history. Some local populations have adapted to the surrounding environment over time. Here a genetic change has taken place which is an evolutionary response of that population to local conditions. The other possibility is individual plants survive because each is flexible.

To try and get some insight into the outcome for native plants, two studies were presented. The first was done by Clausen, Keck and Heisey of Stanford University, California. At select sites along a transect that went from the coast to the Sierra Nevada Mountains, they observed many species of native plants including several yarrows. This was done by taking cuttings from plants of this species found in three different locations on the transect and planting them at the original location and also the two other areas. The height of the plants varied depending on where they originated and where else they were grown along the transect, with plants taken from one location to another not doing as well

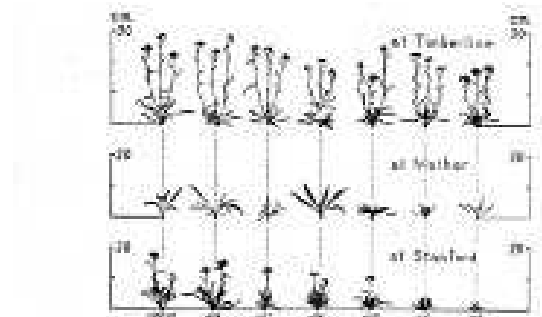


Fig. 1. Responses of 7 cloned individuals of an alpine population of *Achillea*

*lanulosa* from Big Horn Lake, Mono County, California, at 11,000 feet altitude when transplanted to the environments at Stanford, Mather and Timberline

in the new site. These results indicated that populations through natural selection had become very good at surviving in local conditions, but did not do so well in other locations - local genetic adaptation.

Locally the Partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), which is present throughout the Midwest from north to south) was grown in Minnesota, Kansas and Oklahoma. These locations were selected because the climate change predictions indicate that with the best case scenario Minnesota in 40 or 50 years will have a climate similar to Kansas. In the worst situation our state would be more like the current climate in Oklahoma. Partridge peas from the three states were grown in the each of these states for 3 generations. The plants from Minnesota did not do well in the south. This indicates, if we continue to insist on using local genotypes we may have problems as the weather changes.

Following this, Dr. Wilson talked about plants' interactions with animals - in particular bees. A study had been carried out that observed the availability of plants for 3 species of bees throughout a growing season in a designated meadow area. Plotting the presence of plants that offered food to bees against time, there was always something available for the bees to visit. This indicated that bees and flowers have co-evolved resulting in a staggered flowering season where the flowers were using bees as pollinator slaves. Many of the plants and pollinators have a long history of cooperation. It was interesting to note that in 2011 when it was unusually hot and dry, there was a stagnation period (i.e., a time when no flowers were available). This could indicate future problems unless plants evolve or are replaced with other acceptable natives as the climate warms.



Bee Hotel (from Dr. Wilson's presentation)

Dr. Wilson stated that in addition to the adult populations of bees we also need to consider juveniles and the later stages of insects. Bumblebee queens, for instance, hibernate in the ground over the winter appearing in the spring to start the next round of bees. They survive the winter based on having a place in the ground and a store of reserves. Given this, it was suggested that we not pave or compact soil so there are places available for the queens to over winter.

Mason bees lay their eggs in holes in wood (usually created by beetles). Here they build an insect hotel for egg laying. We could also assist these bees by building inviting homes in which they could reside. There are a

number places one can get information on creating bee houses including the following:

- <http://www.inspirationgreen.com/insect-habitats.html>
- <http://www.sunset.com/garden/earth-friendly/bug-hotels-garden-art-00418000078681/>
- <http://www.sfgate.com/green/article/Bug-hotels-offer-wintering-spot-for-garden-helpers-3167667.php>
- <http://muskogeephoenix.com/features/x941534289/Attract-pest-eaters-with-insect-hotels>
- <http://www.pacifichorticulture.org/articles/web-extra-a-resource-guide-to-insect-hotels/>

Finally to come full circle, in the end as the climate changes, we as individuals and organizations will likely have to make choices on what plants we want to try and preserve, what non-local natives or other species we might need to encourage. Just as Dr. Wilson did in his own garden, we will all need to make informed decisions and chose what to plant, to let remain or to abandon.

( *Editor's note. Following the presentation Dr. Wilson included this additional observation from his yard.*)  
An interesting note: last night I was collecting finished compost to sift and spread in a part of my garden when I started hearing loud buzzing coming from the compost pile. Queen bumblebees had settled in to hibernate for the winter, but I had disturbed them. After digging two feet into the pile and disturbing over a dozen bumblebees I decided that I did not need finished compost this fall and let any others sleep in peace. The ones I disturbed were last seen digging into the compost again. So, it would seem that another thing we could do would be to have open compost piles (not the closed plastic bins that many home gardeners use) and to leave the compost piled until spring. I usually collect compost much earlier in the season, but I did not get to it this year. I assume that is why I did not notice the queens in previous years.

## 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.



## Book Reviews, etc.

The Twin Cities Chapter of Wild Ones Library has a number of books that are excellent field guides for identifying plants - native or otherwise. Below are a two of these that are available to be checked out.

**A. Wild Berries and Fruits Field Guide (Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan) by Teresa Marrone.** This book starts out with definitions of a fruit and the various types fruits that are included in the book. I found this book had a number of interesting tidbits. An example is the Large-

*continued...*

Flowered Bellwort which has an inedible fruit. However, the young shoots of this plant can be cooked like asparagus. There was a word to the wise that one needs to be certain of the identification since other shoots resembling bellwort are toxic.

Plants are arranged by fruit color and have the following information on each one:

- Habitat: General environment in which the plant is typically found in our area.
- Growth: The growth form of the plant, ranging from small tender plants, to vines, to small and large shrubs, to trees.
- Leaves: Description including leaf style and shape, arrangement on the plant, attachment to the main stem, and color.
- Fruit: Description including type (berry, pome, drupe or other), color, arrangement, appearance, and edibility.
- Season: When the plant bears ripe fruit in our area.
- Compare: Plants or fruits with similar attributes, including characteristics that differentiate them.
- Notes: Interesting facts about the plant, including harvesting tips for edible plants, notes on other parts of the plant that might be edible, historical or modern day medicinal uses and miscellaneous tips and facts.

**B. A Guide to Nonnative Invasive Plants Inventoried in the North by Forest Inventory and Analysis - Cassandra Olson and Anita F. Cholewa.** This book looks at invasive plants from North Dakota to Maine and down to Kansas on the west and Maryland on the east. All flavors of non-natives were discussed - trees, woody shrubs, vines, herbaceous plants, and grasses. The book is filled with photos for each plant accompanied by information on form, leaves, flowers/fruit, habitat and other distinguishing features/notes.

Among the species that were presented that came out of our region were:

- Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)
- Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)
- Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*)
- Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)
- Common barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*)
- Glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*)
- Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- Showy fly honeysuckle (*Lonicera bella*)
- Morrow's honeysuckle (*Lonicera merrowii*)
- Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)
- Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*)
- Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
- Dames Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
- Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*)
- Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
- Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)



Leafy Spurge - Photo from MDNR Website

# Native Plants - Common Milkweed

**Common Names:** Virginia Silkweed, Silky Swallow-wort, Silkweed

**Scientific Name:** *Asclepias syriaca*

**Family:** *Apocynaceae* - Dogbane (Formerly in family Asclepiadaceae)

## **IDENTIFICATION**

**Habitat:** Found in fields, prairies, roadsides, railroad tracks and woodland margins

**Height:** 2 - 6 feet

**Leaves:** Opposite with large (up to approximately 8 inches long and 4 inches wide), thick, oblong to oval, toothless, short-stalked leaves. The upper part of the leaf is smooth while the bottom is usually hairy. It has a prominent light colored central vein.

**Flowers:** Cream-colored, purple to pink tinged flowers are found in spherical 2 - 4" clusters at the tops of the stems or on stalks where upper leaves join the main stem. Each slightly drooping umbel has numerous flowers up to ½" wide each with 5 downward pointing petals surrounding 5 spreading pinkish-purple hoods. The flowers bloom in the summer from June to August.

**Fruit:** The fruits are up to about 4" long and are flat, dry, bumpy grayish-green pods filled with fluffy, brown seeds having white silky hairs. The seeds are dispersal by wind.

**Overall characteristics:** This plant has a deeply buried rhizome. The stems contain white milky sap (as do the leaves). The name of this plant comes from "Asklepios" who was the Greek god for medicine. It was so designated due to its many folk-medicinal uses. "Syriaca" was actually incorrectly assigned by Linnaeus who thought the seed came from the Orient, not North America.



Common Milkweed

## **GARDEN TIPS**

**Plant Hardiness:** Zone: 3 - 9

**Sun/Shade Needs:** Full sun to light shade.

**Soil Needs:** Moist, well drained soil.

**Planting:** Plant 18 - 36 inches apart.

**Propagation:** Can directly sow the seeds outdoors. These can be collected from pods after they are ripe but before they open up.

**Care:** Can cut back after the plant starts losing its leaves to promote fresh growth. It is a fairly aggressive plant. So deadhead if you don't want volunteer seeding. Growth can be somewhat managed, if it is grown in shadier areas rather than full sun.

**Friends & Foes:** This plant's foliage is the sole source of food to milkweed leaf beetles, milkweed bugs, and monarch butterfly larvae. The eggs of the Monarch butterfly are laid on underside of milkweed leaf. The plant is pollinated by wasps, long-tongued bees, insects, moths, beetles and larger butterflies.

## NOTES

**Current Use/Interest:** The milky sap from the leaves and stems is poisonous and can cause vomiting, rapid heart rate, and weakness. It contains cardiac glycosides, which are allied to digitalins (used for the treatment of heart disease). Some say that young shoots (less than 8" tall) can be used as a vegetable; however, several changes of boiling water are needed to remove toxins. Afterward this, it should be boiled 10 to 15 minutes. Serve with butter/seasoning or put in soup.

**Historic Use/Interest:** The fluffy seed hairs were used to stuff life jackets. Native Americans among other things used milkweeds for medicine, made sugar from the flowers, and made fibers for ropes and cloth.

# Nokomis Naturescape

## Encouraging People to Connect with Nature by Growing Native Plant Gardens

### Thanks Wild Ones!

The 2013 growing season and gardening at the Nokomis Naturescape comes to a close. Testifying to the dynamic nature of native plant landscapes, autumn is another colorful season with the grasses, goldenrods, asters, milkweed pods and other seedheads lending their unique texture while providing vital habitat.

Extending deep appreciation to the Wild Ones members who supported the Nokomis Naturescape by volunteering at the gardens and at the Minneapolis Monarch Festival. We'll begin a new round next spring!

### The 2013 Minneapolis Monarch Festival

Another great get-together for monarch enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds, bringing 9-10,000 people to the Nokomis Naturescape on Saturday, September 7th. Visit <http://www.monarchfestival.org/> to learn more about the activities of the day. **Twin Cities**

**Daily Planet:** [\*Monarchs reign over Lake Nokomis celebration\*](#) shares photos.



Monarch Festival day -  
Photo by Vicki Bonk

Wild Ones Twin Cities, Nokomis Naturescape Gardeners, Restoring the Landscape with Native Plants, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, the Izaak Walton League Bush Lake Chapter, and Pollinator Revival shared the Habitat Tent. We met many festival attendees interested in creating habitat and supporting efforts to conserve and protect our natural resources.

People are motivated to act! The Vagary Native Plant Nursery sold all of the native plants they brought in for the festival. Project for Art in Nature offered a prairie safari in the Lakeside garden that was an adventure for many urban kids. Next year, the Naturescape gardeners will make some improvements to garden with the kids in mind. Experiencing the wonder



Happy plant buyer - Photo by Vicki Bonk

of nature up close and personal is essential to the growth of future native plant advocates. University of Minnesota Monarch Lab gave short workshops on monarch biology with a finale of a tagged monarch release into the Naturescape. Monarch Joint Venture shared information on the collaboration of North American organizations in Canada, the United States and Mexico, gathering energies to address the critical decline in monarch numbers and loss of habitat.

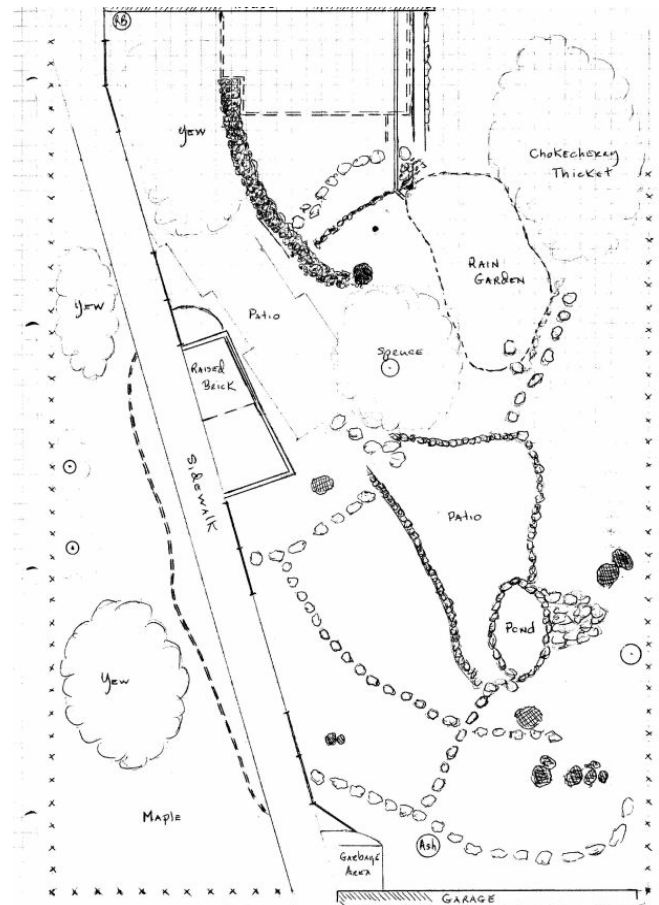
Follow the monarchs as they migrate to their overwintering grounds in Mexico [www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch](http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch) . This another way of taking to heart how crucial our efforts to plant native are.

### **Wild Ones Volunteer Gardener Support**

The **Nokomis Naturescape (NN)** is the **Wild Ones Twin Cities** adopted native plant landscaping project. The NN, a 4-acre native planting, provides a model of sustainable landscaping, is an official **Monarch Waystation** and **National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat** site. Located on Lake Nokomis in Minneapolis at 50<sup>th</sup> St. and Nokomis Parkway, the NN is part of the **Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board** system. Share and expand your native plant enthusiasm by gardening here. We meet Tuesdays, May – mid October from 6-8pm. To volunteer or receive event emails, contact Vicki Bonk at 612-727-3562 or [vbong@usiwireless.com](mailto:vbong@usiwireless.com)

## **The Brown Thumb**

This will be a continuing tale of my yard's rebirth. In the August 2013 Newsletter I related how my backyard had arrived at its present state and my present decision to look at it afresh. Since then my first step in doing this has been to create a plan view of this space. All of the more or less permanent structures were measured and noted on this plan. The reason I say "more or less" is that unfortunately we have an ash tree which probably will not last the onslaught of the ash borer. Xeroxing this, I then penciled in all of the currently existing plants. In a separate effort, I listed all these plants (giving the common name) on a spreadsheet and entered the following information on each: scientific name; zone; color; height; light needs; flowering period; care (including moisture needs, mulching, etc.); wildlife value; descriptions of leaves, stems and flowers; and habitat in Minnesota. This may sound like a lot of work; however, I had been slowly gathering tidbits of information on lots of my natives over the years. Using this information, I have taken the To Do lists from our past newsletters, arranged these items more specifically by month and personalized it for my particular natives. For the October and November time frames I have revised the original "To Do" list as shown in the box below (starred items have been added to



*continued...*

reflect my particular garden plot). Having this additional knowledge has helped me better put my garden to bed this fall).

## **Brown Thumb To Do List**

### **October**

- \* Remove tough perennial weeds, throw away any seed heads, quack grass or bindweed (they continue to grow in your compost pile): the rest can be composted.
- \* Cut back perennials that are yellowed or frost damaged foliage; though if they're not diseased consider leaving them upright to help trap insulating snow and provide shelter and forage for wildlife.
- \* Add compost to newly planted perennials.
  - a. Cut back to ½ after flowering: Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*)
  - b. Trim after blooming to retain rounded shape: Blue False Indigo (*Baptista australis*) – suggest cutting back by 1/3 if fastidious, otherwise just let it be.
  - c. Round-lobed Hepatica (*Hepatica americana*) – likes a thin layer of decaying leaves



### **November**

- \* Clean and organize your garden tools, including draining garden hoses and sprinklers.
  - a. White Spruce: prune
  - b. Canada Yew: give plenty of water to prevent winter burns
  - c. Mulch to protect during the winter:
    - False Solomon's Seal (*Smilacina racemosa*),
    - Jack-in-the Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*),
    - Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*),
    - Prairie Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnotachya*),
    - Prairie Onion (*Allium stellatum*)
    - Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) Soil should not be wet as will rot over winter
    - Black Chokecherry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) Put down 1-3" wood chips

So now I am set for the winter when I will start re-imagining my garden spaces; deciding what plants I want to keep; thinking about what plants are the best for wildlife (which was my initial main drive for creating this native plant area and for joining wild ones); and seeing if my decisions need to be rethought in light of the climate change predictions. Sometimes I wonder if this is too anal an approach, but it will while away some of the dark hours between now and spring. Stay tuned for how things progress.

### **2012 Officers**

Co-Presidents: Marilyn Jones & Vicki Bonk  
Secretary: Becky Wardell-Gaertner  
Treasurer: Elaine Larson

### **Board Members**

Annual Conference: Julia Vanatta  
Audio Visual: John Arthur  
Hospitality: Rose Meyer  
Internet Inquiries: JoAnn Musumeci  
Membership: Marty Rice  
Merchandise: Tammy Argus  
Newsletter: Mary Schommer  
Nokomis Naturescape: Vicki Bonk  
Outreach: Marty Rice & Sydney Campbell  
Programs: Carmen Simonet  
Public Relations: Marilynn Torkelson  
Tours: Marilynn Torkelson  
Volunteer Coordinator: Bill Blood  
Website: Heather Holm

**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](http://www.wildones.org)



Twin Cities Chapter  
c/o Marty Rice  
4730 Park Commons Dr. #321  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416  
Chapter Website: [www.wildonestwincities.org](http://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