

Photo courtesy of Robert Benada

New Members

We're delighted to have the help of these new members of our Chapter in restoring the health of our Fox Valley Area by planting native plants in their landscapes:

- Sara Bargaehr, *Wild Rose*
- Megan & Timothy Florek, *Neenah*
- Kim Peterson, *Appleton*
- Sherrie Purtell, *Oshkosh*
- Kim & Blaine Spicer, *Sheboygan*
- Robert Tess, *Neenah*
- Melissa Weyland, *Larsen*

Don't Become Extinct!

Check 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 54956

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

Hours: The center is temporarily closed due to the corona virus. Normal hours will resume as conditions allow.

Grounds Accessible & Always Open

wildones.org

WHEN DEAD DOESN'T MEAN DEAD (Part 1 of 2)

by Lawanda Jungwirth - *Lawanda is a frequent contributor to Wild Ones Fox Valley Area (WOFVA) Chapter Newsletter.*

A dead tree is never entirely dead even though it may seem that way at first glance. Observe a dead tree for a while and you'll see that it is teeming with life. The healthiest, most biologically diverse forests have a good share of dead trees, broken tops and downed logs along with living trees. They aren't the tidiest looking forests, but they are the most ecologically healthy.



Always a delight: flickers nesting in a snag.

Photo courtesy of Ron Jungwirth

Dead trees in forests and home landscapes provide habitat for more than 1,200 wildlife species in the United States. According to the U.S. Forest Service, this includes about 85 species of birds, at least 50 mammal species, and about a dozen reptiles and amphibians that rely on dead trees for survival. Then there are the dozens of invertebrates like millipedes, beetles, spiders, worms, ants and more who call dead trees home or snack bar. (Plus countless microscopic species essential to the natural community) Some estimates indicate that removal of dead trees from wooded areas can cause loss of habitat for one out of five of the animals in a forest's ecosystem.

Dead trees, also called "snags," can stand for many decades and are useful in every stage of their decay. When standing, they are used by wildlife as shelter, food sources, lookouts and hiding places.

At least 30 kinds of birds use snags as foraging perches, whether they are flycatchers scooping up flying insects; kingfishers, eagles and ospreys diving for fish; or owls and hawks searching for field mice.

In addition, many bird species perch atop dead trees to sing their little hearts out. Dead trees are necessary at some point in the life cycles of up to 45% of all North American bird species.

The most well-known and observable use of dead trees is the cavities that birds use for nests. Only 30 species of birds are able to make their own nest cavities in trees but another 80 bird and animal species, called secondary nesters, depend on those pre-made cavities for their homes. Some of the secondary nesters are larger birds, squirrels, bats, raccoons, porcupines and opossums. It's not uncommon for a series of ever-larger birds and animals to call the same cavity home.

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Upcoming Events of Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter (WOFVA)

COVID-19: Watch the WOFVA website and Facebook page for event updates due to the virus.

2021 25th Annual Toward Harmony with Nature
Jan 30, 2021 | Sat | 10-11:30 am | Meeting | Oshkosh Convention Center

Towards Harmony With Nature 2021 Cancelled due to Covid-19. We look forward to seeing you in person at the next Conference scheduled for January 29, 2022 in Oshkosh, WI.

2021 Native Plant Sale
May 22, 2021

Watch for more information and the Plant Sale Order Form in the next newsletter and on the chapter website, foxvalleyarea.wildones.org. Now is a good time to begin planning for spring.

Photo courtesy of Robert Benada

Moving Forward

by Barb Cattani



I'm pleased to introduce three new Board members: Susan Forbes, Mary Swifka, and Michael Koller. Susan is leading the Mentoring Committee. Michael will take over the care and maintenance of our Chapter website. Mary will chair the Program Committee. As Mentoring Chair, Susan's responsibilities include mentoring individuals and groups looking for guidance in designing and maintaining native plantings. Thank you all for sharing your talents! (See Michael's and Susan's stories on page three. Mary will share her story in the next issue.)

Our by-laws require an annual membership meeting of our WFVA Chapter. In the past, we have celebrated with potluck dinners. Last year, we shared information through email and a brief in-person meeting at the Toward Harmony With Nature conference. This year, we will rely on email communications for our meeting format. Watch for a message from me with the year-end summary and a questionnaire to elect new officers. Shannon Davis-Foust has offered to take over as Chapter President, as my term ends. We need membership approval of the new President.

For the past four years, the Vice President position has been vacant and that makes more work for the President. The VP would be a good liaison with other organizations in the Fox Valley whose missions overlap with ours. These are opportunities to expand our reach and influence, to promote the use of native plants in a variety of landscapes. If you are willing to join the Chapter Board as a Vice President, please contact me at wildonesfoxvalley@gmail.com.

During the past three years, I've learned a lot about Wild Ones, as well as native plants. Serving as a Board member is a rewarding experience. I've gotten to know many more Chapter members. It's a great way to connect with other like-minded people who share your passion for natural, sustainable landscaping. If you've been thinking about getting more involved, I urge you to jump in and give it a try.

WHEN DEAD DOESN'T MEAN DEAD

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Dead trees attract insects and in the past that was one of the reasons that snags were removed from forests. However, those very insects draw predator insects and birds that actually help control the insect pests that can harm the overall forest.

Both standing dead trees and downed logs are home to hundreds of species of pollinating insects like bees and wasps, the primary pollinators of a forest's flowers and berry-producing shrubs.

HOW MANY DEAD TREES ARE ENOUGH?

For wooded acreage, three snags per acre is the minimum recommended to be left standing. A single dead tree in a small yard is also vital, sometimes even more so than on acreage. There is no upper limit for number of dead trees, just as there is no lower limit for size. Even a tree with a 6" diameter at breast height can host smaller birds. In general, though, the larger the snag the better and the more snags the better!

WHEN A TREE SHOULD GO

When a dead tree is leaning against your house or may fall or drop branches on your house, car or children or your neighbor's house, car or children, it should go. Consider that it may be possible to remove part of the tree and let the remainder stand, or to move the dead tree or its branches to another part of your property.

To be continued next issue!

A Favorite Climbing Native Plant

By Rebecca Eyer

Here is one of my favorite native plants, Virgin's Bower (*Clematis virginiana*, aka Old Man's Beard, etc.). Its woody stem easily climbs a trellis with dense foliage and clusters of 3/4" white flowers that bloom in June or July and can last into winter for extended interest. Several plants grow up three trellises to cover one wall of our garage.

Virgin's Bower, *Clematis virginiana* (KLEM-ah-tiss ver-jin-ee-AY-nah)

Vigorous vine has compound leaves with three leaflets. Small, numerous creamy-white flowers appear in dense panicles in June and July and persist into fall as ornamental, fluffy seed clusters.



Clematis in full bloom, early August



Clematis fully seeded out, early October

Photo courtesy of Rebecca Eyer

Height: Up to 20 feet

Landscape Use: May be grown as a vine up a trellis, fence or mailbox, or as a groundcover on steep banks.

Site: Adaptable, but prefers well-drained soil in full sun to light shade.

Native: Eastern North America

Attracts: Bees, wasps, butterflies, moths and birds

Propagation: Plants may be pruned any time during the growing season to maintain shape and encourage bushiness. If plants get too large, prune back to 8"-12" above the ground at strong leaf buds in late fall to early winter. This pruning will reduce woody stems and promote new growth in the spring. Virgin's Bower may self-seed and can become weedy through suckering, but small plants are easily pulled in spring. This plant may be less frequently damaged by deer than other clematis species (hybrids).

References: *Landscaping with Native Plants of Wisconsin* by Lynn M. Steiner, North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox, plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/clematis-virginiana, Missouri Botanical Gardens, missouribotanicalgarden.org, and Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, mgnv.org/plants/vines/clematis-virginiana-virgins-bower.

Michael Koller

My wife Heather and I bought our first home a little over two years ago in Neenah. We finally had a place that was ours and we found much to love about our new home. However, we also found that there was much to be done. After addressing the most pressing issues, we turned our attention to our home's exterior. We found a thick wall of buckthorn, a 50-foot Siberian Elm tree by our bedroom window, and neglected areas of mulch and bare clay.



We jumped into the project wanting to keep everything as natural as possible. We wanted to remediate the soil, while also making it pretty and giving a place for pollinators to do their work. Native Wisconsin plants seemed the obvious choice. Being hikers and frequent visitors of Wisconsin's state parks, we could picture what we wanted. So, Heather researched native plants while I cleared away the buckthorn and other troublesome weeds.

We just were ready to make detailed plans when Heather saw a notice for the Wild Ones' plant sale. We got our order in and waited anxiously for the plants to arrive. In the meantime, we removed the elm tree and turned it into wood chips to re-mulch the entire property. We also sectioned off some new areas to mulch and plant our new flowers.

The day our flowers came in, we were hooked! We got so much joy watching the flowers bloom, chasing the rabbits away from our coneflowers and Black-eyed Susans, watching the butterflies and bees work throughout the season, and collecting seeds to try to sprout our own flowers. We rescued a monarch caterpillar to help it become a butterfly itself.

We joined Wild Ones and planned for the next gardening season. The following year we expanded, buying plants again from the Wild Ones' plant sale and from other nurseries. We mulched and seeded a problem area for a miniature tallgrass prairie.

This year, wanted to have our garden certified through Wild Ones, so we submitted a form through their website. A web developer by trade, I poked around the website a bit out of curiosity and found a former professor of mine was the administrator! I reached out to offer to help and here we are. We are still new to native gardening, but are excited to contribute to this wonderful community as we learn and grow.

Susan Forbes

Hi Fellow Wild Ones. I'm Susan Forbes, one of the new members of the Board. I am now the Mentoring Chair and look forward to working with new members. You may know this is my second time as a Board member. A charter member of the WOFVA, I was the first Treasurer. That seemed easy when there were only twelve of us, but as the group rapidly expanded, so did the job of Treasurer. I arranged buses for trips, did publicity, was Treasurer for the first few Towards Harmony with Nature Conferences and participated whatever else needed to be done. Due to family health issues, I had to drop out for several years, but I am now a Lifetime member.



I have always been interested in native Wisconsin plants. My parents had a cabin on the Black River and we always enjoyed our "nature" hikes. My mother and my uncle were very good at plant identification so I learned the names of many plants such as violets, Solomon's seal, columbines, ferns and jack-in-the-pulpit. I was introduced to the Wild Ones through Donna VanBuecken whom I met through my late husband. He thought we would "get along" and I would enjoy seeing Donna's "weed patch" as he lovingly called her prairie. Well, he was right and we have been friends for forty years. We went to many Milwaukee chapter events and I had the honor of meeting Lorrie Otto and was once a guest at her home. She was such a knowledgeable and inspiring beacon for everyone.

My current home is on five acres of agricultural land. I have a grove of pines, a pond and a small orchard. The plantings around my house are native plants and shrubs plus some cultivated plants. I never planted a lawn, but we mow what was on the land and it is at least green when other lawns are brown. Now I am retired, I have the time to do more, but not the physical stamina. I am also involved in the Winnebago County Master Gardeners and am a co-lead of the butterfly garden at the Neenah Library, which I designed.

My photo was taken last year in Kansas when Donna VanBuecken and I visited the National Tall Grass Prairie among other sites. Until we can meet again in person, I hope you will take advantage of the fine materials that Wild Ones has prepared as we all keep learning.

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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.

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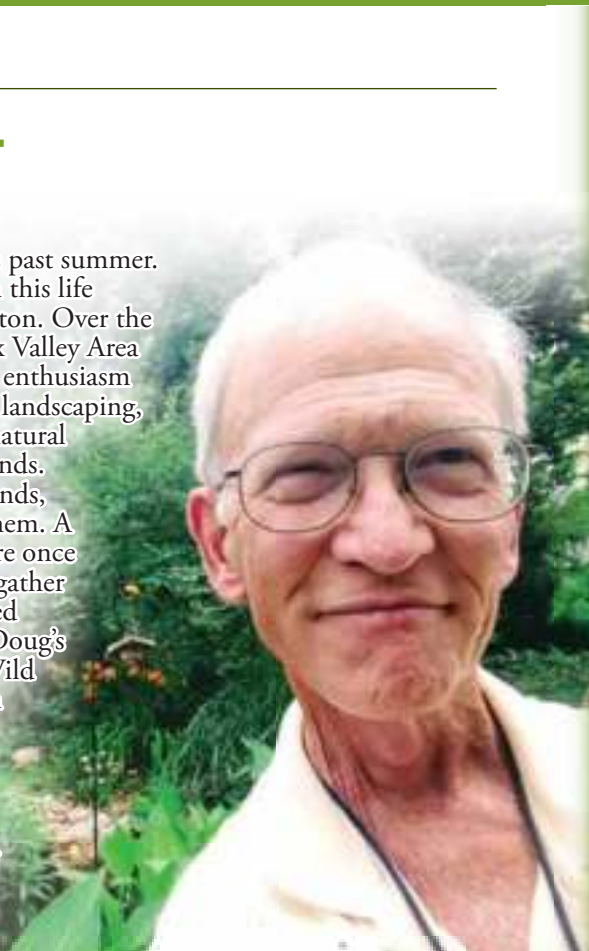
MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

MEMORIES OF DOUG GRANT

by Ron Jones, *WOFVA Treasurer*

We lost a long time faithful Wild Ones member this past summer. On July 28th, 2020, Doug Grant M.D. passed from this life peacefully, surrounded by his four children in Appleton. Over the last 20+ years, Doug attended many Wild Ones-Fox Valley Area Chapter programs and Annual Conferences. Doug's enthusiasm for the natural world can be seen through his native landscaping, his wild community garden, photography, and the natural wonders he sought traveling with his family and friends. He eagerly shared this passion with his children, friends, and neighbors, and his legacy will live on through them. A memorial celebration will be announced in the future once Covid safety concerns are alleviated and it is safe to gather in celebration of Doug's life. The family has requested those wishing to make a memorial contribution in Doug's memory be to one of the following organizations: Wild Ones Fox Valley Area; The Hearing Loss Association of America Fox Valley Chapter; or the Grand Teton National Park Foundation. A full obituary can be found at Legacy.com.

Doug Grant lived his passion in his garden.
Photo courtesy of Doug Grant's Family



Become a Wild Ones Member

Join on-line at the Wild Ones national website, wildones.org/membership. Household membership is \$40 per year and is tax deductible. You may also mail new and renewal memberships to the WILD Center at the address on Page 1. Business and student memberships are also available through the same national web site, wildones.org/membership.

wildones.org

Photo courtesy of Robert Benada