

Photo Courtesy of Donna VanBuecken

New Members

A warm Wild Ones welcome to these new members:

- Joyce Decker, Menasha
- Marv and Jan Faust, Winneconne
- Jeff and Lisa Clauson, Appleton
- Steffi Jonas, Appleton

We're so glad you joined Wild Ones!

Don't Become Extinct!

See your membership expiration date on your newsletter label and follow directions for renewing.

Thanks, and we'll look forward to seeing you at the meetings!

— Bob Niendorf &
Carol Niendorf,
Membership Co-chairs

WILD Center

Wild Ones National Headquarters
2285 Butte des Morts Beach Rd
Neenah, WI

Directions: From Hwy 41, take Exit 136, drive east on BB (Prospect Ave) to right on Northern Rd, then left onto Stroebel Rd. From Stroebel, turn right onto Butte des Morts Beach Rd.

Hours

Monday–Friday, 10 am–3 pm
Grounds Accessible & Always Open

wildones.org

Events – Spring/Summer 2018 of Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter

Plant Sale Trail, Native Plant Sale & Order Pick-up

May 19 | Sat | 9-2 pm | Wild Center | 2285 Butte des Morts Beach Rd, Neenah, WI

Again this year we are partnering with Outagamie County Master Gardeners Association (OCMGA) and the Paper Valley Garden Club (PVGCC) to bring Fox Valley residents the second annual Plant Sale Trail. So mark your calendars for May 19, 2018.

Pick up for pre-ordered native plants and day of sale native plants will be from **9 am to 2 pm at the WILD Center**, 2285 Butte des Morts Beach Drive, Neenah. At the **OCMGA and PVGCC sites**, plants will be **available for purchase** beginning at **8 am**.

Please note the **PVGC site** is at a **new location** this year. Go to **1041 E Northwood Drive, Appleton**. OCMGA's plant sale site remains the same at 3365 W Brewster Street, Appleton.

When visiting the various locations, there will be native and non-native perennials, as well as fruits, vegetables and herbs, shrubs, and houseplants. There will be knowledgeable people on hand to answer your questions about plants, how to plant and maintain them, and how to grow your own.

See the two-page flyer in this newsletter for details or download additional copies and a map at: <http://bit.ly/WOFVPlantSaleFlyer>.

NEW PROGRAM: An Ethic of Restoration in the Fox River Watershed

May 24 | Thr | 6:30 Social | 7 pm Program | WILD Center | 2285 Butte des Morts Beach Rd, Neenah, WI

Dr. Laura Hartman, assistant professor of environmental studies at the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh, brings environmental philosophy to a real-world discussion at Wild Ones. *What counts as "natural" when we restore an ecosystem? What is the value of nature and how does human intervention diminish or enhance that value?* This presentation is part of a larger project bringing ecological restorationists of all kinds into conversation with philosophy on the topic. Dr. Hartman's background in religious and philosophical environmental ethics informs her work on interfaith environmentalism, ethics of climate engineering, and Christianity and consumption.



Dr. Laura Hartman

Green Bay Botanic Garden Tour: Focus on Natives

Jun 27 | Wed | 6-8 pm | Green Bay Botanic Garden | 2600 Larson Rd, Green Bay, WI

Tour the new Schneider Family Grand Garden with Director of Horticulture, **Mark Konlock**, and learn about the incorporation of native plants into this 2.5 acre garden expansion. The design of this area will inspire you to combine grasses, natives, and pollinator-loving ornamentals in your yard. Admission for the tour is \$5. Gather in the main lobby for tour.

Hypertufa Planter Workshop

July 26 | Thr | 6 pm | WILD Center | 2285 Butte des Morts Beach Rd, Neenah, WI

Create a rock shaped planter out of hypertufa, a Portland cement compound. Using a free-form method, gardener **Loris Damerow** will lead you through this hands-on workshop to make a simulated rock with a pocket for planting. You will also receive a pad of native prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia*) to take home. To register, email Loris at lorisleaf@yahoo.com. Registration taken until limit of 12 participants is reached. Materials fee is \$15.00.

Appleton Memorial Park Gardens Savanna Tour

Aug 23 | Thr | 5:30 pm | Appleton Memorial Park Gardens | 1313 E Witzke Blvd, Appleton, WI

Walk with **Dick Nikolai**, retired Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Biologist and volunteer, and **Jim Kinderman**, Appleton Parks Department. Learn about the prairie savanna site within this public park. We will be guided to the initial planting area created in 2001, identify native species, visit new developments, and witness how the area has grown and changed over time. Hear about plans for increasing the native diversity at this choice community location.



Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)

Photo Courtesy of Donna VanBuecken

Program & Tour
Schedule Change

SEPTEMBER 27
PROGRAM CANCELED

The September 27 program
has been cancelled since
Dr. Laura Hartman is
presenting on May 24
instead.

How I Stopped Chasing Butterflies and Learned to Appreciate Plants

by Barb Cattani

Let me introduce myself. I've been a member of Wild Ones for more than a decade, participating in a limited way. I attended the Toward Harmony with Nature Conferences each January, and I don't think I've missed a Native Plant Sale yet. But my work schedule prevented me from attending many of the monthly program meetings or yard tours. And, I didn't see how I could help out in my limited free time.

While closing my business in 2016, many of my customers asked what I planned to do with all the extra time. My first answer was always, "Get more involved with Wild Ones." I wasn't sure exactly how I would be involved and never thought it would mean taking over as President, but here I am! After Tim McKeag's move from President to Treasurer, I was elected to serve the remainder of his term.

True confession time . . . I'm not a plant person. I'm a bug person. More accurately, I'm an insect person, especially butterflies, but I like bugs and beetles, too. Flies, not so much. Here's the thing, though. Growing up collecting and raising butterflies, I quickly learned that insects and plants were very closely connected. There were Black Swallowtails in our yard, because my dad raised carrots and parsley in



Photo Courtesy of Lisa Lehmann

the garden. But Easter Tiger Swallowtails were very rare, because the trees on which their caterpillars fed were scarce in our neighborhood. The relationships were even more evident in the big vacant lot across the street. It was wet at the north end. There were lots of willow bushes and one big climbing tree, but it wasn't easy butterfly hunting territory. As you walked south through the field, you were walking up a slight slope. It wasn't steep enough for sledding, but it did mean there was more grass and were fewer flowers. The sweet spot for butterflies was in between the grass-dominant hilltop and the wet area. That was where the flowers dominated and a wide variety of insects could be found. In a high school environmental science class, I found out that these differences were known as habitats and you could study these relationships in college. Cool.

Wolf Road Prairie in Cook County, Illinois was my introduction to the native prairie ecosystem. This prairie remnant was slated for development in the 1920's, but development stopped after sidewalks were laid due to the Great Depression. What greeted me and my mother on our visits in the late 1970's was nearly virgin prairie with oaks shading the parking area and some of the rock stars of prairie plants growing right next to the sidewalks. The changes in plant species composition as we walked from the wetter, shady entrance to a drier, sunnier upslope area were dramatic. Now, it was time to learn plant identification, as well as insect names. Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) predominated with prairie cord grass (*Spartina pectinata*) and Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) present to a lesser extent. Blue false indigo (*Baptisia australis*), compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum*), cup plant

(*Silphium perfoliatum*), ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*), prairie dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*), boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), even rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) were the first species I learned to recognize. It was magic and I was hooked.



Barb Cattani

Employment took me to New Jersey where my gardening focused on azaleas (*Rhododendrons pentanthera*), hostas (*Hosta*), and irises (*Iris*). The gardens were pretty but didn't do much to improve the environment. I heard about native plants at the annual plant sale at Rutgers University, but I equated native plants to heirloom tomatoes: they were good to have around for genetic diversity and kind of trendy. So I picked up a few plants for variety and to be one of the cool kids. The importance of native plants for native pollinators wasn't a factor in my decision process. Yet.

The second chapter of my career brought me to the Midwest and a 2.5 acre yard in Greenville, WI with a lot of lawn grass and few trees. After experimenting with native and non-native species in the wet areas of my lawn, I came to realize that I needed help figuring out what would really work best in my yard and provide the best habitat for the insects and birds. Wild Ones, specifically the Fox Valley Area Chapter, filled the need. From the Native Plant Sale to the annual conference and the landscape professionals I met at the conference, the information I needed was suddenly available. And it worked! My yard is definitely still a work in progress, but surface water run-off and standing water in the lawn has been greatly reduced with native plantings and rain garden concepts. Best of all, there were fireflies in my backyard last summer for the first time since I moved in.

And that brings us to the third chapter of my career – time to volunteer and give back to a group that ties together all the things that have fascinated me since childhood. Now I know I'm not unique; everyone has shared some of these experiences or something similar. If you can relate to these stories, please consider how you can participate in our Chapter and help spread the news about landscaping with native plants. If you want some ideas of specific ways to volunteer, please contact me at wildonesfoxvalley@gmail.com. I would be happy to help you figure out how your talents and interests can contribute to our Chapter's work.

Milkweed Tussock moth caterpillar.

Photo Courtesy of Barb Cattani



News About Wild Ones Honorary Directors

by Barbara Schmitz

DONNA VANBUECKEN

Donna VanBuecken, Charter President of the Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter, was named a Wild Ones Honorary Director this year. Donna was the Wild Ones' first Executive Director, serving from 1998-2015, having started as Wild Ones' first Administrative Secretary, from 1996-1998. In addition, as president of Accent on Natural Landscaping Inc, Donna spreads the word about native plants and natural landscaping, consults with local nurserymen and provides administrative support to small nonprofit organizations. Since her retirement, she also writes a weekly natural landscaping blog accentnatural.com.



Donna VanBuecken

Donna is involved in a variety of other stewardship activities. She has been a hunter education instructor for nearly 20 years for the Outagamie Conservation Club, and leads eagle monitoring and Eagle Days activities in the Fox Valley. She serves on the board of the Citizens Natural Resources Association and the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame (WCHF), and was a founding member of the Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin. Although now retired, in her role as a park commissioner for the Town of Grand Chute Parks and Recreation Department, she promoted native plants and natural landscaping in the Town's parks and other green areas, and continues to be available as a resource to the Town as well as other local communities.

She earned a degree in organizational management from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

Besides much of the material on the Wild Ones website, wildones.org and the WCHF website, wchf.org, Donna has edited several other on-line resources including:

- <http://bit.ly/WOLandscapingWithNativePlants>
- <http://bit.ly/THWNDarrelMorrisonKeynote>
- Doug Tallamy's presentations listed in the next column
- Soon, also, Neil Diboll's THWN presentation, *The American Garden – A Life or Death Situation*.

DOUG TALLAMY

Wild Ones also named Doug Tallamy as a Wild Ones Lifetime Honorary Director. Doug, an Honorary Director since 2009, joins Neil Diboll, President of Prairie Nursery and Lorrie Otto, the Inspiration for Wild Ones as a Lifetime Honorary Director. Doug is a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark where Tallamy teaches classes on insect ecology and conservation, behavioral ecology and advanced ecology. His current research centers on the behavioral ecology of insects, conservation of biodiversity, impact of alien plants on native ecosystems and plant-insect interactions.



Doug Tallamy

Tallamy, a frequent speaker at conferences, including the 2013 WOFVA Toward Harmony with Nature Conference (THWN), is best known for his 2007 book *Bringing Nature Home*. The book, now in its second edition, is widely recognized, because it advocates the importance of supporting biodiversity by planting native plants and natural landscapes. More recently, he co-authored *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden with Rick Darke*. To date, he has also authored 89 research articles.

Tallamy earned a PhD at the University of Maryland in 1980, a master's degree in entomology at Rutgers University in 1976, and a bachelor's degree in biology from Allegheny College in 1973. He was a post-doctoral fellow in entomology at the University of Iowa from 1980-81.

Videos of Doug Tallamy's presentations at THWN 18 on *Creating Healthy, Biodiverse Neighborhood Corridors* and *The Value of Having Native Plants in Our Yards* can be found on-line at WPT's University Place. <http://bit.ly/WPTTallamyNeighborhoodCorridors> and <http://bit.ly/WPTTallamyValueNativePlantsInYards>

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November 1, 1994:
Fox Valley Area became chartered as a Wild Ones chapter

Wild Ones promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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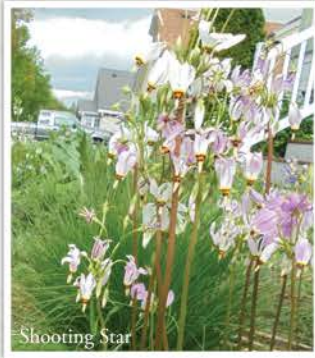
Photo Courtesy of Donna VanBuecken

Make a Wish on a Shooting Star

by Marian French

When a plant has a name like Dodecatheon meadia, it seems to command some respect. Indeed, in Greek, Dodecatheon means “flower of the twelve gods.” This is thought to be in reference to the ancient belief that the primroses, the shooting star’s relatives, were protected by the gods of Mount Olympus. And although far from the home of the Greek gods, the shooting star is nonetheless a divine presence in the prairies and savannas of the eastern United States.

Anywhere there is well-drained soil and part or full sun this native wildflower can make its happy home.



Shooting Star
Photo Courtesy of Marion French

While all the grasses and wildflowers in the prairie garden are just starting to poke their sleepy leaves up out of the soil, the shooting stars are already hanging their chandeliers of flowers over a foot in the air. Each delicate flower has a comet’s tail of white or pale pink petals that point backwards from the stamens and pistil. The strange shape means not just any insect can pollinate these flowers, and it seems that they are reserved for royalty – the most common pollinators are queen bumblebees. That makes shooting stars part of a collection of early-blooming natives that provide vital nourishment for establishing bumblebee hives.

Most of May and into early June, these unearthly flowers waver in the spring breezes. They fill a gap of time when anxious prairie gardeners are waiting for something, anything, to bloom. Other prairie natives such as pasque flower (*Anemone patens*), birdsfoot violet (*Viola pedata*), and prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*) can also add color before the prairie gets going. But the shooting star really adds the height and the drama to the temporarily flat landscape.

After the show is over, the other plants in the flowerbed should be getting tall and floriferous, leaving the shooting star to go dormant and wither back to the ground in privacy. There will be virtually no trace of it until the following spring, when its fleshy, bright green leaves erupt out of the cold earth and begin again their journey toward the stars.

Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter Annual Meeting Highlights

by Barb Cattani

The Annual Meeting, held this year on February 22, is a time to socialize, enjoy great food, and review the state of the Chapter. This year, the meeting opened with a fun and educational round of “Wild Ones Bingo.” Attendees interviewed each other and learned who has been a member of the Chapter for over five years, has a Wild Ones yard sign, and has seen a meadowlark, among other fun facts. Winners were awarded a gift certificate for a free plant at the Native Plant Sale.

The business part of the meeting started with an announcement that Tim McKeag has resigned as President. The board thanked Tim for his year of service, especially for his leadership in differentiating between the responsibilities of our Chapter members and those of the national staff at the WILD Center. Tim is not leaving us though, he will remain on the Board as the Treasurer, replacing Joby McKeag.

Barbara Cattani was elected to fill out the remainder of Tim’s term as President. Peggy McGaffney was elected as Vice President and will continue as Secretary. Tracy Koenig resigned as Chair of the Grants committee. We appreciate Tracy’s contributions over the six years she served.

Barb Cattani reviewed the State of the Chapter Report that was submitted to the national Wild Ones organization. The complete report for our Chapter can be found in the *Members-Only* section of the Wild Ones website. All of the chapter reports are listed under “National Reports.”

- **Chapter Reports:** To see these, go to: https://www.wildones.org/download/National_Reports/CHAPTER%20Reports/http://www.wildones.org/download
- **Financial Reports:** The financial reports for all chapters are also available for review. To see these, go to: https://www.wildones.org/download/National_Reports/CHAPTER%20Reports/2017_EOY_Chapter%20Combined%20Financial%20Statements.pdfreports/CHAPTER%20Reports

A discussion about future opportunities and challenges for the Chapter followed. The Board is tackling strategic planning this year. The focus is how to recruit new members, increase the level of involvement of members in Chapter leadership, and encourage more participation in Chapter activities. Expect to read more about the strategic planning process and how you can contribute in future communications. The Board will be seeking input from members and we hope for extensive participation.

The meeting closed with a report from National Wild Ones Board member, Karen Syverson. The National organization has designated 2018 as the “Year of the Chapter.” National leadership will be developing tools to help local chapters recruit new members. Karen also shared the changes at the National Office in the WILD Center. The Interim Executive Director, Pam Wilcox, finished her contract at the end of February. Elaine Krizenesky is now the National Office Director. Stephanie Marcelle is the Administrative Specialist and is responsible for updating the membership database and providing email and phone support. The position of Membership Manager is currently open. Karen expressed her confidence in the changes in staff responsibility and new hires.

It was an informational meeting and the opportunity to get opinions directly from our members was very helpful to Chapter Board officers.



Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)
Photo Courtesy of Rebecca Eyer

Milkweed

by Mike Bognar

Recently, there has been a tremendous campaign around monarch butterflies amongst conservationists, naturalists, land managers, and even just the nostalgic outdoorsman. No matter what perspective you have on monarch butterflies, most point to milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.) as the solution for their population decline. *But why use milkweed? What is so special about milkweed?*



Monarch on common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) with monarch
Photo Courtesy of Lisa Lehmann

Every butterfly has what is called a host plant. Host plants are specific species, or a number of species, on which the adults lay their eggs. They will only lay their eggs on these plants. And once their caterpillars hatch out of their eggs, they will only eat that species of plant. The monarch butterfly's host plant is... you guessed it - milkweed. The female butterflies are able to sense milkweed with organs on their legs called chemoreceptors. Generally the female butterfly will lay one egg per plant to avoid competition with other hungry monarch caterpillars, but with a synchronistically declining milkweed population she may lay more than one per plant. Eggs are almost always laid on the underside of healthy leaves, easily identified as a milky white dot about 1 mm in diameter.

There are 73 species of native milkweed in the United States (US) and they cover almost every regional ecosystem from Canada to the islands of the Caribbean and everything in between. However, monarchs utilize only 30 of those species as host plants on a regular basis. Wisconsin has about a dozen milkweed species with four common species being heavily utilized for egg laying: common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), whorled milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*), and butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*).

It is said that the largest contributor to milkweed habitat loss is the use of Roundup® (*glyphosate*) on the Midwest's croplands. Milkweed used to grow in the crop rows, but with the explosion of genetically modified crops in the US food system, scientists have created food plants immune to the toxic herbicide. We now douse our fields in toxic chemicals at the demise of our beloved milkweed. There are some researchers that suggest the butterfly population will be difficult to stabilize without the reintroduction of milkweed to millions of acres of our farmlands; an indication that our ditches, back yards, gardens, and naturalized areas need to support these insects until the habitat can be restored!

One of the most interesting facets of the milkweed species is that the members of the *Asclepias* family have adapted to grow in almost any soil type and light condition. Below, are highlights of Wisconsin's most common species that can be easily grown to benefit the monarch.

- **common milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*) will grow in nearly any condition. It can be found growing out of the cracks of sidewalks, but prefers rich soil in partly shady areas. It grows 3-5 feet tall and produces large pink globe-shaped flowers that are pollinator magnets.
- **swamp milkweed** (*Asclepias incarnata*) thrives in our wetlands and shady areas in moisture-rich, even wet locations. It begins to branch out at 3-5 feet tall with rich purple/pink flowers.
- **whorled milkweed** (*Asclepias verticillata*) can be found from moist to dry soils. It grows stout at 2 feet tall, and has clusters of creamy white flowers.
- **butterfly milkweed** (*Asclepias tuberosa*) prefers well drained to dry clay and sandy soils. It grows compact and bushy, 2-3 feet tall and boasts a carpet of vivid orange flowers.

These are awesome plants for the native gardener because the shape of the leaves and the colors of the flowers look nothing alike! It is only the shape of the flowers that easily identify them as milkweed. So, you can house many of the same genus but they all provide something uniquely different in the landscape. I have 6 different species in my yard and the combination of heights, textures, and colors provide year-round interest. (Not just for humans, but for wildlife, I might add.)

Of course there are other milkweed native to Wisconsin, including our threatened purple milkweed (*Asclepias purpurascens*) and oval-leaf milkweed (*Asclepias ovalifolia*), poke milkweed (*Asclepias exaltata*), Sullivant's milkweed (*Asclepias sullivantii*), green milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora*), and tall green milkweed (*Asclepias hirtella*) amongst others. They all grow to different heights and vary in bloom colors and leaf shapes - well worth seeking out for your property!



Butterfly milkweed with monarch caterpillar

Photo Courtesy of Donna VanBuecken

Below is a quick reference guide of our four most common native milkweed species for the on-the-go naturalist.

	FULL-SUN	PART-SHADE	SHADE
WET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • swamp milkweed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • swamp milkweed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • swamp milkweed
MESIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common milkweed • swamp milkweed • butterfly milkweed • whorled milkweed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common milkweed • swamp milkweed • whorled milkweed • common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • milkweed • swamp milkweed
DRY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • butterfly milkweed • whorled milkweed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • butterfly milkweed • whorled milkweed • common milkweed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common milkweed

Grants Awarded

by Rebecca Eyer

The Natural Landscapes for Tomorrow Committee of Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter awarded \$500 grants to two projects that meet the specific requirements of this committee.

Isaac Gabler, Eagle Scout Candidate Troop 135, will work at High Cliff State Park to develop a native landscape for a swale that directs rain runoff. His plan is to naturalize this area using native plants. The second grant will support the diversification and restoration of a landscaped native plant garden at Heckrodt Wetland Reserve (HWR). Emma Neuman, Natural Resource Associate, is the project manager for the project called Diversification for Education. The garden is an important reference garden for HWR's education program and general public knowledge.

Members of the Natural Landscapes for Tomorrow Grants Committee include Tracey Koenig, Chair, Rich Fischer, Zaiga Freivalds, Sonya Jeter, Tim McKeag, and Joy Perry. Special thanks to Tracey Koenig for her leadership for the past six years.

OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

Grant Writers

We have an opportunity to apply for grants from Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region. At this time, we expect to submit only one or two grants. If you have experience writing grants and would like to learn more about our Chapter, please contact Barb Cattani at wildonesfoxvalley@gmail.com

Newsletter Contributions

Anyone may submit a newsletter article. Use this opportunity to share what you know or to learn about a native or environmental topic that interests you. Chances are good that other members will be just as interested as you on your topic.

The deadline to submit articles or other information will be **June 15** (*summer issue*) and **October 21** (*fall issue*). Submit articles to Rebecca Eyer at reyer520@msn.com.

Nearly 300 People Reached Yearly – Help Us Continue the Tradition

by Kristin Kauth

What's the largest and widest program impact the Chapter makes yearly? If you guessed our annual **Toward Harmony with Nature Conference**, you'd be correct! Over the last 22 years this event brings together nearly **300 people** annually to learn about sustainable landscaping. They come not only from our Chapter but from around the state and outside Wisconsin. Of the survey responders this year, **98% plan or hope to come back** next year. It has become known as a full day event offering a choice of 10 speakers on various topics of sustainable landscaping, how-to recommendations, as well as, quality vendors.

ADDITIONAL 2017 STATISTICS

- 82% came to hear speakers on the environment
- 73% to learn about landscaping in their urban or suburban yard
- 29% attended the first time
- 45% previously attended 1-5 years and 25% more years than that
- An average of seven people join as new members at the conference yearly. Every year someone says, "I plan to join as a result of attending this conference."

SAVE THE DATE

The date for next year's **Toward Harmony with Nature Conference** is **January 19, 2019**. Spread the word, looking forward to seeing you there!

OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

Making our conference happen, as you may guess, is carried out by Chapter volunteers.

If you want to play a key role in spreading the word about and helping people better understand the importance of sustainable landscaping with natives, these are vital roles that need to be filled. Join 12 other committee members in continuing our yearly conference tradition, which means so much to so many people, by becoming a part of the Conference Planning Committee.

Currently, we need to fill two Conference Planning Committee positions:

- **Site Coordinator**, making the site facility arrangements
- **Vendor & Exhibitors Chair**, scheduling the vendors

The committee members meet only twice a year, in addition to attending the conference. The current chairs of these functions, who are stepping down after 16 years and 8 years respectively, will assist the new committee members during this year of transition.

Contact **Kristin Kauth**, Conference Planning Committee Chair, at wildonesfoxvalley@gmail.com or Chapter phone (920) 572-9540.

A Special Thank You

A very special thank you goes to three very special THWN Conference Committee Chairs. Thank you to **Sue and Dave Peck** who have been the Site Coordinators over the past 16 years and to **Dave Misterek** who has been the Vendor & Exhibitors Chair for more than eight years. Their dedication in helping make the yearly conference, THWN, an annual success is greatly appreciated!



Is That Herbicide Safe to Use?

by Joy Perry

Wild Ones members often tend to avoid using toxic materials on their landscapes. One exception is the use of herbicides for control of noxious and invasive weeds. What do we really know, though, about the potential effects of using those products??

In the small print on a pesticide label is a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration number. It's the EPA who's charged with overseeing the processes of testing, review and approval of pesticide products.

I used to think that meant the EPA itself did testing and evaluation. I was wrong.

The pesticide makers usually contract with specialist labs for that work. Results are presented to the EPA for their decision on approval and, if so, any needed restrictions.

I used to think this meant that a pesticide approved by the EPA is safe to use. I was wrong.

Pesticide testing is designed to answer several questions: Will it...

- explode or catch fire?
- cause acute health effects from high-level short-term exposure by breathing, eating, contact?
- cause neurological effects?
- cause chronic disease and cancer when evaluated over most of a lifetime? (That's the lifetime of genetically uniform laboratory mice.)
- harm reproduction or cause birth defects after exposure of pregnant mice?

I used to think this was adequate. I was wrong.

First, only the "active ingredient" in a pesticide product is tested. Products also have many other chemicals, the "inerts," some of which are toxic and are patented as trade secrets. The mixtures in commercial formulations of pesticides, including the inerts, are not tested.

Second, many pesticides are applied in combinations with other pesticides and agricultural chemicals. There may be enhanced toxicity of those cocktails, but the combinations are not tested or regulated.

Third, some toxins disrupt the endocrine hormone systems of animals (including human animals), effectively altering balances of male and female hormones with many potentially damaging consequences. We only recently began to devise ways to test for that effect.

Fourth, we do not examine long term, low level exposures, or "pulsed" exposures such as may occur in drinking water after spring rains.

What about the current global controversy over the most widely used herbicide, trade-named Roundup® by Monsanto Corporation?

The active ingredient, glyphosate, is used in hundreds of weed killer products. It's a nonselective herbicide which kills most plants on contact unless they're genetically modified to resist the chemical.

Glyphosate herbicide use has skyrocketed worldwide since the advent of glyphosate-resistant crops, plus it's increasingly used to kill crop plants so that they may be harvested earlier than if they dried naturally. These include: cotton, canola, cereal grains, potatoes, and sugar beets.



I used to think glyphosate was safe. I think I was wrong, though evidence is mixed.

Glyphosate has been touted as benign because it was thought to degrade rapidly once in the environment. In recent years, though, glyphosate has been found persisting and accumulating in soils, especially those with abundant phosphorous, a common nutrient over-applied on much of Wisconsin's cropland. The soil microbial community is altered. Glyphosate use reduces the ability of plants to gather nutrients from soil and there's evidence of reduced nutritive value of glyphosate-treated crops.

Roundup® residues occur in many foods and in the bloodstreams of most of us. *Is this a problem?*

- In 2015 the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer fueled concerns about health risks when it declared glyphosate to be "probably carcinogenic." Court cases and uproar ensued. It was revealed that Monsanto staff had ghost-written some research articles that cleared glyphosate of health damage charges, then paid university scientists to submit the research for publication under their own names.
- In July 2017 California, the top US agricultural-producing state, added glyphosate to its list of cancer-causing chemicals and required that products containing glyphosate carry warnings by July 2018. Immediately, the wheat growers' association, Monsanto and other US farm groups sued California to stop it from requiring those cancer warnings. Attorneys General in 11 states (including Wisconsin) filed a brief supporting the lawsuit, saying that California's action undermines consumer protection policies of other states. On February 27, a Federal judge agreed and issued a preliminary injunction preventing California from requiring the label warning until the lawsuit is settled.
- In December 2017 the European Commission on Food Safety renewed Monsanto's license of glyphosate for 5 more years, promising further study. Nevertheless, France and several other European Union countries have vowed to phase out use of glyphosate.
- Also in December 2017, the US EPA re-stated that it found glyphosate "unlikely to be carcinogenic" and also unlikely to cause any other significant health risks.

The debate over glyphosate continues.

Nobody can "know" if glyphosate (or any other pesticide) is safe. Living organisms are affected by the totality of their internal and external environments. Perhaps the best advice is to think twice, pursue the least toxic methods of pest control and, if you choose to use a pesticide, do so as safely as possible. Be careful out there!



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Sullivan's Woods This Spring

by Zaiga Freivalds

Do you enjoy children and being outdoors? Friends of Sullivan's Woods is looking for volunteers to assist teachers and guide 4th grade students during the month of May. This is a great opportunity to share your love of nature with young people.

Call **Zaiga Freivalds** at **920-233-5914** or email **zaigam@charter.net** for details about how you can become involved with the Oshkosh Area School District outdoor environmental education program.



Photo Courtesy of Zaiga Freivalds

Editor's Note: Sullivan's Woods is a 40 acre native habitat owned by the Oshkosh Area School District that includes tall stands of a variety of native trees, a prairie, a wetland area, a creek, a pond, boardwalks, and other native wonders. Teachers appreciate having adults assist in sharing their love and knowledge of nature. I have volunteered at Sullivan's Woods for several years and have appreciated the opportunity to interact with students in a native habitat. Also, Sullivan's Woods is sponsored by the Winnebago Audubon Society and is approved for earning Winnebago County Master Gardeners Volunteer service hours.

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Wild Ones household membership is \$40 per year. Entire membership fee is tax- deductible. Join Wild Ones by sending your name, address and phone number to the national office:

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Business memberships and student memberships are also available. Call Wild Ones National at 877-394-9453 for an application form or go to national website:

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Photo courtesy of Donna VanBuecken

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