

Volume 8, Issue 2

April - May 2015

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

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April Program: Current Threats to our Great Lakes and Wetlands
with Some Solutions - Alan Steinman PhD.

Monday, April 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Bunker Interpretive Center - Calvin College - 1750 East Beltline Ave.

Dr. Steinman is Director and Professor at the Annis Water Resources Institute at Grand Valley State University. He has published over 100 scientific articles with research interests in nutrient cycling in aquatic ecosystems and restoration and algal ecology.



May Program: Annual Garlic Mustard Fling, Spring Wildflower Walk & Native Plant Exchange

Monday, May 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Seidman Park - 8155 Conservation St NE, Ada, MI 49301

Meet in the parking lot at 7 pm. Bags provided. Bring Gloves. We will also be identifying and categorizing native wildflowers within the park. Native plant exchange to follow event. Have native plants from your garden you want to share? Bring them in pots with an ID label...find new species to take home!

Plant Exchange Rules of Etiquette:

The purpose of the Plant Exchange is to foster natural landscaping with native plants. Please bring plants to share from your garden that you **know** to be true native species, please no invasive exotics!

Respect Plants – Plants may not get planted immediately, pot them up well so they can survive.

Please provide species labels for the transplants or seeds you bring to share.

Respect Yourself – Just starting out? Don't have plants to bring? Of course you may still take plants! In fact, that is one of the main purposes of the Plant Exchange. We all had to get started somehow, and when native plants start doing really well in your yard, bring some back to share. It is the "Plant It Forward" concept!

Respect Others – If there are only a few pots of a particular species, please take only one so that others may have a chance to get one too.

Thank You Members For Your Support! By Amy Heilman - Education Chair

A **HUGE THANK YOU** to all of you who helped make the RCWO booth at the West Michigan Home & Garden Show a big success!! I hope you had fun during your shift(s) and were able to answer the many questions that probably came your way. I had a fun during my shifts and found our booth seemed to draw many interested people with diverse questions. It thrilled me to find that many of the people who visited were already somewhat familiar with native plants and either had added some to their gardens or else **WANTED** to!



L to R - Chapter Founding Member Carol Phelps, Member Joyce Tuharsky & Master Gardener Maurgerite, Vice President Meribeth Bolt with Master Gardeners Don & Gale Stump

February & March Program Overviews *By Ron Cammel - Contributing Member (C.M.)*

February - Jens Jensen Movie

The prairies of the American Midwest inspired a Dane to create natural settings in one of the most industrialized areas of the early 1900s. Jen Jensen designed some of Chicago's most famous parks with the plants, lighting, color and structure of prairies in mind.

Wild Ones watched "Jen Jensen: The Living Green" in February to learn how a street sweeper became a respected landscape architect and an environmental activist at the same time. Though Jensen's name is not a household word today, he is credited with designing 600 parks, saving the Indiana dunes from a seamless strip of industrial development and developing the idea that urban dwellers need to partake of nature in their own communities.

While working for the city of Chicago, Jensen tried to ensure that even the poor who lived in increasingly crowded conditions could experience lively green space – not just grassy expanses, but places with a bit of wildness. Otherwise, they would "shrivel," he said. His designs included stone-lined swimming holes, bouldered waterfalls and a network of forests and plains. He also designed for the super-rich, such as Michigan's own Henry Ford, and worked in conjunction with Frank Lloyd Wright and the new "prairie style." But he said his heart "belongs to the people."

Native plant enthusiasts may want to consider Jensen's largely unsung legacy of art, environmentalism, providing for the poor and battling corruption in politics, as well as his use of native plants.

March - The Web Beneath our Feet with Mike Klug, PhD

2015 is the International Year of the Soil. If you need another reason to like native plants, soil scientist Mike Klug, PhD offers this: They help restore the vital soil that has suffered tremendous losses across the globe.

In the Midwest, long roots of many native plants provide channels through the soil and systems of connected fungi. Plus, a diversity of plants means a diversity of chemistry in soil, helping to support the "web of life beneath our feet." These characteristics are far different than the effects of monocultures and soil inputs in agriculture, Klug said at the March 16th Wild Ones meeting.

Klug spent 34 years studying the decomposition of naturally occurring organic compounds, with the hope of understanding the effects of non-natural compounds in soil. He taught at Michigan State University and is a former director of the Kellogg Biological Station.

He said biodiversity is crucial to keeping soil viable for the food chain, including bacteria, protozoa, nematodes, mites, springtails, insects, worms, slugs and vertebrates. Conventional agricultural practices and deforestation, however, have robbed soil of the complex system of microbes that allow soil to provide for plants naturally. Other pressing issues involve the loss of organic matter which helps hold water and nutrients.

To restore soil, farms need to continue reducing tillage, inorganic fertilizers and pesticides, Klug said. New technology can help. Meanwhile, property owners need to increase organic matter and biodiversity, with the help of cover crops and native plants.

Recommended reading:

Teaming with Microbes a Gardener's Guide to the Soil Food Web by Jeff Lowenfels & Wayne Lewis

Dirt the Ecstatic Skin of the Earth by William Bryant

Native Plant & Pollinator Education Garden (NPEG) Updates

By Meribeth Bolt - Vice President

This spring we begin Phase III of the NPEG with the addition of seventeen additional species including trees & shrubs. This brings the total to over seventy native species. These new plantings are made possible from a generous grant award from the Wildflower Association of Michigan.



(President Mike Bruggink and Vice President Meribeth Bolt receiving grant award from the Wildflower Association of Michigan at their annual conference in March, The 2015 WAM grant award recipients)

Spring NPEG Play Dates Announced

As a River City Wild Ones (RCWO) member you are a steward of this fantastic garden. Playing in the soil with new friends is wildly fun and educational! **Our second garden workday is to begin installation of new plants and is scheduled for Saturday, May 30 from 10am – 1 pm.** You can come and play for all or part of the scheduled time, just bring gloves, shovel, rake and pruners if you have them.

Our $\frac{1}{4}$ acre NPEG is located in front of the Inner City Christian Federation Building located at 920 Cherry Street SE, Grand Rapids 49506. Please share this hidden native plant gem with your family, friends and neighbors. It's an easy way to promote the beauty and importance of native plants and pollinators.

Butterfly ID Tags

Our own Chris Baer, also a member of the West Michigan Butterfly Association (WMBA), will match up our NPEG plants with the butterfly species that depend upon them. Many of our plant tags will gain an additional tag with information about specific butterflies. You may know Chris from her leadership on our seed collection excursions, the Cascade YMCA plant rescue (where she also rescued a snake or two) or her exquisitely detailed taxidermy. The butterfly tags, the new garden brochure and some of the Phase III plants are possible from a generous grant from the WMBA.

Native Plant & Pollinator Education Garden (NPEG) - Continued

By Meribeth Bolt - Vice President

Garden Sign

A NPEG sign is in production to encourage visitors to think about their Michigan plant heritage. Our native plants have existed for thousands of years and grew here long before the U.S. was discovered. The sign is 24" high x 36" wide and will have a protective clear fiberglass coating over the artwork. The frame and stand are made of aluminum and will have a brochure box attached to contain our new garden brochure. Installation is expected the first or second week in July. All of the "i"s are dotted and the "t"s are crossed with approval from ICCF and the City Historical Commission.

RCWO member Ruth Oldenburg of Rainstick Studio is our Graphic Designer and has just won another first place blue ribbon for her work on the Invasive Plant Species Display Board for the West Michigan Cluster of the Stewardship Network (of which RCWO is a partner). Ruth has provided graphic design for our brochures, program bookmarks, the marketing pieces for our annual NPEG garden tour and our own RCWO blue ribbon display board. Ruth is working with Georgia Donovan the artist for the NPEG sign. Georgia is also a Landscape Designer and a Certified Natural Shoreline Professional. You may also know Georgia from the Dwight Lydell Chapter of the Izaak Walton League or from her presentation on "Lake Friendly and Environmentally Sound Shoreline Management Solutions". [Georgia Donovan will offer a fun Botanical Art Workshop in June. Watch for details or contact Meribeth at \[meribethbolt@aol.com\]\(mailto:meribethbolt@aol.com\)](#)



Traditional T style of sign that will be used, Georgia's sketches of plants and pollinators that will be used for the sign artwork, First Place Invasive Plant Species Display Board designed by Ruth Oldenburg of Rainstick Studio.



Natives to Know - Indian Pipe (Monotropa uniflora) *By Joyce Tuharsky - C.M.*

Congratulations to Valerie Lindeman on her first place ribbon in the national Wild Ones Photo Contest last fall! It seems only fitting that we should learn about the plant that was highlighted in her beautiful photo...

Indian Pipe is an erect, 4-10 inch tall perennial, with a single, drooping, pipe-shaped flower on the tip of each stem. Tiny overlapping, scale-like leaves clasp the stems. The plant is descended from the Ericacea family and is related to the blueberry and rhododendron.

The most striking feature of Indian Pipe is that the entire plant is a translucent waxy white, sometimes a pinkish-white and often with black flecks. This white plant blackens with age or bruising, and emits a clear jelly-like substance when injured. No wonder other common names for this plant are "Ghost Flower," "Ice Plant," and "Corpse Plant"!

The reason for the white color is that Indian Pipe is entirely devoid of chlorophyll. It cannot produce food through photosynthesis like most green plants. So, how does it survive?

It was once believed that Indian Pipe absorbed nutrients from decayed organic matter in the soil. However, recent studies have shown that the short, stubby roots of Indian Pipe contain fungi; and these fungi extend web-like through dead rotting leaves to connect to roots of trees. The fungi and the trees exchange nutrients in a mutually beneficial relationship. But Indian Pipe is more of a parasite, with the fungi acting as a bridge between it and the tree that provides sugar. This relationship might seem unusual, but Indian Pipe is one of about 3,000 species of non-photosynthetic (heterotrophic) flowering plants worldwide.

Indian pipe flowers can emerge from June through September. Once pollinated, the ½ inch long, five-parted flowers turn upright, darkening as they dry, and become papery capsules containing tiny seeds. Each seed has exactly 10 cells! When ripe, the seeds sift into the wind through slits that open in the capsule. Once dispersed, the seeds wait until they are contacted by fungi. The fungi enter the seeds as if infecting them. But then the fungi are "tricked" into providing all the nutrients that the seeds need as the seeds have almost no food of their own.

Indian pipe is widely distributed throughout North America, but is absent in the southwest and central Rocky Mountains. Despite its wide distribution, it is not easily found. It grows in deep, shady woods with rich humus soils where few other

plants can find enough light to survive. Information about its pollinators is limited.

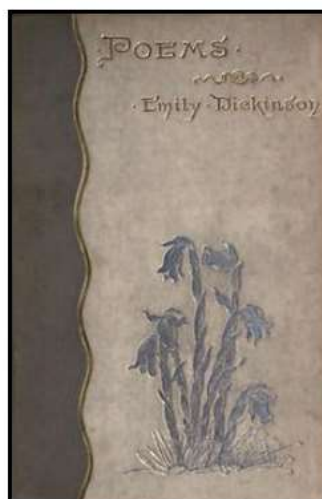
Because of the complex fungal relationship that allows this plant to grow, cultivating Indian Pipe is very difficult. Plants transplanted from the wild are unlikely to survive.

For more information and photos:

<http://www.curiousnature.info/A1-Indian%20Pipe.htm>

http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms_fungi/oct2002.html

http://www.botany.org/Parasitic_Plants/Monotropa_uniflora.php



Valerie's entry entitled "Summer Woods" won best in the Flora category and the photo was printed in the Nov/Dec Journal magazine.

Emily Dickinson used an illustration of Indian Pipe on the cover of her book, *Poems*.

(Photo: en.wikipedia.org)

Rivertown Artists' Exhibit Artworks inspired by the Marywood Prairie

The Rivertown Artists' Guild is exhibiting Artworks at the Dominican Center Marywood Gallery.

Each piece of art in the Exhibit has been inspired by the Prairie Habitat located along the front lawn of the Dominican Sisters campus. The artists have created works in various media over the past year, in all seasons, both on site and in the studio.

The Exhibit is free and will run May-June 2015.

An Artists' reception, which is open to the public, will take place at the Gallery on Sunday, June 14, 2015, from 1-4 pm.

The gallery is located on the Ground Floor Main Lobby of the Dominican Center at 2025 Fulton Street East in Grand Rapids. Park in the main lot off Lakeside Drive and walk through a breezeway to the entrance marked by a green awning.

For more information, call: (616) 514-3325.



"Marywood Prairie Garden Flowers" by Cecilia Schaible

Media: Pen/ink/colored pencil

Educational Films Available for Members to Borrow!

Amy Heilman - Education Chair

Our chapter has a library of informative films that are available for members to borrow and we are adding more all the time! We also have several PowerPoint programs we have developed to be used for public presentations. To borrow a film or to learn more about what presentations we offer groups – contact: Education Coordinator, Amy Heilman (amy.heilman@sbcglobal.net or 616-308-8176)

Urban & Suburban Meadows – Bringing Meadowscaping to Big and Small Spaces (DVD) – This film offers interviews by several experts in meadow and prairie establishment. Learn about design, site prep., planting and maintenance of these lawn alternatives.

Jens Jensen – The Living Green (DVD) – The history of how this famous Landscape Architect and pioneering conservationist used nature as his model and came to be known as the "Dean of the American Style" of garden design.

America's Lost Landscape -Tall Grass Prairies (DVD) – This visually beautiful film explores the history of how our country's Tallgrass Prairie disappeared in the early part of this

century and outlines the efforts being taken to help restore this special ecosystem.

Toward Harmony with Nature (DVD) – Dr. Doug Tallamy, popular national speaker on the importance of native plants and their connection to the food chain and author of "Bringing Nature Home," lectures on "The Value of Having Native Plants in Our Yards" and "Creating Healthy, Biodiverse Neighborhood Corridors."

Gardening For Life – Sharing Our Yards With Creatures Great & Small (DVD) – Dr. Doug Tallamy lecture filmed at Kalamazoo Nature Center during a gardening for nature workshop held in 2008. A panel discussion follows the presentation.

Wild About Wildflowers (DVD) – This video was produced by National Wild Ones Center and provides information and advice on how to get started and maintain a native wildflower garden.

"The April 11th Mason Bee Program presented by Meribeth Bolt was a sold-out success. A repeat class will take place in the near future at the Izaak Walton League. Watch for details or contact Meribeth at meribethbolt@aol.com." (Photos - Patricia Pennell)



Shop Till You Drop - Upcoming Native Plant Sales

Bunker Interpretive Center at Calvin College

Saturday, May 2 from 10AM - Noon

<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/eco-preserve/newsandevents/NativePlantSale.html>

Kent County Conservation District - www.kentconservation.org

Wednesday, May 6 from 6:30 - 8:00 PM (Native Plant Workshop with grower Vern Stephens)

Friday, May 8 (Native Plant pre-orders due)

Native Plant Sale and Pick up Saturday, May 16

Kent/MSU Extension Master Gardener Plant Sale - Open to the public

Friday, June 5 from 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Saturday, June 6 from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

River City Wild Ones members will be on hand both days to help with plant selection.

We will also have our award winning display board, brochures and other native plant handouts.

River City Wild Ones Annual Garden Tour and First Annual Native Plant Sale at the Native Plant Education Garden in front of the Inner City Christian Federation Building

Monday, July 20 5:00 - 8:00 PM

Brewery Vivant (across the street) will once again donate \$1 to RCWO for every beer purchased during open pub hours.



Earth Day (April 22) & Arbor Day (April 24)

PLANT NATIVES to celebrate!

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

- The Lorax

Deadline for June/July newsletter articles: **May 29** (send to [Kim Davidson](mailto:Kim.Davidson@rivercitywildones.org))