
Inside this issue:

July Program	2
Shop Wild & Stay Local	2
ICCF Native Garden Tour	3
& RCWO Fundraiser	
From Traditional to Native	4
April Program Overviews	5 - 6
May Program Overviews	7 - 8
Natives to Know	9
October Program Change	10

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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.

For more information, please contact:

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www.rivercitywildones.org / www.wildones.org (National Headquarters)

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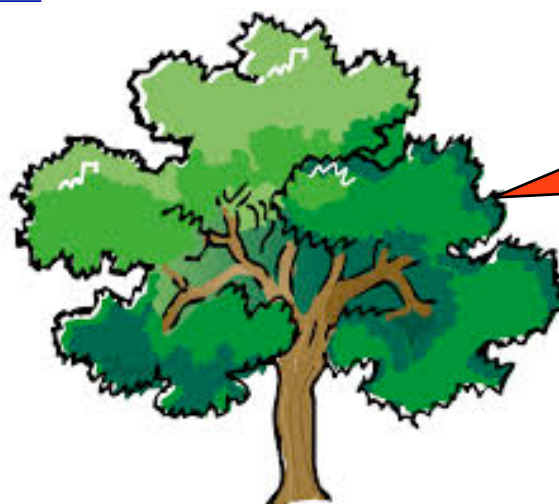
June Program: Michigan Native Tree I.D. Tour

Monday, June 16, 2014 - 7:00 PM - Aquinas College Campus

Meet at the Performing Arts Center Parking Lot

1607 Robinson Road SE, Grand Rapids, 49506

Kim Davidson, Horticulturist at Ironwood Golf Course and MSU Educator, will lead us on a walking tour through the campus of Aquinas to look at and learn how to identify some of Michigan's fabulous native trees. Aquinas is home to many wonderful natives and consists primarily of 2 forest communities - the Beech/Maple Deciduous Forest and the Coniferous Forest. [A Tree Guide of the campus is available by clicking here!](#)



I'm Smitten with the
Mitten!!

July Program
ICCF (Inner City Christian Foundation) Education Garden Celebration
& Brewery Vivant Fundraiser
Monday, July 21, 2014~ 5:00 to 7:30 PM
In front of ICCF - 920 Cherry Street, Grand Rapids

Please spread the news!! Rain or shine come out & be Wild!

It's time for a summer garden party to admire & celebrate this big accomplishment! RCWOs transformed a traditional English garden into a Michigan Native Education Garden at the ICCF!! AND Brewery Vivant (which is right across the street from the garden) will donate \$1 to RCWOs for every beer sold on July 21st, pub hours are 3pm – 11pm.

Shop Wild & Stay Local

All of the proceeds from the Wild sales are used for education programs & native gardens planted at schools & other non-profits right here in West Michigan!

Not Your Grandmother's Garden Stepping Stone

A cool new Wild Ones garden stepping stone will look super in your native garden! Each stone is individually handcrafted by a local West Michigan artist. This stone is substantial, not frilly! You can check it out & place your order at the next field trip, just don't drop it on your foot! A real bargain at \$25 & payment is due when delivered.

Wild Shirts Feature Softer, Lighter Fabrics & New Styles

We now have cool new unisex short sleeved t-shirts. Your choice of crew or a v-neck! All shirts are made in the USA & printed right here in Grand Rapids. Choose green with a purple coneflower or green with a green coneflower. Sizes small – XL run true to size & are \$15 and \$17 for 2XL or larger.

A brand new baseball style t-shirt is also available. It's athletic grey with charcoal grey $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves. Choose a purple or green coneflower. Sizes small – XL run true to size & are \$20 and \$22 for 2XL.

You'll look Wild in your new Wild tee as you admire the RCWO Education Garden and perhaps field a few native plant questions. You'll look super Wild sipping a beer on the new patio at Brewery Vivant on July 21st!!!

Order shirts by phone, email, or at the next field trip. Payment is due when you receive your nice new shirt. Contact Meribeth Bolt 616.450.3001, meribethbolt@aol.com.

You are Invited to a FREE Native Plant Garden Tour!

Raffle prizes! Book sales! Plants! Plant experts!

Join the River City Wild Ones as they celebrate their beautiful Native Plant Education Garden.

You will see Michigan's native plants in a city garden setting, and learn how you can plant your own.

Find out the best native plants to add to your own garden! Experts will be there to advise you.

FREE PLANTS will be available for you to take home-don't miss out, come early!

WHEN: Monday, July 21, 2014 from 5:00 pm – 7:30 pm

WHERE: in front of the ICCF Building

(Inner City Christian Federation)

920 Cherry Street, Grand Rapids



Then enjoy a beer at Brewery Vivant!

(Which is right across the street)

For every beer you purchase on July 21st, Brewery Vivant will donate \$1 to River City Wild Ones.

Thanks, Brewery Vivant! All proceeds will be used right here in West Michigan,
to provide education & create native plant gardens at schools & other non-profits.

(Photo Courtesy of Patricia Pennell)

From Traditional to Native

The Story Behind the ICCF Garden Transformation

by Amy Heilman

During my role as president, I had wanted our chapter to develop a public garden that would showcase how beautiful native plants could be when chosen carefully for a site and maintained. It would be an educational garden where people could learn why native plants are important to our landscape and be able to see the names of the plants as well. The hope was that this type of garden would introduce people to what Wild Ones is all about and motivate them to add some native plants to their own properties - either residential or commercial.

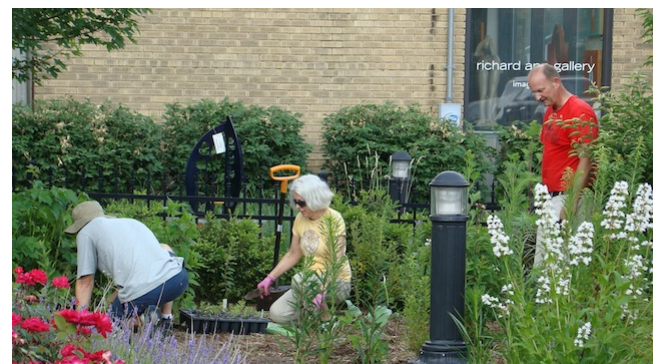
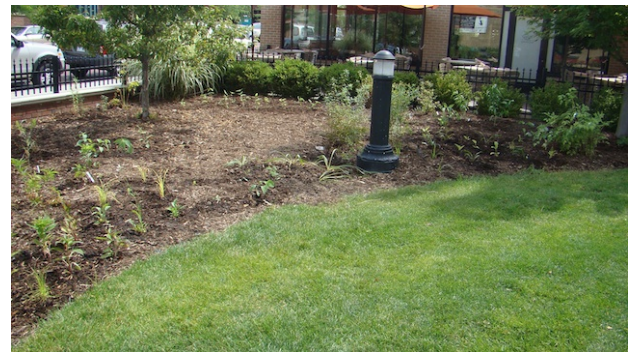
During the winter of 2011/12, VP Mike Bruggink had discussions with managers at ICCF and they were open to the idea of our chapter incorporating native species into much of their traditional-style garden. This was a perfect place to have our garden because it was located in a highly used pedestrian area between restaurants, art galleries, shops and residential homes. Mike and I worked on a list of potential plants we wanted in the garden and he drew up a planting plan.

A group of RCWO members began work in the garden in spring of 2012 by removing most of the existing shrubs and perennials in the north section of the garden along the perimeter. These plants were then potted up and given back to ICCF for use in other projects or for gardens in homes that ICCF built for local residents.

That year we mulched and planted 50 different species all donated by members and several native growers (Sandhill Farm, Hidden Savannah, WILDTYPE, Calvin College, Designs By Nature, Hortech, Fen View Design).

2013 - In the spring we continued to add a few more plants, worked on a bit of weed removal, and added a light layer of mulch again and by July the garden was growing well and was looking great! Plant ID markers were added later that year. Compliments were coming in and the managers at ICCF were quite happy with what they saw. A series of summer concerts are held in the garden each year and RCWO brochures are on hand for viewing during these events.

2014 - The late spring detained our garden work but we finally began clearing out the back portion of the garden for phase II, added more mulch and weeded again - the plan is to add another 10 more species this year to the new area and then the garden planting should be complete!



April Program Overviews - Marywood Prairie and G.R. Urban Forest Project

Marywood Prairie - By Ron Cammel

The Prairie Habitat at Marywood is only a few years old, but its keepers have already seen the annual fluctuations of a prairie's life. The big blue stem grew to 8 feet one year. Another it was 4 feet. Ironweed was abundant one year. Another it was barely existent. Every year a different weed dominates.

"One time I saw all field grass and I was really discouraged," said Sr. Lucille Janowiak, a caretaker of the one-acre meadow on East Fulton Street, part of the ministry of the Dominican Sisters – Grand Rapids. "A week later there were some other plants showing. Then you couldn't see the grass because of all the blooming plants."

"Prairies have a mind of their own," said Darcy Dye, a volunteer at the prairie. "But they can be satisfying to gardeners."

Janowiak and Dye spoke at an April 14 meeting of River City Wild Ones, which has helped in getting the urban prairie established and weeded.

The prairie's 81 species of plants have hosted a good variety of fauna, considering the dense human population surrounding it, the caretakers said. Walking stick bugs, bees, butterflies, dragonflies and other insects are common. Bluebirds, red-winged blackbirds and hawks have used the area, and a mallard nested in it. Deer dine, garter snakes slither, and meadow jumping mice hide among the grasses and forbs.

People have been active, too. The former dairy farmland became a giant lawn when the Dominican Sisters bought the land. In 2005, a bioswale was created as a runoff for a new parking lot. A master plan called for reducing the

bioswale, but a neighbor urged that it be maintained by explaining the benefits of native plants.

"With no background at all, I foolishly volunteered to assist," said Janowiak. Soon she had the expertise and hands-on work of Wild Ones volunteers. An Eagle Scout added benches for contemplative space, bird houses were installed and volunteers continue to remove invasives. Plans call for monitoring bird activity for educational purposes.

Volunteers will continue to be welcome for planting, removal of invasives, trimming of the perimeter and to collect, clean, and broadcast seeds.



Sr. Lucille Janowiak in the Marywood Prairie

(Photo courtesy of Patricia Pennell)

The G.R. Urban Forest Project - By Nancy Bedell

For our April meeting Lee Mueller, ISA Certified Arborist and Program Manager of the Friends of Grand Rapids Parks presented his exciting program - Protecting, Enhancing, and Expanding Parks and Urban Forests (a forest with buildings in it - the buildings are out of place, not the trees).

He explained to us how the danger of losing so many ash trees in Grand Rapids due to infestation by the Emerald Ash Borer spurred the Friends of Grand Rapids Parks Urban Forest Committee to partner with the Community Foundation and set up a long range plan to increase the cover of trees in the city from the 2006 34.6% total to 40% in a few years.

Lee explained how he has been able to convince local civic decision-makers not to destroy all the ash trees in the city preemptively and instead try and save certain trees through treatments. The cost involved with applying treatments was justified based on the many economic and environmental benefits the trees offered: water run-off absorption, wind protection, oxygen production, air pollution cleansing, shaded pavement, the lower cost of cooling buildings because they were shaded by the trees, and the trees beauty.

When it comes to increasing the overall tree canopy in the city, Lee chooses and sites trees depending on the urban landscape needs. The lowest percentage of tree canopy is concentrated in low income areas, so he tries to enhance those areas realizing that the addition of trees helps improve the aesthetic quality of an area and in turn reduce violence and crime. Generally the trees he plants are sited in the "tree lawn" a space between the street and sidewalk or along the owner's property line. He doesn't always choose native trees for areas because sometimes they are not the most effective choice or he cannot find native trees of sufficient size for his purposes. Homeowners are consulted on which trees they might prefer from a range of appropriate and available choices.

In an effort to engage the public more completely the Citizen Forester Program is training many citizen

volunteers to care for their own trees, while also encouraging them to provide leadership to others and volunteer in public space tree plantings. The program sponsors 51 events a year having served 1,200 participants last year. The long-range goal is to train a Citizen Forester for each of the city's neighborhoods.

To learn more about the citizen forest project and upcoming tree plantings visit the website below:

www.urbanforestproject.com

Congratulations to Lee and his colleagues for coordinating, planning, increasing the canopy, and educating the public about Grand Rapids' impressive and expanding urban forest. A Big Thank You to our Wild Ones members who planted trees with Lee and his team - good job!



May Program Overviews - Wildflower Walk at Ken-O-Sha Park and Annual Native Plant Exchange / Loda Lake Look and Learn

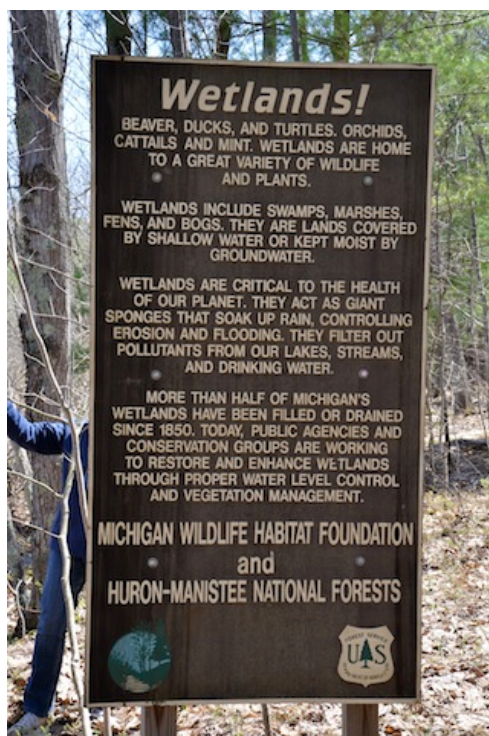
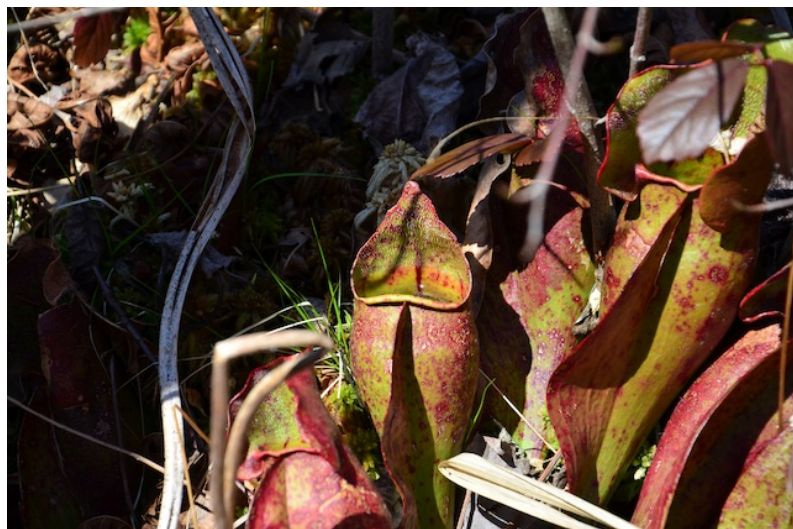
Wildflower Walk and Annual Native Plant Exchange - By Kim Davidson

Due to the tremendous work of other organizations, our scheduled May 19th garlic mustard pull at Ken-O-Sha Park was turned into a Native Spring Wildflower Walk! The areas where we planned to pull garlic mustard were already cleared by other energetic individuals - what a nice surprise! We were led by our current president and former president on a walk highlighting some of the great natives that call Ken-O-Sha home. Mayapple, Solomon's Seal, Wild Ginger, different violets, and many others were on full display!

After our walk the group enjoyed snacks and a chance to obtain some new natives for their own gardens through the highly anticipated annual native plant exchange!



(Photos courtesy of Val Lynn)

First Look and Learn of the Year - Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary - May 10th**Photos by Scott Davidson**

Natives to Know - Pussy Willow (Salix discolor)

By Joyce Thuarsky

Pussy Willows are the first willow catkins to appear each year in late February or early March....a great harbinger of Spring!

Like all plants in the *Salix* or willow genus, Pussy Willows are dioecious (separate male and female plants). It is the male plants that have the beloved silky, pearl gray catkins that resemble a cat's paw. The female plants produce smaller, greenish catkins that mature into 1/3" long seed capsules. These capsules later split to release many tiny seeds with cottony hairs that are dispersed by wind and water.

Native to Canada and roughly the northern half of the United States, the Pussy Willow is a multi-stemmed shrub or small tree, 15-25 feet tall, with spreading upright stems. The bark is slightly fissured. Year-old twigs are hairy but become smooth with age. The leaves of the Pussy willow are alternate, elliptic in shape, up to 5" long, with irregular teeth. The Latin name "discolor" refers to the contrasting colors of the leaf surfaces: shiny green on top and blue-green below, which aid in recognition.

Pussy willows occur along shorelines, swamp margins and poorly drained thickets in a variety of soils as long as they're wet. Preferring full to part-sun, Pussy willows will tolerate flooding and fire, often occurring in abundance in the shrub-dominated successional stage after fires.

Fast-growing and short-lived, Pussy willows have not always been considered beneficial. The wood is weak and easily damaged by ice and wind. The leaf/branch litter is "messy." In moist soils, Pussy willows will produce extensive shallow root systems that can clog pipes, drains and septic fields.

However, the wildlife value of Pussy willows (and other native willows) is very high. Pussy willows are recognized by pollination ecologists as of special value to native bees, bumble bees, and honey bees; because the sugar content of the nectar is high, and the plant provides the first and therefore important forage for bees in early spring. Willows, in general, run a close second to oaks as host plants for Lepidoptera species, the genus that includes moths and butterflies. Pussy willow, in particular, are larval host plants for Mourning Cloaks (*Nymphalis antiopa*) and Viceroy's (*Limenitis archippus*). Its pollen and nectar attracts many other butterfly species as well as flies, ants and beetles.

The leaves, buds, and branches of Pussy willows are eaten by many animals including deer, moose, caribou, rabbits, squirrel, beaver, muskrats, ruffed grouse, ducks, and small rodents. Pussy willows provide valuable cover for wildlife and are favored for nesting by American goldfinch.

Pussy willows are useful for ecological restoration projects and erosion control, and can be used in landscaping if properly sited and pruned. They root so readily that cut branches can simply be inserted into moist soil in summer. There are reports of Pussy willows used as fence posts that rooted and grew into trees!

For more information and photos:

<https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=SADI>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/saldis/all.html>

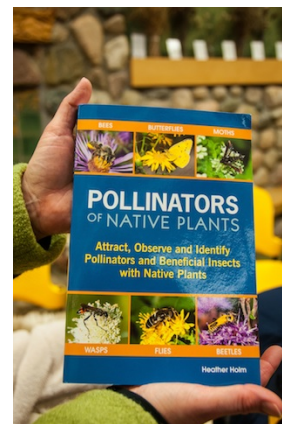
http://landscaping.about.com/cs/hedgesfences/a/pussy_willows.htm



October Meeting Change!

The Silent Auction is on sabbatical this year!! In its place RCWO is planning a social evening with a true potluck. There will be time to catch up with friends and get to know other members and eat great food. There will be a used book sale that will be open for the evening. So please help by setting aside any books, all genres accepted for Astronomy to Zoology and everything between.

More info coming soon.



What are you doing to help out our VIP's (Very Important Pollinators)??

Bumblebees hummed incessantly among the trout lilies, forget-me-nots, and yellow dandelions,
Sparkling crystal dragonflies seemed suspended in the still air,
Butterflies had left their cocoons and were slowly fanning their colored wings,
the day the leaves came out...

Gwen Frostic