

Volume 9, Issue 4

August - September 2015

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RIVER CITY CHAPTER - GRAND RAPIDS, MI

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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August Program: Hike Through a Tall Grass Prairie at the
Hudsonville Nature Center with naturalist Craig Elston

Monday, August 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

2700 New Holland Street, Hudsonville, MI 49426

<http://www.hudsonville.org/Nature-Center/>

Craig will walk us through the six acre planted Tall Grass Prairie at the Hudsonville Nature Center identifying and talking about many of the flowers and grasses found growing there. He will also discuss the importance of prairies and the practices of planting and maintaining them. Interesting facts and a history of prairies in general and in Michigan will also be shared.

Reminder: bring your insect repellent, and water or beverage of choice.



Image: plantsamazeme.blogspot.com

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Extra August Program: Behind the Scenes Tour of WildType Native Plant Nursery
 Saturday, August 29, 2015 at 1:00 PM
 900 North Every Rd., Mason, MI SE Side of Lansing (MAP)

Wildtype was established in 1996 and specializes in native plants from MI genotype. **Bill Schneider**, Founder and Owner will lead us on the tour.

**Carpooling is advised!*



Western Michigan University Asylum Lake Preserve Field Trip with Steve Keto Rescheduled
 Saturday, September 12, 2015 at 1:00 pm.
 3836 South Drake Rd., Kalamazoo, MI

Here's the link to the Asylum Lake Preserve website where you will find lots of information about the property including directions and a map.

<http://wmich.edu/asylumlake/>



You are Invited to Attend a Michigan Botanical Club Field Trip at
 Ody Brook Nature Sanctuary
 Saturday, September 19, 2015 from 1:30 - 4 PM
 Location: 13010 Northland Dr., Cedar Springs, MI 49319 (MAP)
 Meet in the parking lot at V&V Nursery

Discover mushrooms with Dennis Dunlap and enjoy over 250 plant species from herbaceous to woody with Michigan Nature Features Inventory botanist Brad Slaughter and Ranger Steve (Mueller). This ecology walk will examine mushroom and plant identifications and their associations with birds, insects, mammals, and more. The sanctuary has increased acreage to 61 acres. It includes "the big woods", field/shrubland, and wetland forest, stream and ponds. Trails traverse wetland over two bridges that cross Little Cedar Creek and upland habitats. We will examine plants with a 10 Co-efficient of Conservatism. That almost always indicates plants restricted to a undisturbed/pre-settlement remnant.

Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones Fundraiser: Wine & Cheese Party
 Saturday, Sept. 19, 4 to 6 p.m. Rain or Shine
 Treecology Nursery, 9167 Guernsey Lake Road, Delton (MAP)
 Suggested donation: \$25/person your donation will help KAWO projects and programs that enhance our area. RSVP to Cathy McMinn at 269.623.5715 or cmcminn@mei.net

Kazoo Wild Ones say that this was a fantastic event last year so they're making it an annual fundraiser. There are photos on the Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones Facebook page and the restored barn looks amazing! And Treecology is YES, YES, YES a native tree and shrub nursery!! Cathy McMinn extends a warm welcome to all RCWO to come on down and see the place so lets go!

Mike and Cathy McMinn's beautiful 40-acre property is the setting for good company, Michigan wines, beer and live music by jazz trio "Sons of the Desert." Enjoy sweeping meadow views from the deck of the beautiful restored barn, or take a stroll through the quiet woods on this pristine piece of land in southern Barry County.

RCWO September Program: A Mushroom Adventure with Nicole Mathiasz**Monday, September 21, 2015 at 6:30 PM (Note Early Start Time)****Calvin College Bunker Interpretive Center****1750 East Beltline Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 ([MAP](#))**

This fun and informational presentation will help you to correctly and safely identify mushrooms. We will begin with a PowerPoint then a walk through the nature preserve.

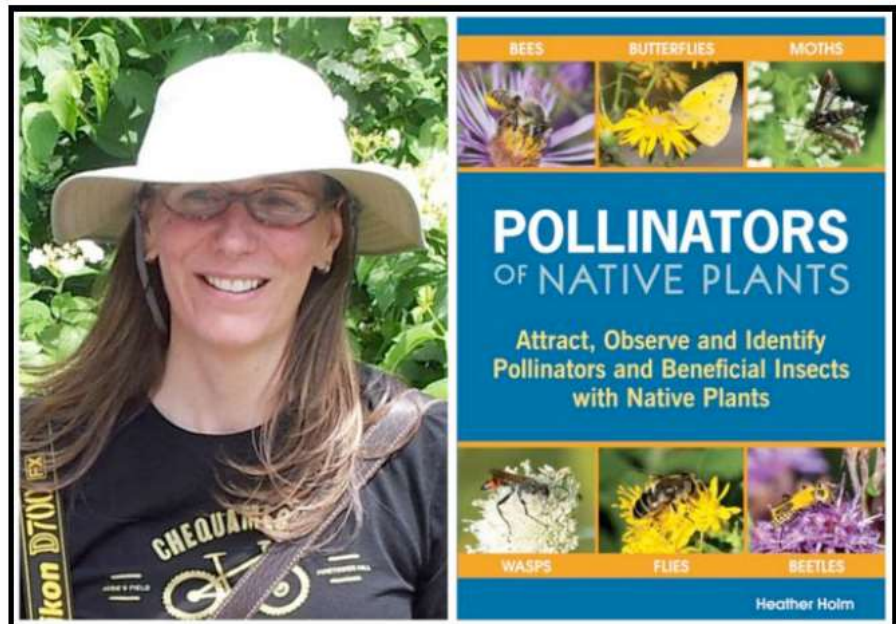
NPEG Work and Play Sessions**Saturday, September 26 10:00 AM to 12 Noon and Saturday, October 24 10:00 AM to 12 Noon**

We will begin fall clean-up and continue removing the stubborn Japanese anemone. More fun is in store as we remove the tough clumps of non-native grasses on the App Gallery side of the fence. This may be a surprise to some but it's also part of our NPEG. Come prepared to wrestle these non-natives out of the garden with sharp tools and a sense of humor. Fun fall plantings will also take place.

Pollinators Conference: Perils & Possibilities**Saturday, October 10, 8:30 AM - 5 PM****[Kalamazoo Nature Center](#) - 7000 North Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009****Fee: KNC/Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones Members \$15, Non-Members \$20**

KNC and the Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones will unite pollinator and garden specialists to talk to our community about the serious problems our pollinators face and the many actions you can take to help them. The conference will highlight keynote speaker Heather Holm, author of the comprehensive book, "Pollinators of Native Plants: Attract, Observe, and Identify Pollinators and Beneficial Insects with Native Plants," available for purchase in the KNC Expedition Shop.

[Learn more & register here...](#)



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Anatomy of our Second Annual Native Garden Tour and First Plant Sale – An Event this Big Requires Many Volunteers, Generous Neighbors, a Big Turnout and Extra Large Thank You's!

By Nancy Bedell and Meribeth Bolt

A big thank you to the 27 members, friends and family who volunteered for the work intensive Garden Tour, Plant, Book and Poster Sale on July 20 at 920 Cherry St. in Grand Rapids.

It started last winter when our member-experts chose ten plants to be sold at our first plant sale. Plants chosen are not readily available for purchase in our area and some are rare. In April, soil, pots and flats of plant plugs were ordered, purchased and picked-up from far and wide. Several of our grower-members donated flats of plants to our effort.

Then the seedlings were transplanted into larger pots at Mill Creek Nursery, where they grew until our July event. Thanks to Roy Gingrich for lending us greenhouse space. Diligent members watered, tended and labeled them.

An artistic and educational garden sign for the Native Plant and Pollinator Garden had also been in the works this year with an installation goal to happen just before the event. Native plants and attending pollinators were illustrated by artist Georgia Donovan. Sign layout, plant and pollinator choices and wording were completed by members Patricia Pennell and Meribeth Bolt with graphic design by member Ruth Oldenburg. A poster of the sign design was printed and made ready to sell at the Garden Tour event.



Meanwhile, extensive publicity was underway. Postcards advertising the event were distributed to local businesses, libraries and nurseries and to members. Master Gardener and Master Naturalist graduates received emails about the details of the event. The weekend before the event street signs prepared by Ruth Oldenburg appeared in prominent spots in the Cherry St. neighborhood.

The day of the event set-up work began shortly after noon. Barb Olson and Bob Wolf transported the majority of the plants by removing seats from their van and rigging up

shelving. Other vehicles brought the remainder. Six canopies were set-up by an energetic crew keeping us protected from sun or rain. Volunteers arranged tables and chairs borrowed from Richard App Gallery next door and I.C.C.F., the landowner, for book, poster and plant sales. Informational signs were positioned to direct visitors.

Plant sales began right on time and most sold out by 6:30 PM. Books sold very well and indicate an increased interest in native plants by the public. (See article on Book Sales)

We had 276 visitors enter to win raffle prizes, donated by members, so Meribeth, event coordinator, estimates over 300 attended the event.

For the second year, Brewery Vivant advertised our event on their Facebook page and on their menu (!), pledging \$1 for each beer sold during their open hours on July 20th! They informed us that their sales that evening were up 30% over a typical Monday night.

Big thank you's go to Meribeth Bolt and Amy Heilman. Meribeth was our event coordinator and promoted and completed the garden sign and poster efforts to coincide during this bigger garden tour event. Amy Heilman traveled hundreds of miles obtaining plants and coordinated greenhouse space for them along with plant care. She also helped with the pick-up and drop-off of the canopies.

After expenses, the profit from the plant sale and book sale ~ \$1,581.73

Donation jar ~ \$96.00 Thank you to everyone who chipped in!

Brewery Vivant Donation ~ \$562.00 Thank you BV!

Grand Total from Fundraiser ~ \$2,239.73

Since the event we have recouped our investment on the poster printing. Posters will be available for sale at all of our upcoming events. Posters are also available at Richard App Gallery located next to the NPEG. The price is right at just \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members.

All funds from our fundraisers stay right here in West Michigan to help fund our education projects. River City Wild Ones is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit all-volunteer organization.

Anatomy of our Second Annual Native Garden Tour and First Plant Sale – An Event this Big Requires Many Volunteers, Generous Neighbors, a Big Turnout and Extra Large Thank You's!
Photos by Nancy Bedell and Patricia Pennell



Delivery and Installation of the new Educational Sign on
 7/10/15

Members and Volunteers helping to set up for our Tour and
 Sale on 7/20/15

The Awesome selection of native plants that were available



How the Number of Books Sold at the Garden Tour and Specific Plant Questions Asked can Lead to New Programs *By Meribeth Bolt*

Twenty-one books were purchased during our Garden Tour. The top selling book Landscaping with Native Plants of Michigan by Lynn Steiner sold out! From this large sale and the top 8 "How do I" questions asked by attendees we added 21 + 7 and deduced a need to provide "How to" education.

Specifically, how to: 1) prepare the soil, 2) choose the appropriate plants and number of plants for the site, 3) place plants within the site, 4) care for new plants, 5) know when native plants can be divided and divide them, 7) identify newly emerging plants the next season so I don't pull them out!

This is how new programs germinate and come into being. Stay tuned, your RCWO Board and the Education Team will have new classes incubating over the fall and winter and available for you and the community spring of 2016.

You are needed to be a part of the Education Team, please contact Amy Heilman amy.heilman@sbcglobal.net or 616.308.8176 to join.

Butterfly Plant Tag Project Nears Completion *By Meribeth Bolt*

Chris Baer has hand drawn and painted the butterflies that depend on the native plants in our NPEG. Ruth Oldenburg has designed the script and printed the tags. The tags will soon be laminated, mounted onto custom metal plant stakes and placed in the NPEG.

The Butterfly Plant Tag Project was funded by a grant from the West Michigan Butterfly Association. Please check out their website . <http://www.graud.org/wmba.html> and follow their new Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/West-Michigan-Butterfly-Association/201294079897167>

You Can Help Save the Monarchs *By Meribeth Bolt*

You can collect and share your milkweed seeds with friends and family, encourage milkweed seed planting and discourage insecticide use. Your milkweed seeds are also needed for school projects and to hand out at the 2016 Home and Garden Show.

Please save your milkweed pods for seed collection. Here's the link to the National Wild Ones that includes a downloadable brochure called Milkweed Basics. This brochure will help you to learn or review the proper steps for seed collection, personal safety while handling the plant and pods and instructions on cold stratification. <http://www.wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs/what-wild-ones-is-doing-about-it/>

Here is a short video tutorial for you on how to remove seeds from a common milkweed pod <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFXWitrxOmQ>.

If you want to just collect the ripe pods please bring them to a meeting in an open paper bag. You can hand them off to a member of the Seed Cleaning Crew - Amy and Meribeth.



New Greenspace Project at 858 Wealthy Street *By Meribeth Bolt*

This Wealthy Street property is a city owned lot that has stood vacant for over 25 years. In a nutshell, plans are drawn up for an urban native greenspace and two thousand dollars in funds has been raised by neighbors and interested citizens. River City Wild Ones submitted a grant request for native trees, and a concept document includes native shrubs, flowering plants, a pathway, benches and signage. We need you to be a part of a greater greening of our Native Plant and Pollinator Education Garden (NPEG) neighborhood and help to expand the Pollinator Flyway. More good news is on the horizon about this project. Contact Meribeth, Amy or Dotti for more details.

Thank you to Member Dotti Clune and the Dyer-Ives Foundation *By Meribeth Bolt*

Dotti is on the Board of Directors of the Dyer-Ives Foundation and she designated an unsolicited grant to be awarded to River City Wild Ones. A check in the amount of \$500 was received by our chapter and will help us continue to connect Pollinator Flyways from our original NPEG to infinity and beyond! Thank you Dyer-Ives Foundation and Dotti Clune.

Congratulations to Goodwillie Environmental School - River City Wild Ones recently awarded a \$200 Plant it Forward Grant to establish native plantings at the school.

Wild Garden at Plainfield Library *By Sue Bouchard, Contributing Member*

If you use the Plainfield Library as I do, you have noticed the remnants of a native garden around the flagpole at the front entryway. Weeds have overtaken this little garden and are smothering many of the smaller plants.

When I inquired if there was a garden maintenance plan, the manager invited me to look at the garden with her. The library staff has heard several patron complaints about the weeds. Because employees use the back entrance, they were unaware of the neglected garden.

The manager and staff are interested in how the library presents itself and would like to have this space as a pollinator garden. I also learned that the township does not have the funds to pay for garden maintenance.

With permission from the Plainfield Library manager, I have begun to coordinate this small but highly visible community project.

If you use the Plainfield library, I invite you to join the "Wild Library Team." All it takes is for you to keep an eye on the little garden and participate in some light weeding. The garden is sparse on plantings and if you can donate a few plants that is fantastic!

No RCWO funds are necessary for this ongoing project.

Please contact me at sue@bouchard.com to join the "Wild Library Team."

Editor's note - At the time of printing, initial weeding is complete and a few new plants were added. More plants and volunteers are still necessary.



Natives to Know - Nodding Onion (Allium cernuum) *By Joyce Tuharsky - C.M.*

The most notable feature of Nodding Onion is its unique ball of star-like flowers which "nod" downward on a bent stem (about 1 ½ feet high). Blooming in July or August, the flowers last 3-4 weeks and range in color from lavender to pink, sometimes white. Each ball (umbel) is about 1½-2 inches across, consisting of 40-60 quarter-inch flowers.

The nodding umbels of flowers are thought to be an adaptation that tends to restrict insect visitors to bees. Other insects are more reluctant to hang upside-down to feed on nectar or pollen. The nodding habit may also protect the nectar from rain.

Once pollinated, the flowers turn upright and ripen into papery 3-lobed capsules which release shining black seeds at maturity. The soft, grass-like leaves are shorter than the flower stem and bluish-green in color. The root system consists of elongated bulbs that often form clusters.

A perennial in the Lily family, Nodding Onion is a native of North America from Alaska across Canada, south through the Rocky Mountains to Mexico. It is found along coastal bluffs at low altitudes, and in moist areas on ledges and slopes at high altitudes. In the Midwest, much of the prairie habitat where this plant once occurred has been replaced by development.

The City of Chicago got its name from the Algonquin name for this plant: "chigagou." The name was first recorded in a 1688 French document referring to a meadow full of Nodding onion along the river near the first settlement. The name was subsequently given to the river and finally to the city in 1830.

Nodding onion is recognized by pollination ecologists as having special value for our native bees. The plant also attracts honeybees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Other insects/larvae feed on the leaves and bulbs, and the bulbs are eaten by bear and ground squirrels. Elk and deer may graze on its early spring sprouts, but otherwise avoid this plant.

For the gardener, a nice characteristic of the Nodding Onion is its adaptability. While it prefers part sun and moist conditions, it will grow in almost any situation --full sun to deep shade-- in loam, sand, clay, or shallow, rocky soil. You may tuck a handful of Nodding onion among rocks, nestle some against a tree, or allow it to spread as a ground cover.

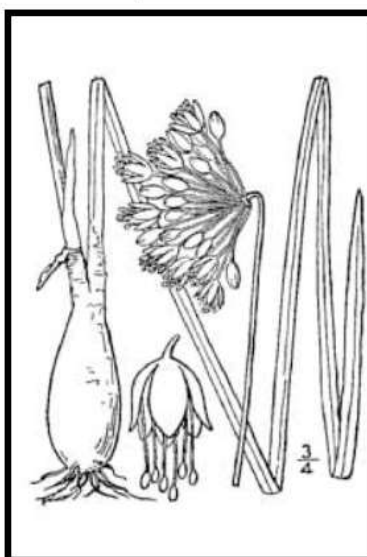
Nodding onion readily reseeds. If this is not desired, deadhead when the flowers fade. It is, however, easier to establish new plants by transplanting the bulbs than by seeding. Divide Nodding onion when 8-10 bulbs appear in the clump. This plant tolerates drought and being planted near black walnut trees.

For more information and photos:

http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/nod_onionx.htm

<http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=ALCE2>

http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=ALCE2



Photos Courtesy of the websites listed above

Wild Plants, Pollinators and Pushy Plants! *By Martha MacCleery, Contributing Member*

In July, two members of the RCWO education committee, Gretchen Zuiderveen and Martha MacCleery, gave a one-hour presentation to 46 campers, grades 3-6, at Covenant Christian Discover Camp in Walker. The campers wanted to learn about native plants, pollinators, and invasive plants in our area.

Prior to the camp, the school principal and the day camp student leader took us on a tour of the beautiful grounds of Covenant Christian High School, the location of the Discover Camp. We identified just a few pockets of garlic mustard, spotted knapweed and buckthorn. They are so lucky the small pockets are manageable to eradicate and we told them so!

We created a talk that was fact-based, fun and memorable. Our goal was to leave the campers with answers to the questions, "What are these things?" "Why should I care?" and "What can I do to help?"

Each child received a potted swamp milkweed plant with care instructions, a list of native plants, and links to our website

and to Monarch Watch. We knew all these materials would go home with the children and this would hopefully engage the parents too.

For the invasive plants education, we created a display of potted invasive plants taken right from the school property. The kids could get up close and personal to study the specimens, and more easily learn to recognize them. Each child received the Stamp Out Invasives brochure.

How do we know that the campers heard and understood our messages? Liz, the student leader tells us that she has received some great feedback from both parents and campers. One mom said that her daughter points out milkweed alongside the road whenever they are out driving. One boy said that he hadn't heard about invasive plant species before this and now wants to make sure that he keeps them away from his house! These budding citizen scientists are already caring locally... the first step toward caring globally! Yes!!

Grand Bee Hotel is the Bee's Knees!!

Vice President, Meribeth Bolt with MSU Professor of Entomology Rufus Issacs. Meribeth donated the materials and specified the best size to attract Mason and Leafcutter bees. RCWO supporter Don Stump donated time and materials and built the "Grand Bee Hotel." The hotel was installed in the new pollinator garden at the Kent/MSU Grand Ideas Garden.

Have you seen a Monarch
Caterpillar or Butterfly
Today??
It's that time of the year!

