

# **WILD ONES.** Reflections

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

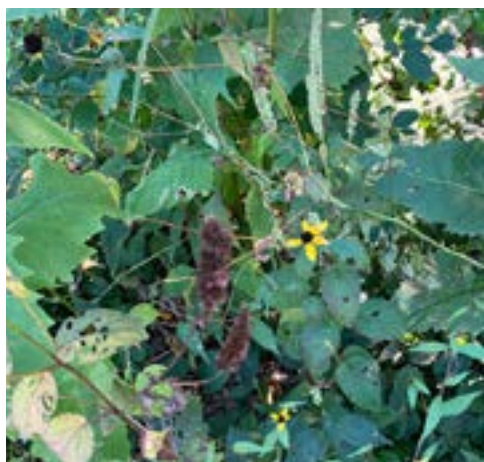
## **Why WILD ONES MATTERS**

Dynamic Duo  
**Violets and the  
Great Spangled Fritillary**

Garden Showcase  
**How to Make Your Own  
SAND PRAIRIE At Home**

The Curiosity Corner  
**GREEN MULCH**





Accept imperfection  
Image: Leslie Pilgrim

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Why Wild Ones Matters.....	3
Dynamic Duos—Violets and the Great Spangled Fritillary ....	4
Garden Showcase—How to Make Your Own Sand Prairie ....	9
Q&A—The Curiosity Corner .....	14
From the Designer's Desk.....	18
Web of Learning. ....	19
What We're Reading, Watching & Hearing .....	19
New! Educational Information Handouts .....	20

## MINNESOTA CHAPTERS

### Arrowhead - Duluth & NE Minnesota

Hartley Nature Center  
3001 Woodland Ave  
Duluth, MN 55803  
[www.Arrowhead.WildOnes.org](http://www.Arrowhead.WildOnes.org)  
[facebook: ArrowheadChapterWildOnes](https://www.facebook.com/ArrowheadChapterWildOnes)

### Big River Big Woods - Roseville & Greater St. Paul

Autumn Grove Park  
1365 Lydia Avenue West  
Roseville, MN 55112  
[www.bigriverbigwoods.org](http://www.bigriverbigwoods.org)  
[facebook: Wild Ones Big River Big Woods](https://www.facebook.com/WildOnesBigRiverBigWoods)

### Northfield Prairie Partners - Northfield & SE MN

Emmaus Baptist Church  
712 Linden St N  
Northfield, MN 55057  
[www.Northfield.WildOnes.org](http://www.Northfield.WildOnes.org)  
[facebook: Wild Ones Northfield Prairie Partners](https://www.facebook.com/WildOnesNorthfieldPrairiePartners)

### Prairie Edge - Minnetonka & SW Metro

Eden Prairie Community Center  
16700 Valley View Road  
Eden Prairie, MN 55346  
[www.WildOnesPrairieEdge.org](http://www.WildOnesPrairieEdge.org)  
[facebook: Wild Ones Prairie Edge](https://www.facebook.com/WildOnesPrairieEdge)

### Wild Ones South Central Minnesota (Seedling)

[wildones.org/chapters/chapters-in-minnesota/](http://wildones.org/chapters/chapters-in-minnesota/)



### St. Cloud - St. Cloud & Central Minnesota

225 33rd Ave S  
Saint Cloud, Minnesota 56301  
320-356-9462  
[bjohnson@csbsju.edu](mailto:bjohnson@csbsju.edu)  
[facebook: St. Cloud Wild Ones Native Plants  
Natural Landscapes](https://www.facebook.com/St.Cloud.Wild.Ones.Native.Plants.Natural.Landscapes)

### St. Croix Oak Savanna - Stillwater & NE Metro

Family Means Building  
1875 Northwestern Ave  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
[st.croix.wild.ones@mac.com](mailto:st.croix.wild.ones@mac.com)  
[www.StCroixOakSavanna.WildOnes.org](http://www.StCroixOakSavanna.WildOnes.org)  
[facebook: Wild Ones St. Croix Oak Savanna](https://www.facebook.com/WildOnesSt.CroixOakSavanna)

### Twin Cities - Richfield & Greater Minneapolis

Wood Lake Nature Center  
6710 Lake Shore Drive  
Richfield, MN  
612-293-3833 | [info@wildonestwincities.org](mailto:info@wildonestwincities.org)  
[www.WildOnesTwinCities.org](http://www.WildOnesTwinCities.org)  
[facebook: Wild Ones Twin Cities](https://www.facebook.com/WildOnesTwinCities)

# WHY WILD ONES MATTERS

Brian Johnson, Vice President, Wild Ones St. Cloud chapter

**In a human community, we are connected**—such as with our neighbors, places of worship, and businesses. The natural world consists of connections, too: ecosystems which originally existed as large, unbroken tracts of land. However, we have subdivided and separated natural areas through our construction of housing developments, parking lots, highways, and more. Noted author, speaker, and entomologist, Douglas Tallamy reminds us that today's manicured lawns comprise more than 40 million acres, the equivalent of nearly ten Yellowstone. The St. Cloud Wild Ones chapter encourages members to reconnect their yards to nature, one yard at a time. Many of St. Cloud's chapter members have natural gardens on their properties that have been turned into havens for insects, small animals, and birds. Our chapter president organized neighbors to install a native planting on a common area that surrounds a retention pond. Another member planted acres of restored prairie that now connect a county park to the woodlands surrounding a local college. Still another restored prairie surrounding his church. A member is pursuing a Wild Ones [Seeds for Education](#) grant to develop a native planting in conjunction with a local Boys and Girls Club. We hope these efforts demonstrate to others that native plantings are necessary as well as attractive, and reconnect all of us to nature and each other.



Carl Bublitz inspects a monarch chrysalis on a swamp milkweed at the Monarch Waystation at First United Methodist Church.

**“We can no longer hope to COEXIST with other animals if we continue to WAGE WAR on their homes and food supplies.” Doug Tallamy, in Bringing Nature Home**



St. Cloud Wild Ones members collecting seed at the St. John's University Arboretum.

## Life Underfoot in the Violet Patch

### The Intertwined Relationship between the Common Violet and the Great Spangled Fritillary

By Vicki Bonk

**A native plant gardener soon realizes** there is infinitely more going on in their habitat plot, no matter how small, than readily meets the eye. Tuning into and connecting with garden life by noticing the variety of species, their relationships and habits at different times of day and season, we find ourselves more understanding of the interconnectedness of it all. If we pause to consider the life happening even in the common blue violet (*Viola sororia*) patch, we may be drawn to looking more closely, treading more softly, and gardening more carefully.



*If we pause to consider the life happening even in the common blue violet (*Viola sororia*) patch, we may be drawn to looking more closely, treading more softly, and gardening more carefully. Photo, Vicki Bonk*

The relationship between violet and fritillary life cycles is but one case of what is not often readily noticed by the unpracticed eye in the native habitat garden. Taking the time to understand floral/faunal connect-edness in nature has a double-fold benefit. First, we are more likely to witness more of what's unfolding in a given habitat and second, by practicing awareness, we play a vital role in allowing natural space to be one where its inhabitants can survive and thrive.

I have been aware for years that the violet plant family (Violaceae) is the larval host plant of greater fritillary (genus *Speyeria*) butterflies. This awareness gave the “yard violets”—as the common blue are often called—and Canadian violets in my yard a pardon to meander freely. However, other than spotting fritillary butterflies nectaring on summer blooms, I had never seen evidence of the fritillary’s other life stages in my lush violet grounds.

## Reliant solely on violets

Curious, I recently delved into the life cycle of the great spangled fritillary (*Speyeria cybele* species), the fritillary seen most often in the Twin Cities area where I live. All lepidoptera (moths and butterflies) go through the process of metamorphosis that begins with an egg being laid, and then moves through the larva (caterpillar), pupa (cocoon or chrysalis), and adult (winged) phases. There are multiple variations in the way these stages manifest in lepidoptera, influenced by time of year, type of host plant, and the life cycles of both the insect and the plant. Such is the diversity of life: Multiple species are somehow able to live within their own niche, sharing an environment without getting in each other’s way.

The larval stage requires specific plants that the lepidoptera species has evolved to feed upon: the species’ host plant(s). Some lepidoptera are specialists, having only one host plant species they can feed upon, such as the well-known exclusive association of the monarch butterfly and milkweed. Others are generalists, having more plant species as a selection. The great spangled fritillary (as are all greater fritillaries) is a specialist reliant solely on violets to nourish its young.<sup>1</sup>



**Top photo:** Around late August, the cycle begins with a single egg oviposited on a violet leaf.

**Bottom:** The pearly egg hatches within a few weeks.

Photos, Sara Bright and <https://alabama.butterflyatlas.usf.edu/>

<sup>1</sup> The fritillary family is comprised of the greater fritillaries (genus *Speyeria*) and the lesser fritillaries (genus *Boloria*). Butterflies in the *Speyeria* genus cannot survive without a violet host plant. Butterflies in the *Boloria* genus use violets as a host plant, although the native passionflower is also used as a host for several lesser fritillary species.



**Top photo:** The first tiny instar caterpillar overwinters in leaf duff, then emerges in May. The great spangled fritillary goes through several instar phases until its final mature phase, pictured above.

The great spangled fritillary caterpillar's black and orange spikey appearance sends a warning signal in the violet patch to many predators. When feeling threatened, it emits a disagreeable, musky odor from glands on the sides of its head to help keep predators away.

**Bottom:** The camouflage of the tiny chrysalis protects it as it pupates for a few weeks in June.

Photos, Sara Bright and <https://alabama.butterflyatlas.usf.edu/>

Lepidoptera life cycles have evolved over thousands of years in tandem with the life cycle of its host plant(s), so there is critical “matching up” that must take place. Looking closely at the greater fritillary, we can start by examining its fascinating life cycle in early summer. Males emerge first from their chrysalides, usually a number of days before the females. When the females emerge later, the mating begins. As is true of all the greater fritillaries, the great spangled are single brooded (one generation per year). After mating, the male's life soon ends, while the females live on in a state of reproductive diapause.<sup>2</sup> During July and August, the females are rarely seen and live in a somewhat dormant state, perhaps hidden in a woodland. It's not until late summer that they become more active and visible. During this time, females deposit their creamy white eggs singly, near or on violets. When the tiny, black fuzz-ball caterpillars emerge, they eat part of their eggshell for sustenance. However, they do not eat any of their violet host plant at this time. Instead, the miniscule first instar caterpillar overwinters among the insulation of leaf litter.<sup>3</sup>

## Notes on the life cycle

The nearly invisible fritillary caterpillars overwinter near or on violets. So note well: Late summer and early autumn are not the time to be thinning violets. Rather, a good time to thin spreading violets is in July and early August when the host plants aren't occupied by eggs or caterpillars. Later in the season, fallen leaves will blanket these violets, providing shelter. Thus, we see a case for leaving the leaves alone. Leaves and duff offer necessary life cycle habitat.

With Mother Nature's amazing co-evolutionary timing (that is, timing that has not been disturbed by the mismatches caused by climate change), the itzy-bitzy overwintering caterpillar becomes active in spring, usually May, right when violets begin to emerge. At this time, the larvae begin to ravenously munch on the violets' delectable new growth. The great spangled fritillary life cycle is synchronized with the

<sup>2</sup>Diapause in lepidoptera is a state of paused or suspended reproduction in which females do not mate or reproduce.

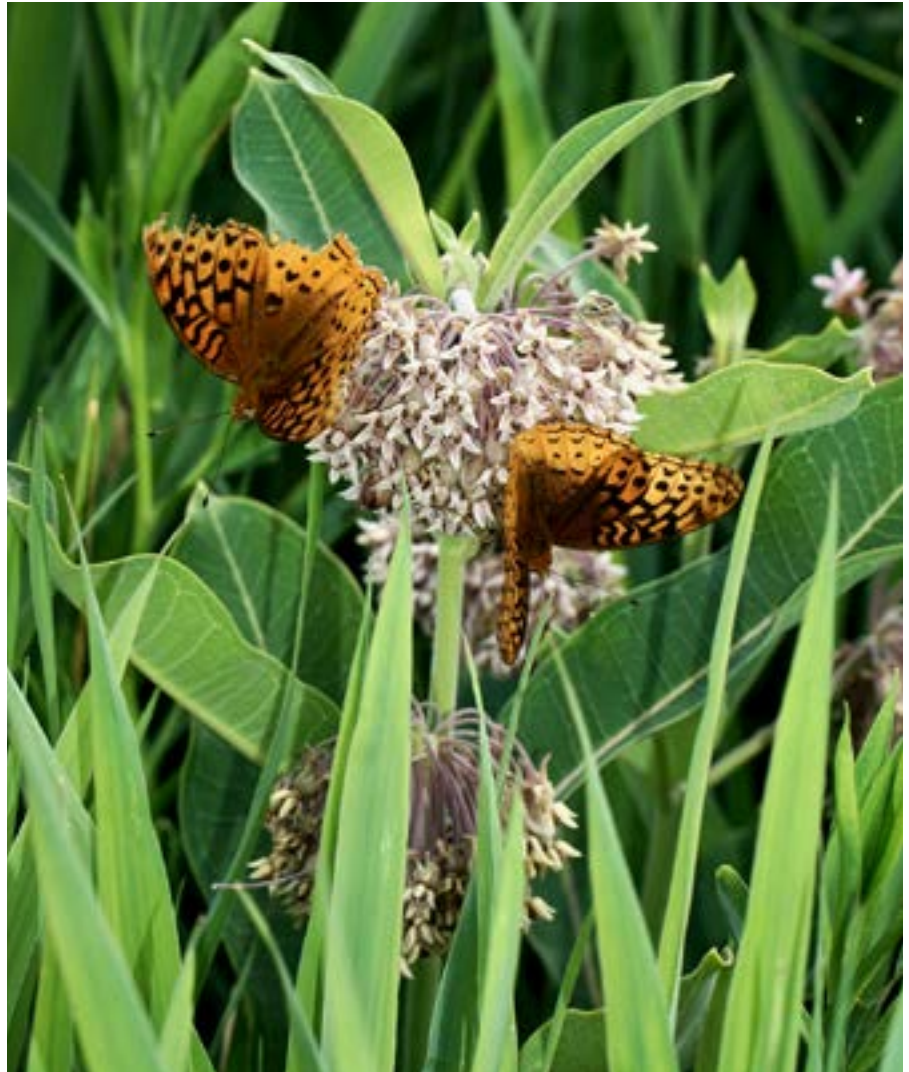
<sup>3</sup>Instar stages are the developmental stages between insect molting in which the exoskeleton is shed.

violet's growth cycle in order to give these caterpillars an abundant supply of food. Again, gardeners are cautioned to let the leaf litter be for a myriad of ecological reasons. The great spangled fritillary is highly secretive and its spring survival relies heavily on fallen leaf cover. To avoid predators, larvae hide among the leaves during the day and come out at night to dine on the violets. No wonder we unaware humans rarely see them! Ground-feeding birds and spiders looking for a meal are among the most likely to detect these larvae.

## Coming full circle

Left undisturbed and uneaten, the caterpillar completes its instar stages sometime in June and pupates into a well-camouflaged and concealed chrysalis—suspended head downward by silken threads attached to a log, rock, bark or leaf. A few weeks later, the butterfly ecloses, and we've now come full circle with the great spangled fritillary life cycle.<sup>4</sup> At this point, the native plant gardener can sustain the newly emerged butterfly by extending a floral welcome. Invite the adult butterflies in your landscape to stick around by providing the fritillary's preferred native nectar plants: milkweeds, Joe Pyes, native thistles, coneflowers, wild bergamot, and more. Consider the “floral refreshments” of late summer bloomers so that female fritillaries can then notice that your garden also includes its necessary host plant, the violet. The more violets your garden offers, the more visible and viable it becomes as a food source for next season's very hungry caterpillars.

Plentiful violets are essential for fritillaries, but their ecological usefulness reaches further. As a part of the circle of life, fritillary larvae are a food source for birds and other predators. And, native bee species such as mining bees (*Andrena*), mason bees (*Hoplitis*), bumble bees (*Bombus*), and sweat bees (*Halictus*) are all attracted to violets. Syrphid flies eat violet pollen, and skipper butterflies are attracted to the nectar. Some birds and small mammals find the



*The great spangled fritillary butterfly emerges in the mid-summer. Pictured here on common milkweed. Photo, Vicki Bonk*

<sup>4</sup>An insect ecloses when it emerges as an adult from a cocoon or chrysalis, or emerges as a first instar from an egg.

seeds delectable. Ants consider the seeds an important food source, unintentionally farm them, leading to more violets! This spring-blooming ground cover has wonderful “bee lawn” characteristics: the pollen and nectar food source of a native plant, low growing, mowable, foot traffic tolerant, resilient, and perennial.

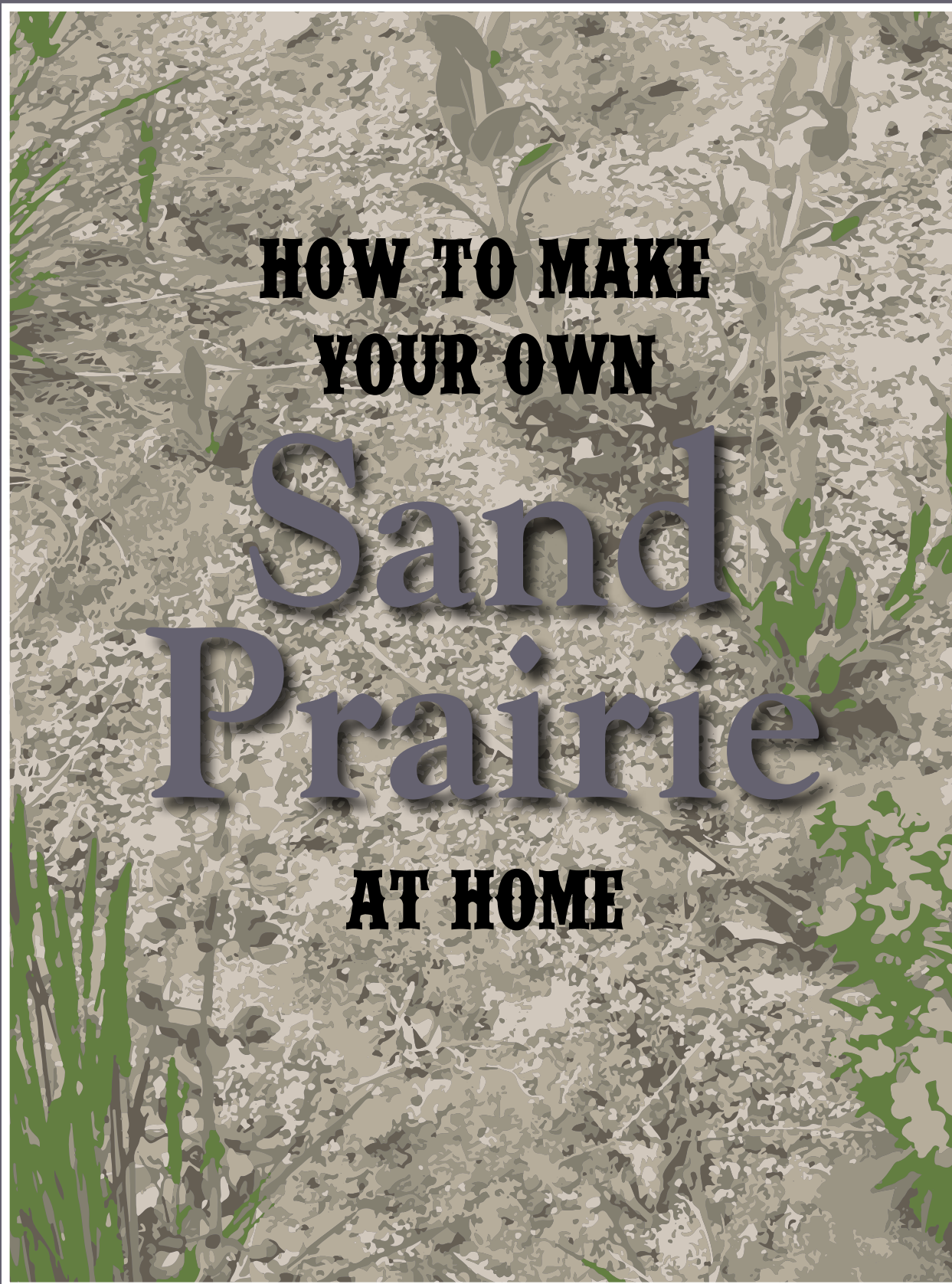
With their proliferation methods, violets can become too much of a good thing. There are ways to work alongside them. Edit violets only in July and early August to avoid editing the fritillaries. Keep violets



*The regal fritillary needs large swaths of prairie violet to survive. [A project at Three Rivers Park](#) outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota, has reintroduced this species with good success. Photo, Travis Bonovsky*

working for wildlife (and you) in a number of ways. Allow them to be massed as a groundcover (that’s best for the fritillaries, too). Violets are manageable as a garden border, and as a pollinator lawn alternative when combined with other native plants such as self-heal and wild strawberries. Violets are a terrific living plant mulch/cover under shrubs.

Violets have a niche in the homegrown habitat garden. Diminishing wild areas make “bringing violets home” vital. Fritillary butterflies, who need violets to exist, have helped elevate violets from its misunderstood status as disrespected “yard violet” to a key host plant, reliable nectar plant, and a key ingredient in an alternative lawn. Understanding the ecological value of all native plants and their faunal relationships gives us inspiration and knowledge to act as engaged stewards. Even in one little patch at a time.



**A sand prairie** (at least by my definition) is a native planting constructed with a layer of sand on top of soil. Weeds don't tend to seed themselves in pure sand, but native plants, when introduced as plugs, can reach the soil underneath and establish themselves. Such a planting offers the hope of a weed-free or at least a low-weed planting.



The initial planting layout, 2018

A few years back, I set out to create a “sand prairie” planting in my yard. I had a few reasons for wanting to give this kind of planting a try. First, it would simulate the gravel prairies of western Minnesota, where I enjoy botanizing. Plants that flourish in this environment struggle in the heavy clay soil found in much of our yard. Second, because of the relatively dense growth in a typical restored prairie, smaller but potentially showy specimens can get lost in the shuffle. By planting individual specimens in a sandy matrix unlikely to be filled by intervening species, even small plants can strut their stuff. Although wood mulch might also be able to separate plants and suppress weeds, it is not appropriate for dry prairie plants and would need to be replaced or at least enhanced every several years. Finally, I simply enjoy experimenting with different types of plantings. Our yard in central Minnesota already has a couple of different prairie plantings, a small pond, and two woodland plantings. I thought a sand prairie planting might appear to be “neater” and serve as a good model for those who worry that their neighbors might see a native planting as a messy collection of plants that are always leaning over or laying on the sidewalk. I was curious to see how (or if) a sand prairie would meet these goals.

## Relatively simple

Creating the sand prairie itself was relatively simple. We had a small perennial garden in a sunny area that we were no longer interested in maintaining, and I removed the soil to a depth of about six inches. I contacted Steve Heymans from PrairieScapes in St. Joseph, a local business that restores prairies, or in the case of sand prairies, who installs them. They use washed sand that by definition is free of weeds. After the sand delivery, I spread it around and walked on it so that it was fairly densely packed. I also left the edging from the former garden which provides a border for aesthetic purposes and helps prevent encroachment of grass from the lawn.

In most cases when PrairieScapes is installing a sand prairie, they remove the sod from a yard with a sod cutter. This creates a clean, clearly delineated shape that is about three to four inches deeper than the turf grass around it and functions as a container for the sand. It might also work to use an old bottomless sandbox if the sand depth is comparable.

Then it was time to select and plant the plants. Consistent with my interest in simulating a gravel hill prairie, I chose to focus on short flowering plants that thrive in dry rocky or sandy environments. This included pasque flower; yellow, silky and aromatic asters; various penstemons, several blazing stars, lupine, and yellow and purple coneflowers. I also mixed in about 30-40 percent grasses, including blue and hairy grama, June grass and prairie dropseed.

## A few tips

I chose either six-packs or four-inch pots, depending on what was available. In hindsight, both sizes worked equally well. Plants were spaced approximately 6-12 inches apart, depending on the anticipated size of the adult plant. I gave the garden a thorough initial watering, both to help establish the plants and ensure that the sand was well-packed. The first summer, which was a fairly dry one, I occasionally gave the garden some extra watering with a sprinkler or used a watering can to assist struggling individuals. Since that initial planting, I have continued to add new species that fit my criteria for this garden. Now I have a total of about 30 different species in the area.

This is the fourth year of the planting. Did it meet my expectation? What have I learned? I am very pleased with the outcome. The plants that I selected have been fairly easy to establish. The garden looks “neat” as individual plants get a little larger from year to year but (with three categories of exceptions discussed below) tend to stay where they’re planted and remain separate from each other as one might want in a demonstration garden. Since the plants are short to begin with, there are few plants that tend to flop or lean on others. There is almost no weeding to do. I spend about five minutes per year weeding this garden! The vast majority of maintenance is removing grass runners that attempt to move in from the lawn. I don’t do any watering, even in hot, dry summer months, except for spot-watering of newly introduced plants. And, like many other prairie plantings or pollinator gardens, there is a variety of colors. The plants that are blooming change from month to month. I have also been very pleasantly surprised at the number of pollinators that seem to like to tunnel into the sand and dragonflies that bask on the warm ground.



The second year of the sand prairie planting, 2019

# A neat look

Generally speaking, the garden maintains a neat look because of the spacing of the plants and the fact that most tend to remain individual plants that get slightly larger from year to year. There are a few plants that don't do this, and they fall into three categories. The first includes the true sand lovers. These native plants



Plantings coming into their own, 2020

will actually seed themselves into new spots in the sand; these plants include the showy penstemon, yellow aster, and partridge pea. The second category is the pirates. They tend to seed themselves into the plugs of soil where other plants have been introduced and take them over. These species seem to be mostly grasses, including big bluestem, little bluestem, and sideoats grama, as well as flat-top goldenrod. While none of these were planted in the sand prairie, they can enter by seed from my other prairie plantings. Finally, there are the expanders. These plants spread by rhizomes and tend to form clumps that increase in size from year to year. The most robust of these is whorled milkweed, which can sprout unpredictably in new locations from year to year. Additionally, coreopsis and aromatic aster tend to expand radially around their original location. Those who truly crave order in their

plantings could simply avoid some of these species or remove unwanted plants, but at least so far I have not taken any action on them. I may if some of the rhizomatous plants threaten to crowd out some of the more delicate plants near the edges of the planting.

# Give it a try

I've been very pleased with the results of this experiment. The sand prairie is a nice complement to my other plantings and allows me to increase the list of plants that I can grow. Maybe it will work in a site in your yard. Give it a try!



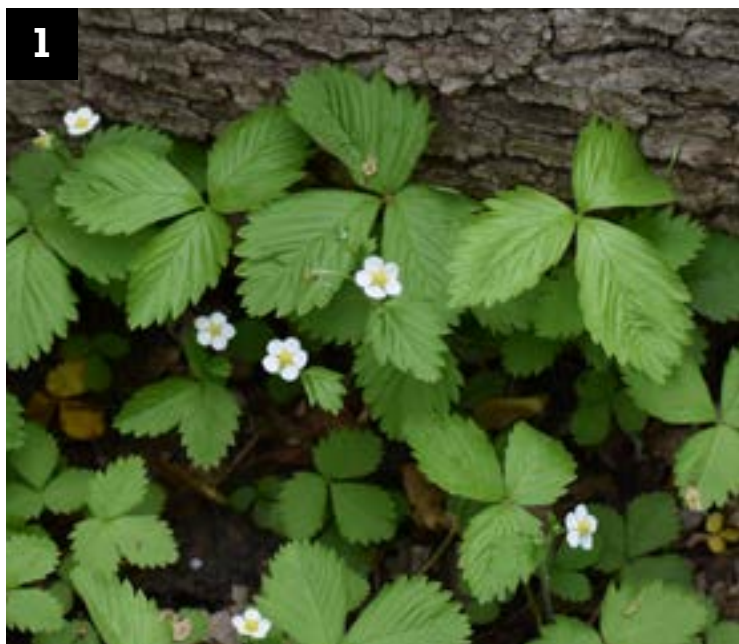
The garden in midsummer 2022

# Q&A | THE CURIOSITY CORNER

By: Holley Włodarczyk, *Wild Ones Twin Cities* chapter

**Question:** I keep hearing the terms “living mulch” and “green mulch.” What do they mean and what are the benefits for me and my habitat garden?

**Answer:** Whether your garden is newly planted or already established, adding a layer of material to cover the ground between plants is encouraged. However, there are much better choices than wood chips, rock, or the array of synthetic products available at your local garden center. [Green or Living Mulch](#)



is the planting of lower-growing ground covers—preferably native plants—to create a continuous vegetative carpet around taller plants, trees and shrubs.

When first planted, either by seed, plant plugs or both, you may wish to use a very light layer of traditional wood mulch to cover exposed ground. If planting in fall, you can [“leave the leaves”](#) instead. Just make sure the layer is not too thick, preventing new seeds from germinating or plants from spreading easily. As your green mulch layer expands and matures, the benefits for you and your garden will multiply! Here are a few reasons to try green mulch in your garden...

## Moisture Retention & Weed Suppression

By increasing the density of plant roots and ground cover, green mulch helps keep moisture from evaporating too quickly. Fewer weeds seeds will get what they need to sprout since less soil is exposed to light and air,

and those that do will have fierce competition from the growing layer of interweaving native plants. If you have a slope, green mulch can also help prevent soil erosion. The right plants, in the right place, will thrive together in a tight, mutually beneficial matrix that is more climate resilient and stores more carbon.

## Enhanced Habitat & Greater Biodiversity

A garden with green mulch offers richer habitat opportunities for a range of beneficial insects and critters—more blooms for pollinators, nectar for butterflies and hummingbirds, host plant foliage for caterpillars, seeds and larva for birds, and cover for ground-nesting bees, as well as for other invertebrates, amphibians

**Woodland Strawberry** is an excellent choice for shadier spots where you want a resilient carpet of green. Bonus: Both **Woodland Strawberry** *Fragaria vesca* and sun-loving **Wild Strawberry** *Fragaria virginiana* produce lovely white blossoms followed by tasty red fruit!

and reptiles. Under trees, green mulch is an essential part of [Soft Landings](#). The denser and more diverse your green mulch planting, the more bountiful and complex web of life you are supporting in your habitat garden.

### Less Work & Added Beauty

More soil moisture and fewer weeds mean less labor watering and weeding your garden. And less replanting is required over time thanks to the multiplication of plants by spreading and reseeding. The great variety of native plants that work well as green mulch offer a stunning range of foliage colors and textures, beautiful flowers and delicious fruits. Species with different growth habits create intricate layers, and as gardens evolve, ground covers add visual interest throughout the seasons.

### A Few Favorite Minnesota Native Species for Green Mulch

There are native plant choices to create green mulch in every garden—from hot, dry and sunny to cool, moist and shady, and everything in between! Many species are fairly tolerant of soil and sun conditions, and may surprise you by traveling into other parts of the garden. You can plant plugs of single species 6-12 inches apart to create a unified visual ground cover between plants and along borders, or mix-and-match species that prefer similar garden conditions for a more dynamic interweaving of color, texture and height.

**Wild Strawberry** *Fragaria virginiana* [1, 2, 3 & 6] & **Woodland Strawberry** *Fragaria vesca* [1] are two versatile species that spread by above-ground stolons. One prefers sun but tolerates some shade, the other, as its name suggests, prefers woodland conditions. Both form vibrant mats of foliage with delicate white blossoms, followed by smaller but sweeter fruit than their cultivar cousins.

**Field Pussytoes** *Antennaria neglecta* [4, 5 & 7] is a drought-tolerant ground cover that forms a dense grey-green carpet by underground rhizomes. In spring, upright stalks emerge with white brush-like flowers



2

**Wild Strawberry** forming a mat along driveway, framing a garden with taller plants and shrubs.



3

Wild Lupine seedling growing through the mat of Wild Strawberry.



**4**  
Wild Strawberry *Fragaria virginiana* and Field Pussytoes *Antennaria neglecta* growing together.

that turn into clusters of fluff when the seed is ripe. Look for American Lady caterpillars munching on the foliage throughout the summer.

**Prairie Smoke** *Geum triflorum* [6 & 7] is another green mulch plant that thrives in hot, dry garden conditions. Slower to spread by rhizome, each plant creates a wide disk of lacy foliage crowned by rosy pink flowers, then Dr. Seuss-style fluffy seed heads. Bumble bee queens visit this important spring favorite to gather nutritious pollen.

There are many other rhizomatic ground cover choices for creating green mulch in sunny gardens, including **Harebell** *Campanula rotundifolia*, which blooms from spring through fall, and **Golden Ragwort** *Packera*



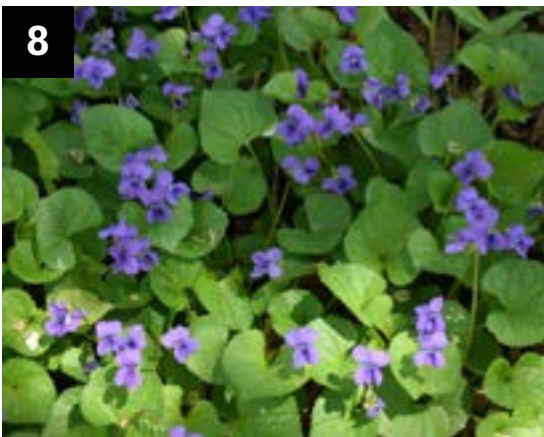
**5**  
Large-flowered Penstemon emerging through a lovely tangle of Field Pussytoes.



**6**  
Prairie Smoke, Wild Strawberry and Pasque Flower *Anemone patens*.



**7**  
Prairie Smoke *Geum triflorum* and Pussytoes fill in together.



**8**  
Common Blue Violets *Viola sororia* are a great choice for green mulch, covering large areas and also a beneficial addition to bee lawns.

*aurea*, with flushes of bright yellow flowers in early summer. Several species for shade will also spread by rhizome to fill in garden spaces between other plants.

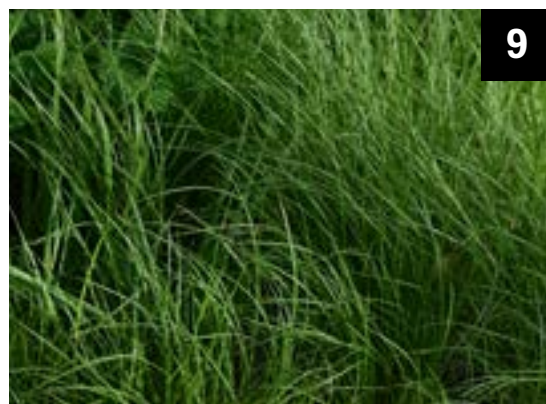
**Common Blue Violet** *Viola sororia* [8] can span areas from sun to shade, filling in gardens with a low-growing field of flowers before taller species steal the show in summer. It is the [host plant for fritillaries](#) and also makes a valuable addition to shady [alternative lawns](#), where turf grasses may struggle and provide little habitat value.

**Pennsylvania Sedge** *Carex pensylvanica* [9 & 10] adds tufts of grassy ground cover that soon fill in to create a lawn-like effect in woodland plantings. It is also fairly sun tolerant, and will travel to surrounding

areas with time. This common woodland sedge also produces a showy bloom of creamy staminate spikes in early spring.

**Wild Ginger** *Asarum canadense* [11] can handle deeper shade than most, with large, brilliant green leaves drawing the eye to darker corners of the garden. Look beneath the foliage to discover maroon and white blossoms on the ground, waiting for ants to collect ripe seeds. This shade-loving beauty spreads by rhizome, but if you find a clump growing at some distance from where you planted it, thank the ants!

Not every species used for green mulch needs to be an easy spreader by rhizome or stolon. In shade, consider using low-growing species that



**Pennsylvania Sedge** *Carex pensylvanica* is one of the best species for adding a grassy texture in shady or partial sun gardens.



By early summer tufts of **Penn Sedge** form a robust carpet below mounds of **Wild Geranium** and **Early Meadow Rue**.



The heart-shaped leaves of **Wild Ginger** *Asarum canadense* form a dense weed-smothering layer, even in deep shade.



**Wild Blue Phlox** *Phlox divaricata* is a spring delight, spreading in between taller plants, trees and ephemerals.

self-sow, like **Wild Blue Phlox** *Phlox divaricata* and **Two-leaf Miterwort** *Mitella diphylla* [12 & 13]. **Rue Anemone** *Thalictrum thalictroides* [13] is a spring ephemeral that reseeds readily, but also has a thin tuberous root system that will slowly colonize.

Green mulch plantings can also be comprised of somewhat taller species, like rhizomatic **Large-leaved Aster** *Eurybia macrophylla* or **Maidenhair Fern** *Adiantum pedatum* for shade, and **Partridge Pea** *Cassia fasciculata*, a self-sowing annual for sun. And don't forget the value of native grasses and sedges, which can be used in a [matrix planting](#) among the native forbs. For a more comprehensive list of Minnesota native species appropriate for this purpose, see our Wild Ones Twin Cities information sheet, [How to Create "Green Mulch" in Your Yard](#).



Also try adding other low-growing plants to create an interwoven tapestry of wildflowers and foliage. Here **Rue Anemone** *Thalictrum thalictroides*, **Two-leaf Miterwort** *Mitella diphylla* and **Wild Blue Phlox** form a living mulch.

# From the Designer's Desk

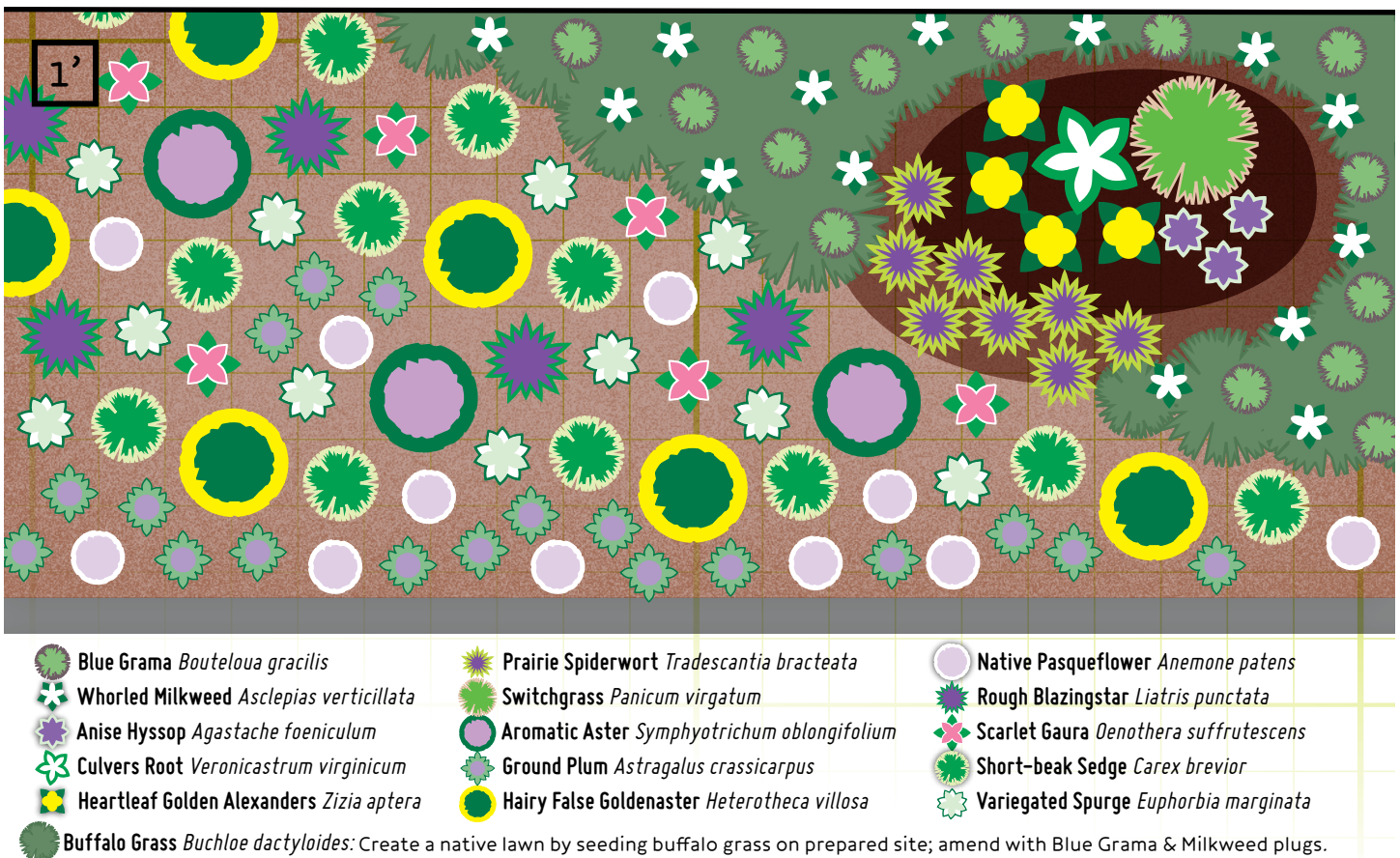
Andy Scott,  
ReWild Native Gardens, LLC

## Drought Resilient Native Planting

Full Sun | Dry | Average to Sandy Soils

### Design Notes & Site Recommendations:

- Adapt this plan to fit your site. This example shows a roughly 20' x 8' area, this would make a good street-side "boulevard" planting with sandier soils.
- A good design for converting a full sun "blank canvas" lawn to garden. Remove sod using traditional methods or by utilizing solarization or smothering via the "lasagna" method.
- Create a shallow swale (indicated by the dark area in the top right of the design). Water will flow to low spots, allowing for a more diverse planting.
- Some species in this design (Variegated Spurge, Anise Hyssop) are annuals/short lived perennials. Ensure their continued presence by allowing and encouraging reseeding. *Euphorbia marginata* is also commonly known as Snow-on-the-mountain, which should not be confused for the non-native invasive groundcover.
- Ensure the planting is successful, in times of drought new plants will need at least 1" of water per week.



**About the Designer** Andy Scott founded his native garden landscape and design business in 2017. He has helped residents and commercial properties convert lawn and wasted space to wildlife-friendly gardens that support a myriad of organisms including beneficial insects and birds.

**Contact Andy:** [hi@rewildgardens.com](mailto:hi@rewildgardens.com) | 612.385.2417 | [www.rewildgardens.com](http://www.rewildgardens.com)



# WEB of LEARNING

Online Resources to Link, Connect, and Expand Knowledge

## Wild Ones Climate Resilient Landscapes

Are you looking for something you can do to help slow down climate change, promote climate resilience and fight biodiversity losses all at the same time? Fill your garden with native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers! This great downloadable booklet offers oodles of information on carbon sequestration as well as how-to's for creating sustainable and resilient landscapes.



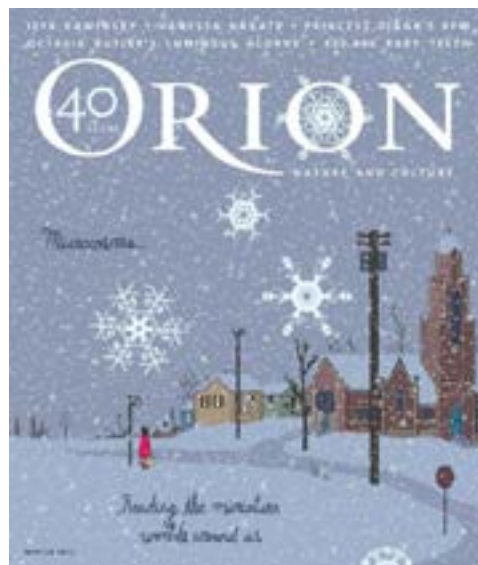
## Grow Like Wild newsletter

by Rebecca McMackin, past director of horticulture of [Brooklyn Bridge Park](#).

This outstanding monthly newsletter is hyper-packed with awesome information. Per Rebecca's website: "The goal of this newsletter is to share studies, stories, and talking points with people engaged in this work so that we can be better practitioners and advocates."

## Orion Magazine

Per their website: "Orion magazine invites readers into a community of caring for the planet. Through writing and art that explore the connection between nature and culture, Orion inspires new thinking about how humanity might live on Earth justly, sustainably, and joyously." Recommended reading: Orion Magazine, Nature and Culture; The Book of Bugs; Old Growth.

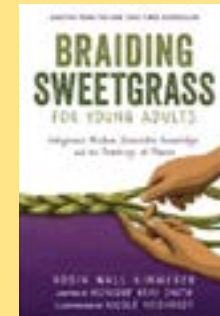


## WHAT WE'RE READING, WATCHING & HEARING

### What We're Reading...

[Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults](#)

"Adapted for young adults by Monique Gray Smith, this new edition



reinforces how wider ecological understanding stems from listening to the earth's oldest teachers: the plants around us, art from illustrator Nicole Neidhardt, Braiding

Sweetgrass for Young Adults brings Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the lessons of plant life to a new generation."

### What We're Watching...

[Pollinators' Best Hope: A New Approach to Pollinator Habitat That Starts in Your Yard](#) By Doug Tallamy



Quintessential Doug Tallamy. One hour and twelve minutes of great information. [One of several](#) excellent webinars put on by the Ohio State University Bee Lab.

### What We're Hearing...

Absolutely the best thing since sliced bread!

["The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's free Merlin Bird ID app can now](#)



[identify bird sounds.](#)

Merlin can recognize the sounds of more than 400 species from the U.S. and Canada, with that number set

to expand rapidly in future updates." Don't go outside without it!

# 12TH ANNUAL - More-Than-a-Plant-Sale!



**FREE AND OPEN TO ALL RAIN OR SHINE**

**Landscape Revival  
OAKDALE**

**Saturday June 3 2023  
9am - 1pm + food truck!**

**Oakdale Fire Station #1  
5000 Hadley Ave. N.  
Oakdale**

**Landscape Revival  
SHOREVIEW**

**Saturday June 10, 2023  
9am - 1pm**

**Shepard of the Hills  
North Paking Lot  
3920 Victoria St. N.  
Shoreview**

## NEW! INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES developed by Wild Ones Twin Cities

(here is a sample of one of the handouts. You can find the rest at  
[www.wildonestwincities.org](http://www.wildonestwincities.org))

**Check out our new educational handouts!** We get lots of questions from lots of people! So, we developed a series of handouts based on themes of questions we frequently hear. These printable handouts are located in the left-hand sidebar on Wild Ones Twin City's landing page.



### Wild Ones Reflections

Leslie Pilgrim: Editor  
Doug Benson: Design

**A special thank you  
to this issue's contributors:**

Vicki Bonk  
Brian Johnson  
Andy Scott  
Holley Wlodarczyk

- 🐦 [A Selection of Regionally Native Vegetation for Birds](#)
- 🐦 [Favorite Native Plants for Dry Shade](#)
- 🐦 [Favorite Native Plants for a Shady Boulevard Garden](#)
- 🐦 [Favorite Native Plants for a Sunny Boulevard Garden](#)
- 🐦 [How to Create "Green Mulch" in Your Yard](#)
- 🐦 [How to Create an Alternative Lawn](#)
- 🐦 [Ideas for Edible Plants for Your Native Plant Garden](#)
- 🐦 [Keystone Species & Soft Landings](#)
- 🐦 [Native Plant Seed Collecting](#)
- 🐦 [Native Plant Winter Seed Sowing](#)
- 🐦 [Native Shrubs to Plant after Buckthorn Removal](#)
- 🐦 [Native Trees for a Changing Climate \(Twin Cities Urban & Suburban Areas\)](#)



Pagoda Dogwood, Image: Leslie Pilgrim

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

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

Many chapters' meetings/presentations are now  
hybrid! See individual chapter websites to learn  
about in-person and virtual offerings.



**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.

**SUPPORT** our mission by purchasing local 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.](#)

**This is the last in the Wild Ones Reflections series. We hope you have enjoyed these issues! Past issues can be found at [WildOnesTwinCities.org](http://WildOnesTwinCities.org) on the left-hand side of the landing page. If you liked this issue of Wild Ones Reflections, be sure to **share it widely!****