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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:

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

August 16th Program: Tour of Ruth Oldenburg's Native Garden

We are in for a treat on Monday, August 16 at 7 PM. Ruth Oldenburg has graciously invited members and visitors to tour the native gardens she has worked hard to develop over the course of several years. This tour is a follow-up to the power point program she presented to us in March in which she outlined the site preparation, planting and maintenance involved in this project.

Ruth has asked that we parallel park on the grass along-side her meadow – she will have the area marked. The terrain should be fairly level and mostly dry but as always be prepared with sun hat, notepad, sturdy walking shoes and bug spray. Her rain garden area may be a bit wetter if

we have rain before the program date. Visitors are always welcome and cameras are a must to capture interesting flora and fauna. This will be a great opportunity to work on native plant identification! Refreshments will be provided

The address for the program is: [7485 Cloud-berry LN., Belmont, MI 49306](#) – click for link to Google Maps.

Remember to come prepared at these meetings for hiking, possible inclement weather and bring your water or sport drink. As always, some tempting goodies will be provided.

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Michigan Environmental Ac-
tion Council

Natives to Know: Cup Plant (*Silphium perfoliatum* L.)

The Cup Plant is an imposing 4-8 feet tall native perennial that is easy to distinguish by its yellow sunflower-like flowers; thick, hairless, four-sided square stems; and opposite pairs of cup-forming leaves. The plant remains unbranched, except for the panicle of flowering stems near its apex. The flowers, about 3-4" across, bloom in mid-summer for about 1-1½ months. The leaves, which grow to 14" long, are coarsely toothed, and have a rough, sandpapery texture. The root system consists of a central taproot, and abundant shallow rhizomes that help to spread the plant vegetatively. When cut, the stem of the Cup Plant exudes a gummy sap which was used by Native Americans as chewing gum.

While the lower leaves of the Cup Plant are attached at the stem by petioles, the middle and

upper leaves lack petioles and join together, encircling the central stem to form a cup, hence the name of the plant. These cups collect rain-water and dew and become drinking fountains for birds, insects and even frogs.

Overall, the Cup Plant is an exceptional wildlife plant. Along with the "cups" that hold water, the showy flowers provide pollen and nectar to long-tongued bees, butterflies, and humming-birds. Many birds, especially Goldfinches, love the seeds; and because of the tendency of the Cup Plant to form dense colonies, this plant provides good cover. Birds can lurk among the leaves during the heat of the day, searching for insects or pausing to rest.

In Michigan, Cup Plant is found in river flood-plains, forest openings and edges. According to

Community Events

Demystifying the Grasses

Date: Tues., Sept 21st **Time:** 6:30—8:30 p **Location:** Calvin College

Join Dr. Dave Warners for a seminar on grass identification and ecology. We will learn basic skills for recognizing some of our more common grasses, their contributions to the local ecology, and which habitats support which native grass species. Problematic non-native grasses will be highlighted, although the emphasis will be on increasing understanding and appreciation for native grass species. Particular attention will be given to those species that can be used in home landscaping. The program will take place at the Bunker Interpretive Center at Calvin College. It is sponsored through the West Michigan Cluster of the Stewardship Network (www.stewardshipnetwork.org) The program is expected to fill quickly. The class capacity is capped at a maximum of 30 people. [Sign up now](#) if you want to attend this hands-on workshop! Cost: \$10 for Stewardship Network members/\$15 for non-members



Little bluestem.

***Please Note:** We had talked about making this our September meeting, but due to the limited number of slots available that is not feasible. We will let you know soon the status of the September meeting via email as well as posting it in the next newsletter. (If you are one of the few people still receiving a paper version of this newsletter this would be a great time to share with us your email if you have one so we can let you know of event update in a more timely fashion.)*

RCWO News and Notes

July Meeting Recap: Fern Frenzy at Sandhill Nursery

On Monday, July 19th, 25 RCWO members and friends gathered at Sandhill Nursery in Rockford to learn about native ferns and other woodland plants. The owner, Cheryl Tolley, toured us through her amazing, diverse estate. We explored the open, prairie areas that she had reseeded (collecting all of the seeds by hand!) as well as the

dense woods. She brought us to an ancient peat bog that was now home to hundreds of ferns, some over 5 feet tall. We also identified some very interesting plants, including wild coffee, on the property. However, one ID eluded us—check out the picture on the next page and see if you can help. Thanks, Cheryl, for a lovely time!



Cheryl Tolley—Owner of Sandhill Nursery

Some Ferns to Know...



Cinnamon Fern

Height: 2-5 ft

Dist.Characteristics: stipe (leaf stalk) covered with cinnamon hair



Lady Fern

Height: 2-3 ft

Dist.Characteristics: stipe dark at base; flat in front; brown scales



New York Fern

Height: 1-2 ft

Dist.Characteristics: large colonies, fronds taper toward base; lowest very small



Waist deep in the ferns at Sandhill Nursery.

Please pardon the mistake... In the last newsletter, the Member Gallery was erroneously labeled as photos by Gail Snow. In fact, these photos were taken and generously offered for use by Barbara Olson. She also contributed the Wendell Barry poem. Sorry, Barbara! If you would like to contribute photos for a future Member Gallery, please send them to newsletter@rivercitywildones.org.

Natives to Know: Cup Plant (*Silphium perfoliatum* L.) (continued from page 1)



the “Michigan Natural Feature Inventory,” the Cup Plant is “Threatened” and legally protected. However, the plant is fairly common in other parts of the country and is even considered a weed and potentially invasive in some places.

Nevertheless, researchers at South Dakota State University are exploring Cup Plant as a potential new biomass crop that could also store carbon in its extensive root system. Perennial grasses will

always be the base for biomass production; but Cup Plant could be an excellent complementary species since it will grow in low, moist prairies generally unfit for cropland. In addition, Cup Plant supports biodiversity because its water “cups” attract a variety of insects and birds, and its stems provide perches for grassland birds.

The Cup Plant can be a very dependable and striking addition to your garden if you have room. It has a commanding presence in perennial borders and can be used in rain gardens, prairie gardens, or at the edge of woodland gardens. It thrives in full or partial sun and moist loamy soil. The plant does spread vegetatively and can look weedy if not kept in check. It has also been known to topple over during a rainstorm with strong winds, particularly while in bloom or situated on a slope.

-- By Joyce Tubarsky

More Cup Plant:

Photos and more information :

<http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/cupplantx.htm>

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=SIPE2>

<http://www.hort.net/profile/ast/silpe/>

LOST

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you

Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,

And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,

Must ask permission to know it and be known.

The forest breathes. Listen. It answers, I have made this place around you, If you leave it you may come back again, saying Here.

No two trees are the same to Raven.

No two branches are the same to Wren. If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you, You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows

Where you are. You must let it find you.

-David Wagoner

Can You Identify This?

This was a plant that many of Wild Ones members were interested in on our recent trip to Sandhill Nursery. It stands 2-3 feet high. It grows in the deep shade of the forest. The small flowers are a light yellow in color. If you know what this is, please email Amy at president@rivercitywildones.org.



2010 River City Wild Ones Calendar

All programs (unless otherwise specified) will begin at 7 pm on the 3rd Monday of each month, March – November. Non-members are always welcome! Find more information for each event on our website.

Date	Speaker/Topic	Location
Aug 16	Ruth Oldenburg /Native Meadow and Rain Garden Tour	7485 Cloudberry Lane NE Belmont, MI 49306
Sep 20	TBD	TBD
Oct 18	Nancy Hoover/Plant Rescue	Bunker Interpretive Center 1750 East Beltline Ave. SE Calvin College, Grand Rapids
Nov 15	River City Wild Ones Fourth Annual Auction	Bunker Interpretive Center 1750 East Beltline Ave. SE Calvin College, Grand Rapids