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RIVER CITY CHAPTER - GRAND RAPIDS, MI

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

For more information, please contact:

Amy - 616-308-8176 or president@rivercitywildones.org

Officers

President - **Amy Heilman**
VP - **Eileen Schmuker**
Membership - **Ruth Oldenburg**
Outreach - **Carol Phelps**
Treasurer - **Harriet Bromberg**
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Garden Chair - **Sue Bouchard**
Hospitality - **Rhonda Reider,**
Gretchen Zuiderveen
Newsletter - **Kim Davidson**
Web - **Roland Bouchard**

Advisory Board

Melanie Manion - Natural Resources Manager Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission
Steve Mueller - Environmental Education Consultant
Patricia Pennell - Environmental Consultant, Photographer, Botanist, Eco-friendly Landscaper

RCWO Silent Auction and Potluck

Monday, November 19, 2012 - 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Bunker Center at Calvin College

The 6th annual silent auction and potluck is fast approaching. This is our main fundraiser for the year and the money is put to good use supporting our growing number of community projects and outreach. Last year we raised more than \$1000! This year, we plan to do even better by advertising to the general public and having donations from local businesses as well as from members.

Bring your donation items, a dish to share, a guest to join in on the fun, and get a start on your holiday shopping while supporting RCWO!



River City Wild Ones News & Notes

Silent Auction Donation Information

We hope you have been thinking about what you can donate to our upcoming silent auction. Possible donations include gift certificates and/or products from local businesses that you frequent (asking for a donation). Hand crafted items such as art, jewelry, soap, candles, pet items, or canning from your gardens bounty. Potted house plants or perennial plant divisions and bargains from garden center clearance sales have also been popular in the past. Another thing to think about is a service that you could provide such as garden design, garden help, computer consulting or home organizing – just use that great imagination that so many of you have shown for past auctions! Keep in mind that if you have

an item not quite up to auction quality we are planning a “Tailgate Garage Sale” this spring at our first field trip.

Should you have an idea for an item but aren't sure if it will work, need to have an item picked up, or need donation forms to give to a contributing business please contact Sue Bouchard at 616-450-9429 / sue@bouchard.com or Meribeth Bolt at 616-450-3001 / meribethbolt@aol.com

Lets work together to make this years auction the best one yet!!

Farewell and Welcome - Newsletter Editor Change

You may notice a slight difference in the layout of this issue of our newsletter. That is because our wonderful Editor, Rachel Ford, Educator and busy mother of three, who has helped us with our newsletter appearance for over two years is moving with her family to sunny California! Rachel has used her substantial technical skills to polish up the look of our newsletter and we extend our sincere appreciation for her efforts. We will miss you Rachel and wish you good luck on the golden coast. There are many wonderful native plants there for you to discover!

Our chapter is blessed with lots of talented members and one has stepped up to the Editor plate to take a swing! Next time you see Kim Davidson, thank her for accepting the challenge of the Newsletter Editor role.

Kim is a Horticulturalist with a degree from MSU and works at Ironwood Golf Course in Byron Center. She has also been teaching landscape classes as a adjunct instructor for MSU for 10 years now..wow! She also frequently gives programs to various groups and clubs and we are fortunate to have Kim on board to help us get the native word out to everyone. If we are lucky, she may agree to teach us a thing or two at one of our 2013 programs! Kim will be happy to accept info. for the newsletter such as short articles, garden related quotes, poems or pictures. Send her your info. at bradle88@hotmail.com.

Something to Consider

The officer terms of our Vice President (Eileen Schmuker) and Membership Chair (Ruth Oldenburg) will be up this winter. Both ladies have done wonderful jobs in their positions and are looking forward to handing the reigns over to some new faces. We would love to have nominations of individuals for these positions for 2013. If you are interested in the duties / rolls of the positions feel free to contact Eileen (divamom3849@gmail.com) and Ruth (oldenburg@comcast.net).

August Program Recap

We were treated to a tour of the Newaygo Prairie on August 11. Matt Schultz from the Michigan Nature Association lead the tour and showed us many wonderful Michigan natives.



Photos courtesy of Patricia Pennell

September Program Recap

Jesse Lincoln a botanist / ecologist with the Michigan Natural Features Inventory took us on a tour of a rare 10 acre savannah that runs along the Mines Golf Course.



October Program Recap

We were delighted to have Shane VanOosterhout, Horticulturalist and Educator talk to us about the techniques he uses in his bee keeping hobby. Shane also updated us on the latest news regarding the colony collapse disorder in the country.



Photo courtesy of Barb Olson

Students Learn About Capturing Natures Bounty - August 23, 2012 – Rockford Squire News

Students in the Earth Keepers Magnet at East Rockford Middle School (ERMS) spent last school year on a variety of projects to learn about responsible earth keeping. As a service-learning project, the 55 students identified the need to limit the amount of storm water runoff that was entering the nearby Bostwick Lake through ERMS parking lot drains.

“We just looked for the areas that the water was running to after a rain,” stated student Emma Wilkinson.

With the help of Tom Laage, brother of teacher Linda Spencer, the chosen area was excavated and prepared for planting. Students removed rocks from the site and used them to create a rock drainage swale in another area and spread seven yards of hardwood mulch to prepare the site.

“Mr. Mike and Ms. Amy helped us pick out the plants so we had plants that could survive. Some of them have very long roots so they can really soak up the water,” said student Meriah Gannon.

Most of the plants were purchased with a grant that teachers Spencer and Barb Altizer were awarded from GROUNDSWELL, a coalition of community partners that is focused on improving the Great Lakes Watershed through hands-on learning opportunities. The Earth Keepers partnered with the Baldwin Foundation, Amy Heilman of River City Wild Ones, Michael Bruggink of Fenview

Landscape Design, and Nate Haan of Calvin College to plan, design and plant the rain garden.

“Did you know that storm water is emptied directly into our waterways?” asked sixth-grader Casey Lenon, who went on to explain, “All that stuff that is on the pavement and roof top is channeled right to our waters and is called non-point source pollution!”

On June 5, the students planted the 150+ plants and labeled them with plans to add to the garden in the future.

Student Josh Wittenbach explained, “A rain garden will filter the oils and other pollutants out of the water so they never make it to the lake.”

The students were excited to complete the garden and look forward to seeing it grow over their years in middle school. Altizer and Spencer plan to work with seventh-grade science classes next year to expand their service by planting rain gardens in Rockford, close to the Rogue River.

“We are making a difference and doing it close to home. Students are taking the information to their families and purchasing our rain barrels as well as putting in their own rain gardens. It is place-based education at its best and stewardship in action!” concluded Altizer.



Natives to Know: Tamarack (Larix Laricina)

One of our northernmost trees, the hardy Tamarack is a slender-trunked, conical tree that grows 50-75 feet tall. The needles are a bright blue-green and surprisingly soft. They grow in tight spirals around short knobby spurs along the twigs. Tamaracks are among the few conifers that lose their needles in autumn. Just before the needles drop, the needles turn a beautiful golden-yellow.

Tamarack cones are egg-shaped and among the smallest: less than an inch long. The bark is tight and flaky. Under this flaking bark, the wood appears reddish, giving the tree an interesting appearance even without needles.

Very cold tolerant, Tamaracks are able to survive temperatures down to -85°F . They are commonly found at the arctic tree line where it grows as a shrub. In more southerly locations, Tamaracks are normally found in wet soils in swamps, bogs and along lake edges. They are among the first trees to invade filled-lake bogs and are fairly well adapted to reproduce after a fire. However, because of its thin bark and shallow root system, the tree itself does not stand up well to fire. Also, the seedlings do not establish well in shade. Consequently, other more shade tolerant species eventually succeed Tamaracks.

Tamaracks are native to much of Canada and south into the northeastern US from Minnesota to West Virginia. Because of its extensive range, the tree is known by many names: American Larch, Eastern Larch, Red Larch, and Hackmatack.

The name "Tamarack" is Algonquian and means "wood used for snowshoes." Indeed, because Tamarack wood is very sturdy, yet flexible in thin strips, Native

Americans used the wood and roots for many things: snowshoes, toboggans, sewing edges of canoes, and weaving twined bags. The Cree people used Tamarack to create hunting decoys by binding the twigs into delicate sculptures of Canada geese. Handed down through the generations, these sculptures are now an important part of the Cree heritage.

Native Americans also boiled and ate the tender spring shoots of Tamarack, used the bark for tanning, ground the inner bark for flour, chewed the sweet sap, and used various parts of the tree to treat a range of maladies. Because of its resistance to rot, Tamarack has been used for corduroy roads, curved pieces in wooden boats, railroad ties, fence posts and house frames. It is also a favorite tree for bonsai.

Under-appreciated as a landscape tree, the form and color of the Tamarack is as interesting as any imported species. Although it grows in moist, cool spots in the wild, the Tamarack is adaptable to a wide range of conditions and is a good choice for wet soils where other trees will not grow. It prefers slightly acid soils and is intolerant of deep shade or air pollution.

By Joyce Tuharsky

More information and photos available at:

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=LALA>

http://bioweb.uwlax.edu/bio203/2010/panich_just/Site/Habitat.html

<http://www.nativetech.org/willow/tamarack/tamarack.html>



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River City Wild Ones Just Having Fun!

Looks & Learn Programs

A Big Thank You goes out to Sue & Roland Bouchard and Mike Bruggink for allowing us to use both of their properties for our Look & Learn Tours this summer! A good time was had by all that attended!



Sue & Roland Bouchard's Home in Northeast Grand Rapids - June 27th



Mike Bruggink's Family Property in Howard City - September 15th

Roselle Park River Festival

Patricia Pennell, Harriet Bromberg, & Eileen Schmuker help staff the RCWO table on Sept. 29 - Over 1,000 people attended this event!



Thank You, Carol & Fritz Rottman

Wild Ones members gathered to collect native seed in September at the Rottman's 17 acre prairie to be used for the Prairie Wolf Park project!



Autumn Tidbits

The Leaf's Lament

by Andrew Fusek Peters - submitted by Barb Olson

*Said the leaf to the sky,
I would learn how to fly,
But I'm shaking like a leaf do I dare?*

*Said the sky to the leaf,
It's a matter of belief
Just jump into my blanket of air!*

*Then the sky sang
Then the leaf sprang
And the trees were empty and bare.*

