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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

July 18th Program: Plaster Creek Watershed Restoration with Nate Haan

Plaster Creek corridor is home to a diverse community of plants and animals, and its drainage basin covers over fifty square miles – all within the Grand Rapids metropolitan

area. We will explore this fascinating area and learn about the groups that have teamed up to restore and care for this important watershed system which is a spawning ground for Lake Michigan salmon. We will begin at Ken-o-Sha Park and hike some of the trail system with our guide Nate Haan, Project Manager of the Plaster Creek Stewards. Some uneven ground and slightly steep terrain may be encountered, so plan accordingly with proper footwear, walking sticks, etc.

The program begins promptly at 7 PM so carpool if possible and plan to arrive a bit early. Parking and meet-up spot is in the lot at the end of Ken-O-Shay Park Drive (located on the west side of Kalamazoo S. near 32nd.) The location address is: [3155 Kalamazoo St, Grand Rapids, 49507](https://www.google.com/maps/place/3155+Kalamazoo+St,+Grand+Rapids,+MI+49507/@43.000000,-85.666667,15z).



Connie Redding plants a tree along Plaster Creek to help mitigate erosion.

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.

Pictures From Our Last Field Trip—The Rottman's Prairie



RCWO Educational Display Wins Blue Ribbons

The judges at the recent Kent Garden Club Annual Flower Show held at Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park were so impressed with our new display detailing the benefits of native plants, that they awarded it two blue ribbons! The layout was researched by Carol Phelps and the design was implemented by Ruth Oldenburg. It is a beautiful work of art, information and inspiration. Many thanks to them both for adding this tool to our educational workbook!



Ruth Oldenburg and Carol Phelps

Grand Rapids Water Festival Update



Some of the volunteers manning the table at the Grand Rapids Water Festival.

The new venue for the Grand Rapids Water Festival on July 25 and 26th at the Lowell Fairgrounds was a nice location and a steady stream of folks flowed in to attend the 4th annual event this year. Festival authorities claim the new venue for the festival was a success and that they had about 1200 folks attend to listen to the line-up of wonderful local music, taste local food and learn about the importance of our waterways. Many vendors were on the scene to support and educate the participants on how they could help protect our watershed systems.

Our native plant sale brought in over \$200 in proceeds and our enthusiastic volunteers were able to talk with many interested people about the benefits of native plants. Joyce Turarsky helped us create beautiful informational plant cards with photos and growing descriptions. These really added an educational as well as, aesthetic appearance to the

display of plants (we had around 140 or so plants there with 27 different species available.) Chris Baer donated 20 shade plants which she had been growing and they sold out completely! Be sure to thank her for that nice gesture when you see her next time okay?

Many thanks also go out to the following members who helped us prepare for and carry out this plant sale: Carol Phelps, Eileen Shmuker, Rachel Ford, Madeline Heibel, Mike Bruggink, Shannon Goodwin, Barb Olson, Mark Fitzpatrick and Chuck Vannette.

This event involved a lot of work but it was an opportunity to reach a new group of people of all ages. We were even asked to talk about Wild Ones on WYCE – our local independent radio station, which will run this public service announcement on occasion for a year or more.

Student Gardens Grow with Hands-On Learning

Note: This article originally appeared in the [Rockford Squire](#) newspaper on Jun3 16, 2011.



Some of the students working at East Rockford Middle School. (source: [Rockford Squire](#))

After two hot weeks of removing sod one shovel at a time, spreading nine yards of mulch, and planting approximately 200 native species of plants, the East Rockford Middle School Earth Keepers (EK) students have a completed garden.

For the two weeks the EK students have been diligently removing sod from an area on the west side of the building near the

entrance. “We only hit and broke through one irrigation pipe. Good thing the owner of Splash has his daughter in our room!” said teacher Barb Altizer.

The garden, along with the making of 13 rain barrels, is the culminating activity for the students after learning about storm water, watersheds and the importance of using native plants in landscapes and gardens. After spreading nine yards of mulch on the

(Continued on page 3)

Student Gardens Grow... continued

last day of school, the kids were able to begin planting the native plants provided by Nate Haan from Calvin College.

"We also had help from our 'community partners' Mike Bruggink of Fenview Landscape Design and Amy Heilman of River City Wild Ones. In the future we hope to split plants and collect seeds to share and plant another garden," Altizar stated.

Funding for this project was provided

through a grant from GROUNDSWELL, an organization that promotes service learning and place-based education.

"We are very proud of our Earth Keepers kids," said Altizer. "They worked very hard. According to our partners, some of the plants will grow to be chest high by the fall. We can't wait!"



Planting some of the native plants. (source: Rockford Squire)

Natives to Know: Harebell (Campanula rotundifolia)

Harebell is a pretty native perennial, with dainty violet-blue bell-shaped flowers on airy thin stalks, hovering over low-growing basal foliage. Delicate in look but hardy in nature, Harebells return reliably after cold winters with some of the earliest foliage in spring. Blooms persist from early summer until late fall.

The flowers of the Harebell are about ¾" long, with 5 petals fused together into a bell, 5 lavender stamens, and 5 long pointed green sepals behind. These nodding flowers are borne singly or in loose clusters from the tips of thread-like stems which grow 6-18 inches tall. Along the slender stems are alternate linear leaves, up to 2" long. The lower basal leaves are round to heart-shaped and usually slightly toothed, but these often wither away by flowering time. The flowers develop into 3-celled capsules (0.1–0.2 inch diameter) that contain numerous tiny seeds. The seeds are dispersed by wind. Like other Campanulas, Harebells exude a milky sap when broken. The root system consists of a taproot.

In Michigan, Harebells grow in clumps on many of our dunes, adding splashes of blue to the dune/beach landscape. Harebells are also found in woods, grassy meadows, along rocky streams and roadsides, and even colonizing cracks in walls or cliff faces. Small bees, butterflies and hummingbirds visit the flowers for nectar. However, the slender foliage and tiny seeds are insubstantial, possessing low food value for wildlife.

Harebells are circumboreal, which means they are native to temperate regions of the

northern hemisphere around the globe. The Latin "*Campana*" means little bell. "*Rotundifolia*" refers to the round basal leaves at the base of the stem.

Long-blooming, Harebells add charm to any garden. They produce more flowers in sunny locations, but also do well in part shade. Because the basal foliage is so short and the flower stalks are so thin, Harebells seem to fit into whatever space you give them, weaving well with other perennials. Drought resistant, they prefer dry to average moisture conditions and do well in sandy soil or rock gardens. They will also thrive in ordinary garden soil, but tend to be out-competed by taller, more aggressive plants without thinning.

Propagation is by dividing the root ball or by seed. Seed heads can be collected after they have dried on the plant, and the seeds sown the following spring after the last frost. Seedlings will not flower until the second year. Young plants can have difficulty standing up on their own the first couple years....Harebells do best grown in crowds.

Do not confuse Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) with Creeping Bellflower (*Campanula rapunculoides*) which has similar but larger flowers and broader foliage. Creeping Bellflower is a perennial from Eurasia that has become an invasive in North America. These plants produce deep, taproot-shaped tubers, any piece of which can sprout into a new plant. Creeping Bellflowers are extremely difficult to eradicate.

-Joyce Tuharsky



Harebell
(photo: wildflower.org)

More Harebell

More information and photos on Harebell are available at:

<http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/harebellx.htm>
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=CARO2>
http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=CARO2

Linda's Banana Cream Cake

1 box yellow cake mix
 1 cup mashed, ripe bananas
 1/4 cup softened margarine
 1/3 cup sugar
 1/2 tsp baking soda
 1 cup water
 1 tsp. vanilla
 2 eggs

Blend liquid ingredients together. Add dry ingredients and beat with mixer for 2 minutes at medium speed. Grease and flour a 15" jelly roll pan. Pour and bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes.

Frosting

My frosting is your basic homemade butter cream frosting but instead of milk use orange juice or fresh lemon juice. Blend until spreadable.

- orange or lemon juice
- confectioner's sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- Butter (1/2 stick)

RCWO Kid's Corner

Looking for something to do with the kiddos this summer?

Date	Activity	Location	Ages	Cost	RSVP
July 26th 9:30a-11a	Spiders Are Our Friends	Wittenbach/Wege Center	K-2, older and younger welcome	\$5/ family	616-987-2565 or mjohnson@lowell-schools.org
August 9th 9:30a-11a	Who Needs Trees	Wittenbach/Wege Center	K-2, older and younger welcome	\$5/ family	616-987-2565 or mjohnson@lowell-schools.org
August 9th 10 a-12 p	Water Fun	Ada Parks & Recreation	3-5 years old	\$5/ child	616-676-0520 or mfitzpatrick@adatownshipmi.com
August 10th 10 a-12 p	Rock Hounds	Ada Parks & Recreation	5-7 years old	\$5/ child	616-676-0520 or mfitzpatrick@adatownshipmi.com
August 11th 9:30a-12p	Rocks and Fossils	Ada Parks & Recreation	8-11 years old	\$5/ child	616-676-0520 or mfitzpatrick@adatownshipmi.com
August 23rd 9:30a-11a	Harvest	Wittenbach/Wege Center	K-2, older and younger welcome	\$5/ family	616-987-2565 or mjohnson@lowell-schools.org

2011 River City Wild Ones Calendar

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

Date	Speaker/Topic	Location
Jul 18	Nathan Haan/Plaster Creek Watershed	Ken-O-Shay School 3155 Kalamazoo SE Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Aug 15	Cedar Creek Institute	701 W Cloverdale Rd Hastings, MI 49058
Sep 19	Dr. David Dornbos/Invasive Woody Shrubs	Bunker Interpretive Center 1750 East Beltline Ave. SE Calvin College, Grand Rapids
Oct 17 *6:30 start	Jerry Stewart/Genotype Native Grass Seed in Three Rivers, Michigan	Bunker Interpretive Center 1750 East Beltline Ave. SE Calvin College, Grand Rapids
Nov 14	Fifth Annual Auction	Bunker Interpretive Center 1750 East Beltline Ave. SE Calvin College, Grand Rapids



Grand Rapids Chapter
 River City Wild Ones

rivercitywildones.org

www.for-wild.org
 (National Headquarters)