

# **WILD** Reflections

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF PRESERVING AND RESTORING BIODIVERSITY  
OF OUR NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES, BEGINNING IN OUR OWN YARDS AND GARDENS.

## **WHY Wild Ones Matters**

**Dynamic Duo  
Milkweed & Monarchs**

**Garden Showcase  
Small-Lot Gardening for Wildlife**







Photo: Doug Benson

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*We know that when nature falls out of balance, species disappear.*

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[facebook: Wild Ones Prairie Edge](https://www.facebook.com/WildOnesPrairieEdge)

Cover photo: Andy Scott

## WHY DOES WILD ONES MATTER?

*Marilyn Jones, Wild Ones Twin Cities Treasurer*

**Because our members share a mission:** to promote environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities. We are passionate about repairing the human ravages against nature within our own yards and communities. And we volunteer in our communities to educate and inspire.

We know that when nature falls out of balance, species disappear. We work toward restoring and repairing the ecological balance in our own yards and communities. Because we care about the nesting and feeding requirements of bird species. We love the “littles” in nature such as butterflies, bees, and fireflies. We nurture the soil microbial life essential to the flora that comprise our forests, prairies, and gardens. We garden with deep-rooted native vegetation to reduce water pollution by facilitating infiltration.

Why does Wild Ones matter? Because together we can help bring nature back into balance.



Wild Ones on a tour at Frontenac State Park.  
Photo: Holley Wlodarczyk

**What You Can Do! BRING a friend to a Wild Ones meeting, tour or event**  
**JOIN a local Wild Ones chapter PLANT a native plant garden—no matter how small!**



Left to Right: Marilyn Jones demonstrates how to separate milkweed seed from its fluff at our November Membership Meeting and Native Seed Exchange. Wild Ones on a tour of a remnant goat prairie and savanna restoration with Prairie Enthusiasts at Frontenac State Park. Wild Ones greet visitors during the annual Monarch Festival at the Nokomis Naturescape. [Monarch Festival](#) | [facebook: Nokomis Naturescape](https://www.facebook.com/NokomisNaturescape)



# MILKWEED and MONARCHS



Above:  
Monarch on  
Common  
Milkweed.

**Milkweeds are the ONLY host plant for monarchs.** Adult females lay their eggs exclusively on milkweed plants, and the caterpillars feed only on milkweed leaves. In recent years, there has been a drastic decline in the monarch population (down 90%). The downward trend is largely attributed to loss of milkweed in the Cornbelt due to application of herbicide on genetically modified crops. Both the eastern monarchs and their unique 2500-mile migration are at risk of extinction. To survive, they must have an adequate supply of milkweed. We can make a difference by planting milkweeds in small urban lots, corridors or larger acreages.

Planting milkweed will invite monarchs plus many other beneficial pollinators, including butterflies, moths, bees, flies, beetles and hummingbirds. Milkweed species native to the region provide the best habitat choice. The following five are a selection from the fourteen found in Minnesota. See the full brochure here. There is a milkweed for almost every landscape situation.



Monarch caterpillar on Butterfly Weed | *Asclepias tuberosa*.  
Photos by Holley Wlodarczyk, Garden Variety Art (2019)

## MILKWEED SPECIES | *Asclepias* species



**Common Milkweed** | *Asclepias syriaca*  
**Height:** 3' | **Bloom:** June - August  
**Sun:** full sun - part shade | **Soil:** widely tolerant  
**Companion Nectar Plants:**  
*Liatris pycnostachya* (prairie blazing star)  
*Symphytotrichum novae-angliae* (New England aster)



**Swamp Milkweed** | *Asclepias incarnata*  
**Height:** 4' | **Bloom:** Jun - Aug  
**Sun:** full - part sun | **Soil:** moist - wet  
**Companion Nectar Plants:**  
*Liatris ligulistylis* (meadow blazing star)  
*Eutrochium maculatum* (spotted Joe-pye weed)



**Butterfly Weed** | *Asclepias tuberosa*  
**Height:** 2' | **Bloom:** Jun - Aug  
**Sun:** full - part sun | **Soil:** well-drained, dry  
**Companion Nectar Plants:**  
*Liatris cylindracea* (cylindric blazing star)  
*Echinacea angustifolia* (narrow-leaved purple coneflower)



**Whorled Milkweed** | *Asclepias verticillata*  
**Height:** 2' | **Bloom:** Jun - Sep  
**Sun:** full - part sun | **Soil:** medium - dry  
**Companion Nectar Plants:**  
*Liatris punctata* (dotted blazing star)  
*Rudbeckia hirta* (black-eyed Susan)



**Poke Milkweed** | *Asclepias exaltata*  
**Height:** 3-5' | **Bloom:** Jun - Aug  
**Sun:** pt sun-pt shade | **Soil:** med, rich, well-drained  
**Companion Nectar Plants:**  
*Eutrochium purpureum* (sweet scented Joe-pye weed)  
*Rudbeckia laciniata* (cut-leaf coneflower)

Photos by Holley Wlodarczyk, Garden Variety Art (2019) except Poke Milkweed by Liz Stanley





## GARDEN SHOWCASE

Sandra  
Nussbaum's  
Garden**Why did you start using native plants in your yard?**

I became interested in learning about native plants as a result of a work assignment during my time with Hennepin County Environmental Services. In 2003, we began conceptualizing a sustainable landscape demonstration site called The Eco-Yard Midtown. A staff landscape designer worked on the design and site preparation and I was assigned to work on the implementation. In anticipation of that task, I attended my first Wild Ones Twin Cities meeting. I also signed up for a Wild Gardener landscaping series at the Maplewood Community Center. I quickly became interested in native plants and looked forward to my new assignment. In the interim, I joined the Midtown Greenway Coalition Greenspace Committee where I shared my newfound knowledge of native plants.

The Eco-Yard Midtown installation in 2005 went well. I was then tasked with its maintenance for the next year. During that time of closely watching the site transform into a thriving variety of beautiful flowering plants, grasses, shrubs and trees, I knew that I wanted to redo our small Minneapolis yard to incorporate native species in every way possible.

**So you were inspired to start work on your own yard. How did you get started?**

It all began with our backyard in the summer of 2006, after having lost a very large basswood tree. I sought help from a permaculture designer to incorporate my favorite native trees and shrubs, wildflowers and native grasses. We wanted a bit of good-for-birds woodland, a sunny woodland pollinator border, and room for vegetables. A few years later, the same designer helped us install two raingardens in the front yard. Our front boulevard came last, planted solely with native forbs and grasses around a city-planted maple tree. My native plant gardens now fill our entire small yard in southwest Minneapolis.

**What worked well in this process?**

What has worked well has been the general reliability of my native plants and the relatively low-maintenance required once they are established. My plants have mostly thrived year after year, returning in the same or slightly different spot. Some “volunteer” and spread into new areas. In the beginning, I often pulled out volunteers, trying to keep to my original designs. Over time, I began to appreciate the spontaneous and natural ways in which some plants moved to locations that suited them better, such as the heart-leaved asters appearing in the midst of another plant grouping. I now have a hard time pulling any of them. The effect in the fall is stunning.

**August 11** - Boulevard garden. anise hyssop, *Agastache foeniculum*; common milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*; yellow coneflower, *Ratibida pinnata*; wild bergamot, *Monarda fistulosa*; and Culver's root, *Veronicastrum virginicum* (in back).



**Top: July 21** - wild bergamot, *Monarda fistulosa*. Boulevard garden, with bumble bee.

**August 8** - Culver's root, *Veronicastrum virginicum*, boulevard garden. I have these in both the boulevard and backyard gardens. I love this plant. So do the insects! These plants are so ALIVE with insects during their bloom time. It's a joy to watch. Note the orange pollen on the bumblebee's hind legs.



### What are some favorite features of your yard/garden?

My favorite features are simply the variety of shapes, sizes, colors and seasonal changes in my gardens; and the insect, butterfly and bird visitors that frequent my plants. From the small, ground-hugging plants to the tall cup plant and towering river birch, my gardens provide an ever-changing landscape. I love watching the birds in the trees, the bees gathered on the native hyssops, and monarchs alighting on the

meadow blazingstar. It's impossible to go near any of my gardens without stopping to inspect new growth or wildlife visitors on the plants. I also love that people walking by often comment on the beauty and the experience of my front gardens.

### What have been some of your gardening challenges?

Selecting foundation plantings has always been difficult for me. I want to include both coniferous and woody plants in my small space, without planting something that will grow too tall by the front-facing windows. After eliminating spreading yews that were blocking windows, I planted three smaller nativar dogwoods. They soon grew too tall and too wide and were eventually cut short and transplanted to another person's property. I also planted wild ginger in front of some of the dogwoods. The ginger spread so much that I had to remove it to make room for other plants. While I love the native ninebark shrub, again, I had little choice but to select a smaller nativar for my front landscape. My thimbleberry plants, native

to northeastern Minnesota, never bloomed and spread more than I preferred. They were removed in favor of glossy native black chokeberry shrubs. A few plants, including the lovely spring-blooming golden Alexanders, were a bit too "exuberant," and needed to be thinned out to allow other plants to thrive. It's all been a learning process and part of the joy of gardening with native plants.



**Clockwise from top: December 30** - Michigan lily, *Lilium michiganense*. Front rain garden with seed pods in winter. **June 9** - golden Alexanders, *Zizia aurea* at front rain garden blooming in various patches. An early burst of color along the front walkways and the early insects love it. **June 15** - wild ginger, *Asarum canadense*. Backyard between shed and fence, adjacent to pagoda dogwood. I moved several plants from front foundation planting, and it has just kept expanding. So, now it's a nursery that I use to provide plants to others

### What worked as planned?

My front rain garden borders of Pennsylvania sedge (one of my favorite plants) have spread nicely, but not aggressively. The backyard native trees and shrubs have thrived, adding more habitat and beauty to that space, just as I had hoped. My goal of having a diverse garden that attracts many different pollinators, beneficial insects, and birds has been achieved. I now simply continue to add one or two new species each year to observe how they grow. It's wonderful to watch this lovely experiment unfold on our small city lot.

### Do you have suggestions for those who have not gardened much with native plants?

Try to learn as much as possible about the different native plants in our area. Learn about their needs for growing conditions and habits before starting a big project. Start with a smaller project with fewer species until you can see how they grow in your yard. Attend Wild Ones meetings, go on garden tours, and take advantage of neighborhood grants or subsidies to help you get started. Read books by local native plant authors, such as Heather Holm, and gain a better understanding of all the symbiotic relationships in nature that can occur in our own small yards. Don't be afraid of a bit of chaos, or when some people say they think native plants look messy or are not flashy enough—the beauty and life that native plants will bring to your landscape is amazing. Display a "native plant landscape" yard sign to help educate others—proudly let them know that your landscape is purposeful and important.

Interview with Sandra Nussbaum by Leslie Pilgrim



**September 24** - Front rain garden. showy goldenrod, *Solidago speciosa*, with heart-leaved aster (aka, blue wood aster), *Symphyotrichum cordifolium*.



# From the Designers Desk

Nathalie Shanstrom, Pasque Ecological Design

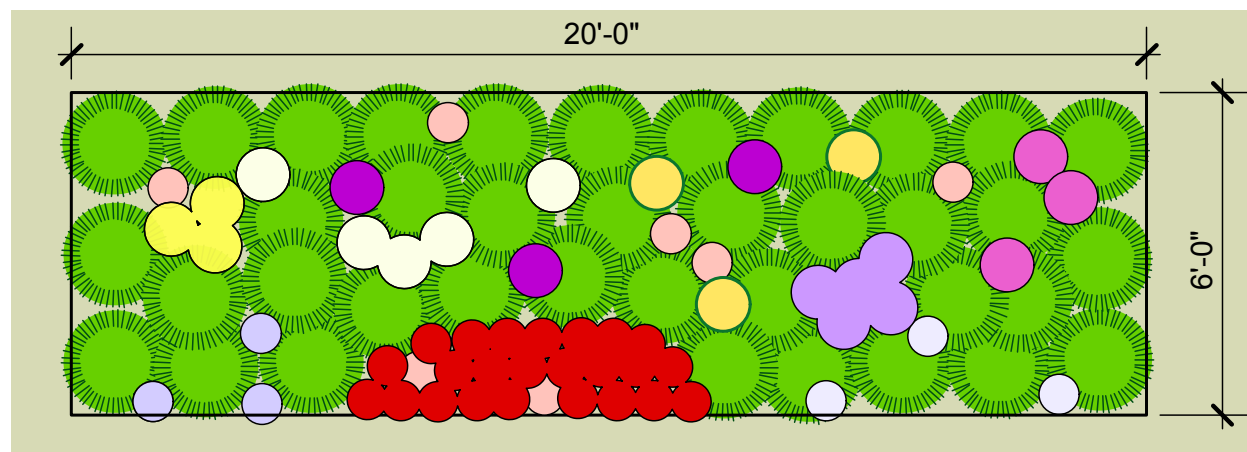
## Short Native Plants for Sunny Areas

Sun | Dry to Mesic | Loam to Sand

### Design considerations for incorporating these into your garden:

- Adapt this plan to fit your site and goals.
- Use native plant communities to inspire your design/to inform design.
- Use plants to create spaces, direct views and draw out regional character of your site.
- Include plants that bloom from spring through fall, as well as plants with winter interest.
- Maximize species diversity, and include grasses, legumes, composites and other functional groups.
- Consider salt exposure, herbivore pressure and other stresses plants will be exposed to on your site.

## PLANTING PLAN



## PLANTING CHART

| Symbol | Common name           | Scientific name               | Bloom      | Ht     |
|--------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------|
| ●      | Prairie Onion         | <i>Allium stellatum</i>       | July-Aug   | 1.5'   |
| ○      | Pasque Flower         | <i>Anemone patens</i>         | April-May  | 0.5'   |
| ●      | Aromatic Aster        | <i>Aster oblongifolius</i>    | Aug-Oct    | 2'     |
| ●      | Harebell              | <i>Campanula rotundifolia</i> | June-Sept  | 1.5'   |
| ●      | Prairie Coreopsis     | <i>Coreopsis palmata</i>      | June-Aug   | 2-3'   |
| ●      | Purple Prairie Clover | <i>Dalea purpurea</i>         | July-Aug   | 1-3'   |
| ○      | Alum-Root             | <i>Heuchera richardsonii</i>  | May-July   | 1-2'   |
| * ●    | Dwarf Blazingstar     | <i>Liatrix cylindracea</i>    | July-Oct   | 0.5-2' |
| ●      | Gray Goldenrod        | <i>Solidago nemoralis</i>     | Aug-Oct    | 0.5-2' |
| ●      | Prairie Dropseed      | <i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i> |            | 2-4'   |
| ●      | Prairie Smoke         | <i>Geum triflorum</i>         | April-June | 0.5'   |

\* Substitute *Lilium philadelphicum* in mesic soils

## About the Designer

Nathalie Shanstrom of Pasque Ecological Design started designing with native plants in 1994, and specializes in providing sustainable landscape architecture services, connecting people with nature and integrating native plants, edibles, and sustainable stormwater management.

More info at:

[www.pasquedesign.com](http://www.pasquedesign.com)



## WEB of LEARNING

Online Resources to Link, Connect, and Expand Knowledge

### Seeing the Potential of Wood-Inhabiting Fungi in the Managed Landscape

Learn more about these natural decomposers in your yard and why you should welcome them.



Photo: Holley Wlodarczyk

### Audubon Native Plant Zip Code Database

From the Audubon website: "Enter your 5-digit zip code to use Audubon's native plants database and explore the best plants for birds in your area..."

### Useful Terminology for Native Gardening

A great primer for learning the terminology often used in gardening with native plants.

Dioecious Plants  
Forb  
Nativar  
Genus  
Invasive  
Annual



Photo: Holley Wlodarczyk

### Keep Monarchs Wild: Why Captive Rearing Isn't the Way to Help Monarchs

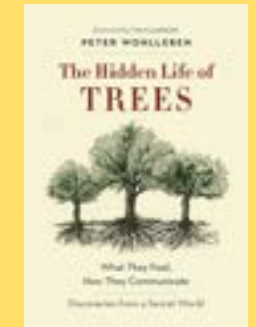
The Xerces Society explores indoor captive monarch rearing.

## WHAT WE'RE READING, WATCHING & HEARING

### What We're Reading...

[The Hidden Life of Trees: What they Feel, How they Communicate](#)

by Peter Wohlleben, 2016



An engaging, pleasant, and fascinating read about how trees "talk" to one another. From goodreads: "In The Hidden Life of Trees, Peter Wohlleben shares his deep love of woods

and forests and explains the amazing processes of life, death, and regeneration he has observed in the woodland and the amazing scientific processes behind the wonders of which we are blissfully unaware."

### What We're Watching...

[The Biggest Little Farm](#)



A fun and inspiring documentary film, The Biggest Little Farm chronicles the eight-year quest of John and Molly Chester as they trade city living for 200 acres of barren farmland and a dream to harvest

in harmony with nature." Available on DVD, Redbox, and Netflix.

[www.biggestlittlefarmmovie.com](http://www.biggestlittlefarmmovie.com)

### What We're Hearing...

[Freakonomics, How Stupid is Our Obsession with Lawns?](#)

On average, Americans use a whopping 20 trillion gallons of drinking water per year on lawns. In contrast, farmers use 30 trillion gallons to irrigate crops. It's time to redesign the American lawn.

# Q&A | THE CURIOSITY CORNER

**Question:** I have been told that to ecoscape my yard to support pollinators, beneficial insects, and other wildlife, I should leave the leaves and not worry about a fall clean-up. I'd like to better understand why.



**Answer:** Providing habitat is a primary function of a well ecoscaped yard. “Leaving the leaves” generates habitat throughout the winter for the many tiny creatures that live in leaf “litter.” Fallen leaves also provide food for small animals such as chipmunks and birds.

Many butterflies and moths overwinter as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, or adult and may need leaf litter for overwintering. “Fall cleanup” has new (and disturbing) meaning given that it is wildlife that is being cleaned up and out. It's easy to surmise why leaves shouldn't be chopped, mowed, or mulched, either.

Another bonus to leaving leaves is that they will decompose naturally and become compost. This improves soil structure, which results in healthier plants and better water retention.

Photo: Holley Wlodarczyk, Garden Variety Art (2019)

Leaves that are moved from traditional turf grass areas can be added to your garden or even piled in outer edges of the landscape to become compost.

If your community has a yard waste composting process, you could bring your excess leaves to that program. The worst thing you can do is put leaves in plastic bags headed to a landfill where they can break down with organic waste to create heat-trapping methane gas which contributes to climate change.

In the rain garden, leave the leaves except for those areas that are designed to allow overflow onto streets, creeks, lakes or waterways. Leaves cause nitrogen pollution in our waterways so they shouldn't accumulate to the point in which they outflow from the rain garden.

Leaves are a gift from nature which will help your ecoscape become a healthy habitat. Toss the rake. Leave the leaves.

Marilyn Jones, Treasurer, Wild Ones Twin Cities

**Question:** How do I minimize pesticide drift from neighboring yards?

**Answer:** If you are reading this newsletter, you are most likely committed to growing native diversity to enhance habitat for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife threatened by harmful landscape practices. Unfortunately, despite our personal efforts, neighbors may continue to apply herbicides and insecticides. And oftentimes, these “cides” drift into our property and impact the safe spaces we are trying to create.

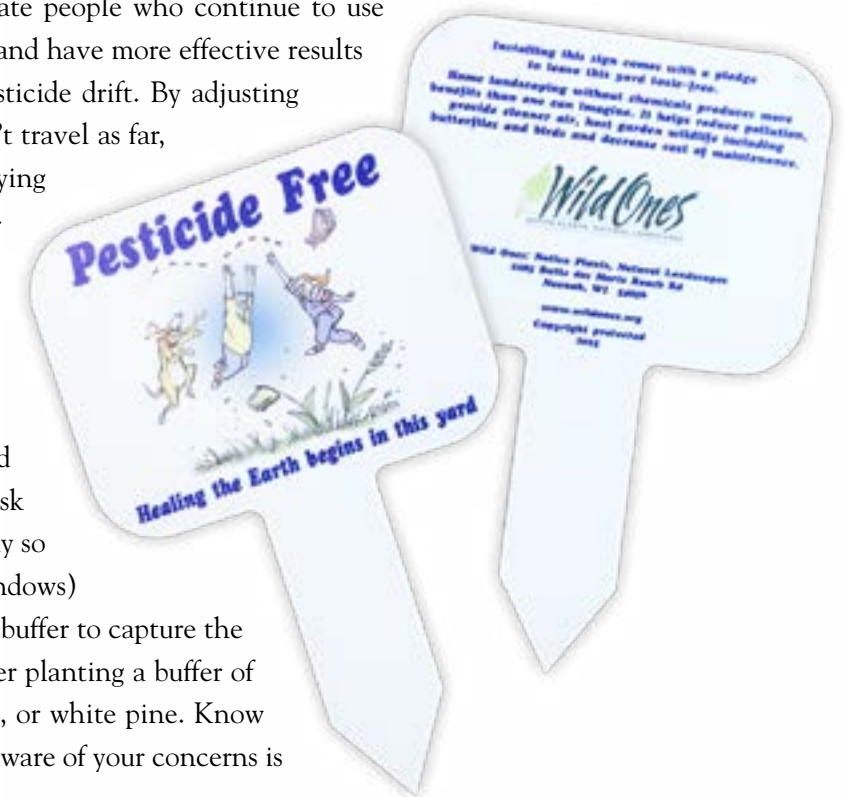
One way to tackle pesticide drift is to gently educate people who continue to use harmful chemicals. Your neighbors will save money and have more effective results if they learn practices that minimize or prevent pesticide drift. By adjusting nozzle and pressure to form larger droplets that won't travel as far, applying only during calm winds, and avoiding applying during fog events or before hot weather, your neighbors can help reduce harmful drift. Your neighbors may also not be aware that it is best to apply pesticides earlier in the day when air is calm and temperatures are cooler.

You have a right to protect yourself, children, and pets as well as your vegetation from pesticide drift. Ask your neighbors to inform you when they plan to spray so that you can keep people and pets indoors (close windows) and cover sensitive plants. Plants can also provide a buffer to capture the drift. If creating new shade is not a problem, consider planting a buffer of fast growing trees like trembling aspen, cottonwood, or white pine. Know that the best approach is education. Making others aware of your concerns is the best place to begin.

For additional background contact:

[www.panna.org](http://www.panna.org) or the [Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/spraydrift.htm](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/spraydrift.htm).

Douglas Owens-Pike, Founder of Sustainable Landscape Solutions of Otter Creek

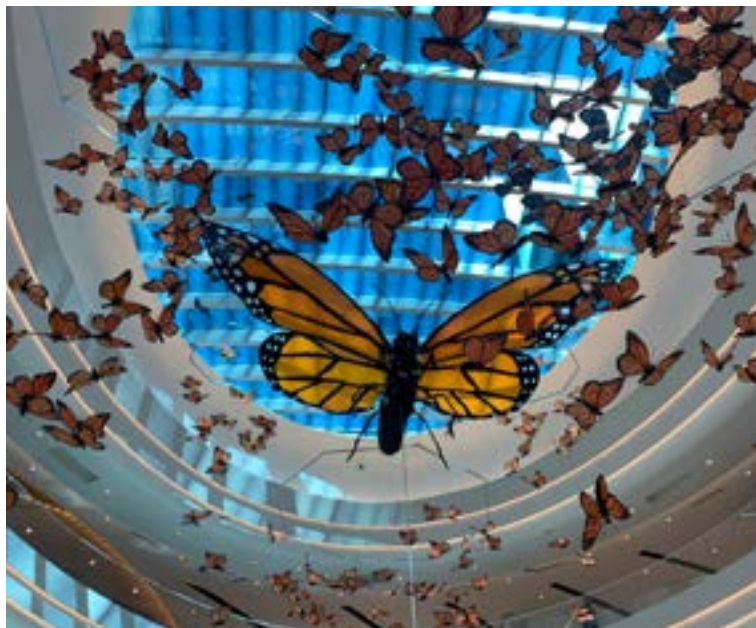


**Have a Question? Send it to the Wild Ones Twin Cities Periodical editors HERE! [info@wildonestwincities.org]**



# WILD ONES—In the Field

## Chapter/Membership Information



Monarch Butterfly exhibit at Mall of America | Photo: Holley Włodarczyk

**Last Earth Day** Wild Ones volunteers helped make this spectacular art installation celebrating monarchs. It hung in the Mall of America for months, helping to educate visitors about the plight of the monarch and the importance of habitat gardening. As we launch this new Wild Ones Twin Cities publication on Earth Day 2020, we want to thank all of our passionate, dedicated volunteers for helping all our chapters further the Wild Ones mission and spread our message!

And a VERY, VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU to Mary Schommer, who has produced our quarterly newsletter for over ten years! You can find digital copies of this invaluable archive on our website.

### Want To Volunteer?

Check out chapter websites to sign up for volunteer opportunities around the state. Thank you.

**LEARN MORE** and **JOIN** the movement at [wildones.org](http://wildones.org)

**ALL MONTHLY TOPIC MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!**

#### **SPRING AND SUMMER EVENTS:**

FEB | DESIGN WITH NATURE CONFERENCE

MAY - JUNE | NATIVE PLANT SALES

MAY-SEPT | AREA GARDEN TOURS AND COMMUNITY GARDENING



### WILD ONES MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

**WHO WE ARE...** Wild Ones is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to provide learning and field experiences to those interested in Minnesota native plant landscaping and environmental education.

#### **WHY JOIN?**

**LEARN** more about native plant landscaping and related topics during our monthly programs from experts in the field. Minnesota Wild Ones Chapters also sponsor an annual Design with Nature conference in February.

**SUPPORT** our mission by purchasing local native wildflowers, grasses and shrubs during our annual spring native plant sale.

**TOUR** local homeowners' native plant gardens and yards during the summer months.

**VOLUNTEER** at Wild Ones sponsored community activities, such as the Minneapolis Monarch Festival and native plant habitat gardening at Nokomis Naturescape in Minneapolis.

**SHARE** and connect through regular email and quarterly newsletters or get up-to-date program information on our website.

**ENJOY** getting to know people who share your interest!

*\$40 tax-deductible annual membership includes the national organization and local chapter.*

**Wild Ones Reflections** is published periodically by the Twin Cities Wild Ones chapter with contributions from Wild Ones chapters throughout the state.