



Fox Valley Area

Photo courtesy of Deb Benada.

Chapter Newsletter

Volume 33 • No. 1

Winter 2025

New Members

Welcome to our newest members who have joined our Chapter:

- Megan Ruffing, Neenah
- Linda Jordan, Oshkosh
- Lyn Chimera, Neenah
- Lora Zimmer, Appleton
- Amanda Kordus, Greenville
- Bob Kissinger, Van Dyne
- Kristi Armstrong, Neenah
- Kathy Sina, Shiocton
- Jean Verhasselt, Neenah
- Desiree Johnson, Oshkosh

as of 1/20/25

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.

WILD Center

Wild Ones National Headquarters
2285 Butte des Morts Beach Rd.
Neenah, WI 54956

920-730-3986
support@wildones.org

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

Grounds Accessible
& Always Open

Horrific So Cal Fires: Eaton Canyon/Altadena Fire

by Robert Benada

In newsfeeds and on TV, folks have seen the destruction many times in the last week but despite the loss of homes and lives, the earth still holds out promise for life. The grief will last a lifetime, but some hope will emerge next Spring.

My wife, Deb, and I lived in the area that burned on the second day of the fire. The status of the house we owned is unknown but assumed burned to ground as did most in our old neighborhood of modest, single-family houses.

The slopes are covered with a mix of native vegetation, collectively called chaparral, that has evolved with frequent fire similar to our Midwest prairies. The above-ground plant parts burn very readily (explosively) but the crowns are usually not killed. Also, the ground harbors the seedbed and, similar to prairies here, next year's growth can be vigorous and rapid.

We are thinking that what we planted and their seeds will probably survive this terrible disaster and show up with hope for the spring. Nothing is going to lighten the hearts of friends and former neighbors now but, given time, the plants will bring back some beauty from the ashes.

See Capstone Project insert, "Burning with a Native Passion" by Nichole Riendeau's, to find out about the benefits of a controlled burn. (Congratulations, Nichole!)

Photo courtesy of Nichole Riendeau.

Upcoming Events

Toward Harmony with Nature Fair

Feb 8 | Sat | 8 am-4:30 pm | Bridgewood Resort Hotel & Conference Center | Neenah

Explore a diverse array of natural landscaping and native plant-related topics, featuring Heather Holm as our Keynote Speaker. You'll also enjoy exhibitors, vendors, speakers, and engaging discussions. Don't miss out on our silent auction—a perfect opportunity to discover unique treasures while enjoying a celebration of nature. Register at foxvalleyarea.wildones.org/thwn-fair-2. A virtual attendance option is available.

Fox Valley Area Chapter Annual Meeting

Mar 1 | Sat | 1-3 pm | WILD Center

We'll gather for a brief, but required, business meeting to share our successes from the past year and let you know what's coming up in 2025. Light snacks and beverages will be provided along with a fun ice-breaker. Bring your questions and suggestions for the board. The meeting is open to all members.

Composting Basics

April 12 | Sat | 9-11:30 am | Mosquito Hill | Nature Center | New London

Are you ready to compost, but not sure where to start? Then this learning session is for you. Learn the best practices for successful composting, equipment needed, and do's and don'ts. You'll be on your way to free, non-chemical fertilizer in no time. Online registration due **April 5**.

*Watch the WOFVA website and Facebook page for more information and any program changes.

Photo courtesy of Deb Benada.

foxvalleyarea.wildones.org



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Bats in Prairie Environment

by Shannon Davis-Foust

Last year I became involved in bat monitoring and began to understand how truly unique bats are. There are eight species of bats in Wisconsin and over 1,400 in the world. Bat species make up about one-fifth of all known mammalian species! They give birth to one pup each year and some species can live for several decades, which makes them quite unlike rodents.



Photo courtesy of Shannon Davis-Foust.

Bats are integral to many ecosystems, especially prairie environments. Many bat species take cover by roosting in trees during the day and foraging for insects in open spaces at night. They help maintain balance by consuming agricultural and forest pests, as well as biting insects, which aids in reducing the need for harmful pesticides. It has been estimated that bats save the U.S. corn industry over \$1 billion annually by preventing crop damage and reducing pesticide costs. Bats are also key players in controlling insect-borne diseases such as the West Nile Virus.

In prairie habitats, some species of bats are drawn to prairie dog towns, where the disturbed soil attracts a variety of insects that provide a rich food source. Additionally, there is emerging evidence that bats may use unoccupied prairie dog tunnels as day roosts, showing unexpected interconnections between species within prairie ecosystems.

“There are many ways of elevating humanity, the best is with understanding.”

– J.R. Lowenstein



Photo courtesy of Robert Benada.

“Reached to get my hammer from our B&B garage but stopped when I saw the big blob of what seemed to be brown grease on the handle. Then, I noticed the toes and focused the rest of the little brown bat, one of many who live in the garage. I let it sleep.”

– Robert Benada

Sadly, Wisconsin's bat populations have been declining rapidly due to white-nose syndrome (WNS), a devastating fungal disease first discovered in the US in 2006. Since reaching Wisconsin in 2014, WNS has decimated populations of cave-dwelling bats, including the big brown bat, little brown bat, northern long-eared bat, and tricolored bat, with some species facing declines of nearly 100%.

As we work to restore and protect prairie habitats, we are helping to ensure that bats continue to thrive. Let's continue to protect our prairies and all the species that depend on them.

Photo courtesy of Deb Benada.

DON'T FORGET TO PLACE YOUR ORDER!

Native Plant, Tree & Shrub Sale

by Grace Elonen

Pre-Orders Due Mon | Mar 31 **Pick Up** 9 am-2 pm | Sat | May 17

Heckrodt Wetland Preserve | 1305 Plank Rd | Menasha, WI 54952 | Public Welcome

It's time to think about filling in that spot which needs a little something or redoing the entire property. Here's your chance to get top quality native plants from reputable local nurseries. Our annual native plant sale order form is included in this newsletter. You can download an order form from our chapter website, www.foxvalleyarea.wildones.org.

The folks selling native seed, Fellabees, will be at the plant sale again this year. Come and shop.

QUESTIONS, contact Grace Elonen at (920) 817-0529 or elonengrace@gmail.com with questions.

TO VOLUNTEER with the plant sale, contact David Langner at (920) 205-4602 or via email at lanikarask@yahoo.com.

Photo courtesy of Deb Benada.

New Pick-Up Location:

Heckrodt Wetland Preserve



Native Plant Alternatives – Use These, Not These

by Donna VanBuecken

As you shop, you may wonder how to tell if a plant is native to our area or not. The simplest way to tell is to compare the plant stake labels which contain the botanical name and habitat conditions for each plant. The botanical name of a native plant will have the genus name capitalized and then the species. If the plant is a cultivar, the variety will follow the species name. For example, *Symphotrichum Novae-angliae* is the botanical name of the native New England Aster. If “Honeysong Pink” is added to the botanical name, it refers to the non-native pink cultivar Aster Honeysong Pink. There are excellent native plants that may be used in place of non-natives to obtain a similar effect. Below are some examples.

For more information about alternatives to non-native and invasive plants go to: [http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/files/7913/8327/9534/Landscape Alternatives to Invasive Plants.pdf](http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/files/7913/8327/9534/Landscape_Alternatives_to_Invasive_Plants.pdf) or invest in a copy of *The Midwestern Native Garden*, by Charlotte Adelman and Bernard Schwartz.

Photo courtesy of Donna VanBuecken.

USE THESE	NOT THESE
Native Early Blooming blue-eyed grass (<i>Sisyrinchium angustifolium</i>), squirrel corn (<i>Dicentra canadensis</i>), wild geranium (<i>Geranium maculatum</i>), bloodroot (<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>), heartleaf foamflower (<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>), cutleaf toothwort (<i>Cardamine concat-enata</i>), shooting star (<i>Dodecatheon media</i>), white trillium (<i>Trillium grandiflorum</i>) and Virginia bluebells (<i>Mertensia virginica</i>).	Non-native Early Blooming Favorites tulips (<i>Tulipa spp</i>), daffodils (<i>Amaryllidaceae spp</i>), Bergenia (<i>Saxifragaceae bergenia</i>) and common bleeding heart (<i>Lamprocapnos spectabilis</i>)
Native Early Sun-loving Perennials prairie smoke (<i>Geum triflorum</i>), prairie phlox (<i>Phlox pilosa</i>) and foxglove penstemon (<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>)	Non-native Early Sun-loving Perennials bugloss (<i>Brunnera macrophylla</i>)
Native Ground Covers wild ginger (<i>Asarum canadense</i>), Virginia creeper (<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>) and three-leaved stonecrop (<i>Sedum ternatum</i>)	Non-native Ground Covers periwinkle (<i>Vinca minor</i>), lily of the valley (<i>Convallaria majalis</i>), ajuga (<i>Ajuga reptans</i>) and pachysandra (<i>Pachysandra terminalis</i>)
Native Vines virgin’s bower (<i>Clematis virginiana</i>), Virginia creeper (<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>) and American bittersweet (<i>Celastrus scandens</i>)	Non-native Vines Chinese bittersweet (<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>) and English ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>)
Native Summer Sun-Loving Perennials purple coneflower (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>), yellow coneflower (<i>Echinacea paradoxa</i>), black-eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>), butterflyweed (<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>), prairie phlox (<i>Phlox pilosa</i>), beebalm (<i>Monarda didyma</i>) and swamp milkweed (<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>)	Non-native Summer Sun-Loving Perennials ditchlily (<i>Hemerocallis fulva</i>), veronica (<i>Veronica filiformis</i>), salvia (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>), Shasta Daisy (<i>Leucanthemum superbum</i>) and Dame’s Rocket (<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>)
Native Summer Shade-loving Perennials white (<i>Actaea pachypoda</i>) and red baneberry (<i>Actaea rubra</i>), Solomon’s seal (<i>Polygonatum biflorum</i>), woodland phlox (<i>Phlox divaricate</i>) and early meadowrue (<i>Thalictrum dioicum</i>) and a variety of native ferns, such as Christmas fern (<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>) or lady fern (<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>)	Non-native Summer Shade-loving Perennials hosta (<i>Hostas spp</i>), ligularia (<i>Ligularia spp</i>) and campanula (<i>Campanula spp</i>)
Native Late Summer Sun-Loving Perennials Joe-Pye weed (<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>), New England aster (<i>Symphotrichum novae-angliae</i>), calico aster (<i>Symphotrichum lateriflorum</i>), sky blue aster (<i>Symphotrichum oolentangiensis</i>), prairie blazingstar (<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>) and wild quinine (<i>Parthenium integrifolium</i>)	Non-native Late Summer Sun-Loving Perennials yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>), dianthus (<i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i>), blanket flower (<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>), Russian sage (<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>), scabiosa (<i>Scabiosa spp</i>), chrysanthemum (<i>Chrysanthemum spp</i>) and the multitude of non-native asters (<i>Symphotrichum spp</i>)
Native Grasses little bluestem (<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>), side oats grama (<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>), prairie dropseed (<i>Sporobolus heterolepsis</i>), switchgrass (<i>Panicum virgatum</i>) and tussock sedge (<i>Carex stricta</i>)	Non-native Grasses maiden grass (<i>Miscanthus spp</i>) and fountain grass (<i>Pennisetum spp</i>)
Native Trees & Shrubs & Shrub-like Plants red maple (<i>Acer rubrum</i>), sugar maple (<i>Acer saccharum</i>), hackberry (<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>), chokecherry (<i>Prunus virginiana</i>), serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>), winterberry (<i>Ilex verticillata</i>), witch hazel (<i>Mamamelis vernalis</i>), pagoda dogwood (<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>), elderberry (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>), golden currant (<i>Ribes odoratum</i>), white wild indigo (<i>Baptisia leucantha</i>) and sweet black-eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia subtomentosa</i>)	Non-native Trees & Shrubs & Shrub-like Plants amur maple (<i>Acer ginnala</i>), Norway maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i>), autumn olive (<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>), Bradford pear (<i>Pyrus calleryana ‘Brad’</i>), barberry (<i>Berberis spp</i>), burning bush (<i>Euonymus alatus</i>), butterfly bush (<i>Buddleia davidii</i>) and astilbe (<i>Astilbe spp</i>)



Fox Valley Area

PO Box 385
Appleton, WI 54912



RENEW!

Don't Become Extinct!

Your mailing label is date coded with your membership renewal. **Member dues are \$40 per household per year.**

Please renew on-line at:
wildones.org/membership.

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

— Dan and Dawn Barker, Membership Co-Chairs

UPCOMING CLASSES IN OUR NATIVE PLANT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Identifying Native Trees and Shrubs in Winter

Instructor: Danielle Bell

Sat | Feb 22 | 9 am-2:30 pm *(half hour lunch on your own)* | **Mequon Nature Preserve** | **Elective (5 hours)** | **In person**

Establishing & Managing Native Plant Communities

Instructor: Mel Mohr and Shannon Davis-Faust

Sat | March 29 | 9 am-3:30 pm | **UW Oshkosh Campus** | **Core Course (6 hours)** | **In person**

Nature Teaching Strategies for All Ages

Instructor: Shannon Davis-Faust

Sat | April 12 | 9 am-3:30 pm | **Coughlin Center** | **Elective (6 hours)** | **In person**

Discount: Wild Ones members & students get 15% off
Optional Project WILD Certification: Add \$50 (includes Project WILD book)

For Details & Registration

foxvalleyarea.wildones.org/certificate-in-native-plants/



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