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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:

Sue – 616-450-9429 or membership@rivercitywildones.org

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

Oct. 18th Program: Plant Rescue with Nancy Hoovler

We are very excited for our last formal program of the year before our annual Wild Ones Auction. Nancy Hoovler will be discussing Plant Rescue. We will begin at 7:00 pm at the Calvin College Bunker Interpretive Center. See you there!

Click [here](#) for a map to Bunker.

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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Julie Francke—Director of
Horticultural Education—
Frederik Meijer Gardens &
Sculpture Park

Steve Mueller—
Environmental Education
Consultant

Patricia Pennell —
Environmental Consultant,
Photographer, Botanist, Eco-
friendly Landscaper

River City Wild Ones November Auction

The Fourth Annual RCWO Auction and Social evening is November 15 at 6:30 - just about a month away. It is being held at the Bunker Interpretative Center at Calvin College. The auction is our major (only) fund raiser for RCWO projects such as creating native gardens with schools, public education programs and scholarship grants.

The Silent Auction will formally start at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome to come earlier and preview the items and start enjoying all the tasty appetizers and desserts by members.

I hope you have already been thinking about the auction and are preparing your auction items. (We already have two items.) Need a few ideas to help you get started? Garden Art (both new and gracefully aged), art work, plants, crafts, gently used gardening books, tools, and baked goods are all great auction items. Think about a skill or service that others might value such a garden design, garden services (planting, weeding, pruning), computer consulting, graphic design, craft class, or photography lessons are all sure to have bidders. Should you have question about a possible donation

offering please feel free to call me at 450-9429 or e-mail Sue@bouchard.com.

There are three ways to get your wonderful donation to the auction:

- For the super-efficient, highly talented members who have their projects completed, please feel free to bring them to the October meeting. We will be glad to safely store them until the auction.
- If you, like me, aren't quite at that stage please feel free to contact me and I will be glad to arrange to pick your item(s) up.
- Last but not least, you can bring them to the Bunker Center starting around 6:15

Past auctions have proven that there are a lot of creative and talented members in our group (and lots of members eager to bid on items). Let's make this our best auction yet and enable RCWO to support all of our great community projects. Encourage your friends to come and enjoy in this fun evening and find some unique holiday presents.

RCWO News and Notes

September Meeting Recap: Prairie Paradise

The September Wild Ones fieldtrip to Carol and Fritz Rottman's property filled us with awe right from the start. As we drove along the extended drive to the Rottman's home, we were surrounded by beautiful, tall waves of native grass mixed with various wildflowers producing seed. We learned that their 17 acre prairie had begun 11 years ago on land previously used for corn and soybean crops. The initial seeding contained 40-50 species of natives. The grasses were the first to become established, with the wildflowers finally blooming 4-5 years later. The couple enlisted professional help with this native planting through Wild Type Nursery. Local genotype seed was used. They also entered a partner program with the DNR for additional assistance. They hire a prescribed fire team from Ann Arbor to burn the biomass every three years in early spring. This periodic burning helps to eradicate weeds, restore nutrients to the clay soil and eliminate the build-up of decaying plant material.

We were delighted to see a well-planned rain garden in front of the residence. This established garden captured water run-off from the gutters. Another feature to note was the natural swale located down the gently sloped terrain from the house. This area was planted with natives and held runoff from the hill above during seasonal wet periods. It served

as an inviting home to turtles, frogs and nesting birds.

Carol and Fritz also led us further down the slope to Flat Iron Lake, a 30' kettle lake created by glaciers and inhabited by ducks and swans. As we watched a flock of Sandhill Cranes flew over, we learned that this amazing couple have donated their property - 70 acres of prairie, woodlands and lake - to Calvin College as part of their Ecosystem Preserve program. This will prohibit any type of development to occur on the land in years to come. Calvin students are now carrying out research on this unique piece of property and they have found over 67 different species of flowers. They have also helped to mark and eradicate invasive hot spots.

Carol Rottman writes eloquently on what the land means to her in her new book *All Nature Sings – A Spiritual Journey of Place*. Fritz supplies the photographic detail for the book. The combination of their talents make this book a lovely work of heart and art. We were so fortunate to get an opportunity to purchase her book during our program (complete with author's signature). If you missed the program do not fear, her book is available at Schuler's Books and we have been invited back to see the property again during the summer months when it will show itself anew in all its flowering splendor!



Fritz and Carol



Volunteer/Learning Opportunities

Volunteer Work Days in Ada Park

Dates: various **Time:** 9:30 a—12 p **Locations:** Ada, Leonard and Roselle Parks

Mark Fitzpatrick – Director of Ada Parks and Recreation, and a member of RCWO Advisory Board, has placed this announcement asking for volunteers to participate in upcoming stewardship projects. Please consider donating some of your time and get Master Naturalist hours. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn from others, assist the community and enjoy some time in the great outdoors! These are primary outdoor grounds and landscaping work days focusing on invasive species removal, garden clean ups and the backyard habitat sites. Tools, gloves and a snack will be provided each day. Locations vary. Meet out at the designated parks on the days of the events. Use Mark's cell phone number as a contact on the day of the events: 862-0584.

Wednesday, October 20
Wednesday, November 3

9:30 a.m. – 12 noon
9:30 a.m. – 12 noon

Ada Park
Roselle Park



Source: Ada Parks

On Thursday, February 12th, 2009, Milan Maria Capobianco lost her battle to terminal brain cancer at age 8. Born December 8th, 2000, she was told she would never walk, and she danced in flip-flops! Then she was told she would be legally blind, and instead she saw the world clearly. Thus by all outward appearances, Milan looked like a normal kid but on the inside she wasn't just "normal," she was extraordinary.

Milan's family consisted not only of her mother Sharyn, father Philip, brother Delano, and puppy Coco Chanel, but her classmates, teachers and fellow students at Ada Vista Elementary where she was a third-grader. Part of this extended family was Cameron Bruneau, son of RCWO website creator Ryan Bruneau. As a kindergartener that moved up to 1st grade math, Milan took him under her wing and made him feel at home in her classroom. After Milan's passing, the Bruneau family wanted to help and knew just the way when a letter was sent home regarding her parents' plans for a memorial garden in partnership with the school and PTO. This was the perfect opportunity to not only pay respect to Milan's life but also contribute to her legacy by educating the students of Ada Vista on the vital role of native plantings in our local circle-of-life.

The original garden plans called for 5 sensory gardens (sight, smell, taste, sound, and touch), with each garden having plants representing the assigned trait. With the help of RCWO President Amy Heilman, the plant materials for the "sight" garden were narrowed down to Michigan natives that offered diversity in bloom times, bloom color, leaf color, species' height, and even attracted insects to give the garden both dimension and year-round interest. The quantities and layout of each plant were decided using a Visio blueprint of the triangular planter. The final design called for a Prairie Smoke border, a Celandine Poppy and violet Heuchera inlay, a Butterfly Weed and Purple Coneflower center, and a mauve Swamp Milkweed backdrop. Thanks to a RCWO matching gift, the generosity of friends of RCWO, Fruitbasket Flowerland, and Romance Gardens, and a butterfly house courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited~ Kentwood, the garden plans were completed.

A couple weeks after school let out this past spring, the Bruneau family rolled up their sleeves and planted the bed. With it being raised, newly planted, and exposed to full sun, Cameron and his older sister Megan spent many hours throughout the summer watering, mulching, and fertilizing. All of the family's hard work paid off; students returned to school this fall greeted by a sight garden in bloom. Just this past month tons of seed pods appeared atop the various plants to coincide perfectly with classroom instruction on functions and structures of living things.

If you would like to contribute to Milan's Garden, please contact Ryan Bruneau at rbruneau@rivercitywildones.org. Help with both plant additions and divisions is anticipated in the years to come. In addition, it would be nice to have some markers to label the various plants. Monetary donations are also appreciated to help in the fight against childhood cancer. For more information or to make a contribution to Milan's Miracle Fund, please visit MilansMiracleFund.org.

- Megan E. Bruneau

MILAN'S "SIGHT" GARDEN

FEATURING SWMI NATIVES

4 PURPLE CONEFLOWER

24-48" HEIGHT, 4-6" DAISYLIKE RED-VIOLET FLOWERS, MATTE DK. GREEN LEAVES



4 CELANDINE POPPY

12-20" HEIGHT, 2" CREPE-PAPER FLOWERS, OAKLIKE MD. GREEN LEAVES



5 HEUCHERA

12-24" HEIGHT, 3-4" FROSTED PURPLE-GREEN LEAVES, TINY CREAM FLOWERS



11 PRAIRIE SMOKE

6-16" GROUNDCOVER, PINK NODDING FLOWERS, LT. BLUE-GREEN LEAVES



4 BUTTERFLY WEED

12-36" HEIGHT, 2" CLUSTER ORANGE FLOWERS, GLOSSY LT. GREEN LEAVES



SWAMP MILKWEED

36-60" HEIGHT, 2" CLUSTER MAUIE FLOWERS, GRAYISH-GREEN VEINED LEAVES



WALKWAYS

5'-0"



Scale: 1" = 1'

A2Pd

Natives to Know: Witch Hazel (*Hammelis virginiana*)

At a time when few plants are blooming, Witch hazel adds sparkle to the autumn landscape. The four narrow, crinkled petals of its yellow to cream-colored flowers create a delicate, spidery appearance on bare branches, persisting even after leaf-drop.

Hamamelis virginiana is a deciduous shrub or small tree that is native to eastern North America. It has a short trunk and numerous spreading, crooked branches. The young branches with slender zigzag twigs are brown and slightly fuzzy. With age, the thin bark turns a silver-grey with rough patches. The leaves are alternate, elliptic to nearly circular in shape, and irregularly round-toothed along their wavy edges. They are 2-6 inches long and have 5-7 prominent veins. Medium green above and pale below, the leaves turn bright yellow in the fall. At maturity, Witch hazel can reach 12 to 20 feet tall, spreading 10 to 15 feet wide.

Hamamelis is Greek for "fruit" and "together," referring to the plant's habit of producing flowers at the same time the previous year's fruits mature and disperse. The capsule-like fruit (1/2 inch oval, brown, woody, hairy) contains two shiny hard black seeds. These nutty seeds were savored by Native Americans of the south. After ripening the following summer, the capsules to split open explosively and shoot the seeds up to 30 ft in all directions.

The origin of the name Witch hazel is uncertain. It may have come from an Old English word "wyche" meaning "pliable",

because the twigs bend easily. It is called hazel because it resembles the hazelnut shrub, though it is not closely related. Witch hazel is also associated with divining for water as its forked branches were used by some early settlers to locate underground springs.

For centuries, Witch hazel oil has been valued for its astringent, tonic and pain-relieving qualities. Today, it is one of very few American medicinal plants still approved in non-prescription drugs by the Food and Drug Administration. Recent studies have shown that Witch hazel may have antioxidant, radiation-protective, and antiviral properties, with potential for many more medical applications.

In the wild, Witch hazel often grows as an understory shrub, at the edge of a bog or field, preferring evenly moist, acidic soil. It provides seeds for birds, and browse for deer, rabbits and beaver. However, browsing doesn't harm this plant, and can actually create a fuller shrub. Reasonably care-free, Witch hazel has been found to tolerate urban environments, and is rarely bothered by pests or diseases. The branches can be cut and brought indoors to flower where their soft sweet perfume can be savored. However, be careful to remove the seed capsules from the previous year....or the warm indoor air will cause them to split and spew out seeds across the room!

By Joyce Tuharsky



Witch hazel (Source: www.wildflower.org)

More Witch Hazel

More information and photos on Witch hazel are available at:

http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=havi4
<http://www.stevenfoster.com/education/monograph/witchhazel.html>
http://www.floridata.com/ref/h/hama_vir.cfm

Some Reminders from National...



SFE Grant Program Deadline

Applications for 2011 SFE Grant cycle are due October 15th so please remind non-profit organizations planning to develop outdoor learning centers in your community about the deadline. Submittals will again be accepted only electronically. Click [here](#) for more information.

Wild Ones Photo Contest

Voting for People's Choice for the 2010 Wild Ones Photo Contest is now open. There were over 100 submissions this year, so the committee had quite a job registering them, reviewing them for compliance and then organizing them for the website. You will have until October 25th to vote for your favorite photo for People's Choice. Please go to <http://www.for-wild.org/members/photo.cgi> and vote as soon as possible.

www.rivercitywildones.org



Wild Ones
 NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

Grand Rapids Chapter
 River City Wild Ones

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