



Twin Cities Chapter Quarterly Newsletter

May 2006 • Volume 4, Issue 2

Upcoming Events

Growing Monarch Habitat + Plant Sale

Tuesday, May 16, 6:30/7:00 p.m.

Nokomis Community Center, 2401 East Minnehaha Pkwy in Minneapolis

Free and open to the public

The Nokomis Naturescape gardeners have developed the Growing Monarch Habitat project to connect monarch conservation to the importance of native plant habitat. De Cansler, a science teacher working at the University of Minnesota's Monarch Lab, will give a PowerPoint slide presentation on monarch life cycles, including basic biology and habitat requirements. Vicki Bonk from the Nokomis Naturescape will present the Growing Monarch Habitat project and the specific native plants monarchs prefer. A native plant Garden-to-Go will be available for purchase. The \$18 kit contains a garden template, monarch habitat information, and 9 plants in 3.5" pots, with the choice of a dry-mesic or a mesic-wet selection. Other plants favored by monarchs will also be available.

Our annual plant sale will start at 6:30 p.m. Save those native plants you're thinning out and donate them to our plant sale. This is the best time of the year to be thinning them out. Pot them up now, label them with name (preferably both common and botanical) and cultural requirements (sun, shade), and bring them at 6:00 p.m. so we can get set up. No cultivars please – just natives. Those who donate plants will get first choice of plants to buy; members will be next in line, then non-members (you can always sign up to become a member at our meetings). Questions? Call Marty at 952-927-6531.

Nokomis Naturescape

Every Tuesday, May-September

6:30 p.m. until dusk

Meet at the N.E. corner of Lake Nokomis, along 50th St.

Our chapter has an exchange agreement with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; in return for the use of the community center for our meetings, we help maintain the native plant demonstration site. Join us for some hands-on learning and enjoy the company of other native plant fans. Help keep the movement growing by being part of our team one evening. The setting is beautiful and gratification is immediate!

Summer Tours

Remember that during the summer months there are no monthly meetings; instead several tours will be available for members. The first of these planned events is a tour of Landscape Alternatives.

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This will be a meeting of sorts in that it is going to take place concurrently with the St. Croix Chapter. Although not yet finalized the tentative date is 3:30 on 17 June. Confirmation of the date/time and details on carpooling, etc. will be sent to members as soon as it becomes available. A tour of the Greenway by bicycle with probable opportunities for people in cars to meet at various points of interest is confirmed with no date set. This tour will primarily focus on rain gardens that have been developed along this pathway, but will also include other features of interest. The date for this is not set, but will be in late July or sometime in August.

We typically hold events at least monthly. June, July, and August are usually tours; our Spring Expo is held in February or March; and in December we take a break. In addition, from May-September we offer hands-on participation at the Nokomis Naturescape. The remaining months we host presentations, usually held at the Nokomis Community Center. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for socializing and setup, meetings start at 7:00. Check for updates at www.for-wild.org/chapters/twincities.

Message from the Presidents

John Arthur's beautiful slide show, the great presentations and demonstrations at the Spring Expo, John Caddy's program on journaling, learning about the "bones" of our gardens from Eric Olson, and just chatting with other native plant enthusiasts all help us grow our skills and enthusiasm for landscaping with natives. Our chapter is fortunate to have many volunteers to thank for making these programs available to us and for time spent generating ideas, organizing activities, publicizing events, keeping track of membership, creating the newsletter, paying bills, doing outreach activities, and numerous other tasks.

If you are interested in taking a more active part in our chapter, we would love to hear from you! Several positions remain open (Tours, Merchandise, Mentorship, and Nokomis Maintenance) and our board meetings are both interesting and fun. We have opportunities to staff booths at expos, we are looking to arrange plant rescues, and in May we resume our Nokomis Naturescape activities.

Our group gets free use of our meeting room in the Nokomis park building in return for maintaining an area at the Naturescape. Volunteers work Tuesday evenings 6:30-8:30 from May-September planting, mulching, and removing undesired plants. It's a great chance to expand your knowledge about natives and, almost equally important, to learn weed identification. And there's nothing like working beside someone to get to know that person better. Last summer we started a adopt-a-plot program, dividing the area into 10 sections. A person can adopt a section as the main area where that person will work. It makes it easier to recognize the plants in that area and to see what work needs to be done on that section. Anyone can work on any of the plots as needed, but it's fun to have a specific area to watch more closely. If you miss a Tuesday evening, you are welcome to maintain your area at a different time. Whether you'd like to adopt a plot or be a general maintainer, it would be great to have you there Tuesday evenings for fun, learning, and beautifying the Naturescape!

Want to hear more or volunteer? Call Kris Martinka at 612-822-2061.

Kris Martinka & Mary Schommer

May-June-July Gardeners' To-Dos

Spring has sprung and we hope you are enjoying signs of your garden coming to life. What insects and birds have you been noticing return? Here are a few reminders as the gardening season gets into gear. The garden centers and native plant nurseries will be opening their doors soon—do you have a list of your plant wants yet? Send your tips to the Newsletter Editor, Rebecca Chesin (spiralenso@yahoo.com).

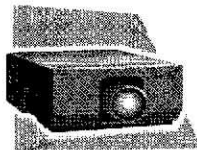
- Start turning your compost pile, if you have the energy...or a helper!
- A little time spent weeding early in the spring while weeds are tender will save you extra work later, when the weather is hotter.
- Spread up to 3-4 inches of wood chip mulch on beds to help conserve water and reduce weeds.
- Keep an eye out for the return of wildlife to your garden: dragonflies, caterpillars, and hummingbirds, to name just a few.
- Water any newly planted seedlings during drier periods to help them get well established.
- Cut off dried seed heads of spring blooming flowers. Save seeds for propagating next spring, or direct sow into the ground now.
- Do you remember thinking any of your plants were a bit leggy or just too tall last year? Pinch them back to encourage denser, shorter growth—and with more blooms, too!
- Don't get so busy with your gardening work that you forget to enjoy the beauty of your native plants, while sitting in the shade sipping an iced tea; your back needs the break.

Announcements

A BIG THANK YOU to Lakewinds Natural Food & Home store who made a very generous contribution to our Wild Ones chapter of funds from their Jan/Feb/Mar Green Patch program. This program gives shoppers a green patch for every bag they bring into the store to use. Shoppers can then donate the patches to a not-for-profit organization that focuses on caring for and protecting the environment. WO member Jane Moran was instrumental in getting our chapter to be the recipient for this past quarter's proceeds. Lakewinds also provided food at cost and free beverages for our national Conference last September. In addition to their new expanded store in Minnetonka, they also have stores in Anoka and Chanhassen. Stop in if you're in the area – they're a wonderful source for organic food and lots of other healthy food and home items.

LAPTOP PROJECTOR NEEDED

Many speakers have wonderful PowerPoint presentations to illustrate their talks, though most lack a projector as they are still rather expensive. We would like to be able to offer this option as part of providing our members with the best coverage in native plant-related topics. If you have a good source for a projector or your company would like to donate one to us in support of our mission please contact Mary Schommer at 612-729-5274.



NEW MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

Have you seen the new online group for members to discuss native plants? Ask questions, invite advice on your dilemmas, share your experiences, post pictures and more! Recent conversations have discussed property edging, landscaping issues, and plants to grow in specific conditions. Visit this URL to join: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wildonesnativeplants>

CONGRATULATIONS TO GREAT RIVER GREENING for being awarded the National Recreation and Parks Association Great Lakes Region Partnership Award for 2005! G.R.G. collaborated with the City of Brooklyn Park and the National Park Service on a restoration and redevelopment project in River Park. A 13-acre, professionally designed natural park, it provides prairie, savanna, wetlands and an interpretive garden for patrons to enjoy while improving stormwater management and enhancing the water quality of the Mississippi River.

NATIONAL W.O. MAKES REQUEST

Wild Ones National headquarters would like feedback from members (this means you!) on website and revisions are being considered. Comments are also invited about proposed purchase of a property near Appleton, Wisconsin. See the most recent issue of The Wild Ones Journal for details, or visit the website at www.for-wild.org.

OUR MEMBERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

John Arthur has donated \$80.00 to the Twin Cities Wild Ones chapter. With a double match from his employer, Ameriprise, our chapter benefits by \$240.00. A huge thank you, John! We've benefited from John's generosity in another way. He has provided the laptop projector and screen for several of our weekly meetings.

Barb Gallagher added \$25.00 to the donation our chapter provided National for supporting one issue of the Journal. Thank you to Barb from all readers of the Journal!

These are great examples of people pitching in to make a difference!

SPOTLIGHT: OUR LOCAL WEBSITE

We maintain a list of links on our chapter's web pages for your use and benefit. Have you seen them lately? Check them out at www.for-wild.org/chapters/twincities/resources.html. One resource is a directory of native plant suppliers and landscapers on the Minnesota DNR's website.

Grant Challenge Comes To Our Chapter

Wild Ones Twin Cities Chapter is one of a number of non-profit organizations that has been the fortunate recipient of a National Science Foundation grant, awarded to the Minnesota Science Museum. Over the last three years, the Science Museum has included science groups from all over the state in this NSF grant effort, providing each \$600 with an expected \$200 matching contribution. The primary goal was for these organizations to develop methods/products to better promote their missions.

Our chapter was invited to participate this past winter and was part of the final group to receive this funding.

Roberta Moore, Mary Schommer, and Carolyn Harstad were the chapter representatives. They attended three workshops, as well as a "hands-on" design day; at which general communication skills were introduced and ideas for a specific Wild Ones project were developed. As a result of their efforts, Wild Ones has initiated a long-term program whose focus is to increase the awareness of native plants and Wild Ones among gardeners in the area. Our primary goal is to reach out to people who are not familiar with native plants or might just be curious about them. To do this a Wild Ones recommended list of garden friendly native plants will be developed each year.

To launch this program, 11 plants that are native to Minnesota (6 perennials, 1 grass, 1 fern, 2 shrubs and 1 tree) have been chosen. The theme for this initial year was more general – "getting people started with native plants." Selected plants are available at a number of local nurseries and are easy to incorporate into any garden:

SUN LOVERS . . .

- Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) sun or part shade
- Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)
- Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
- Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*)



SHADE TOLERANT . . .

- Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) shade or part sun
- Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*)
- Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
- Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- Joe-Pye-Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*)

BOTH SUN & SHADE . . .

- Pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*)

To date a desktop tri-fold exhibit and a single handout sheet have been developed. This spring/early summer these will be tested at a limited number of venues, to include selected large and small retail businesses and possibly some wholesale outlets. A full promotion is planned for 2007, at which time corrections to the original products will have been incorporated based on the 2006 test period and a brochure and slide show will also be available. In the spring of 2007, we hope to distribute this throughout the Twin Cities to not only gardening businesses, but also garden clubs, food coops, and environmental organizations, to name a few. So keep your eyes peeled for the Wild Ones plant list and help promote its use! By Mary Schommer

Seed Germination Challenges

At the April chapter meeting Rebecca Chesin gave a brief presentation on the Pasque Flower (*Anemone patens*). She noted that she had had absolutely no luck germinating this plant from seed. This led to a lively discussion with ideas contributed by a number of members on how to make this work. I am passing this information on to you in the hopes that it will lead to success by others. Although do not go forth with the