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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:

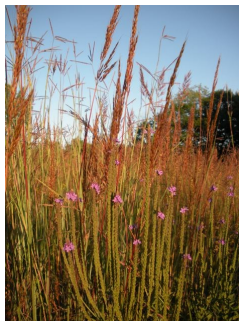
Sue – 616-450-9429 or membership@rivercitywildones.org

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

Sept. 20th Program: Carol and Fritz Rottman's Restored Prairie

NOTE: Due to unforeseen circumstances, the previously scheduled itinerary for the Sept. 20 program will not be a tour of various rain gardens in the area. However, an alternative tour of another beautiful native planting will take place on the same date.

Mark your calendars for Monday, Sept. 20 at promptly 6:30 pm (note earlier start time due to shorter daylight hours) for a tour and discussion of Carol and Fritz Rottman's 17 acre restored prairie – a labor of love project they have been working on over 10 years! Their 70 acre property also includes a rain garden, lake with native wetland plants as well as woodland areas. This is a special site that will be a future research area for Calvin College students under the direction of Dr. Dave Warners.



Big bluestem, Indian grass and vervain
photos courtesy Carol Rottman)

Carol Rottman has written the book - *All Nature Sings: A Spiritual Journey of Place*, which details the history and creation of this unique piece of property. To learn more about her, the book and so see some beautiful photos taken on the property; visit her inspiring blog at www.carolrottman.com.

Her book will be available for sale during the program.

The terrain of this site is generally level with stone paths that take you through the plantings around the residence, mowed paths take you through the prairie and an overhanging deck allow views of water plants. Fritz and Carol have offered the use of their outdoor deck for our refreshments or in the event of a light rain, their walk-in room in the lower level of the residence. Heavy rains will cancel the program.

Location (click link to Google maps)

The address for this event is [11300 Hart St., Greenville, 48838](https://www.google.com/maps/place/11300+Hart+St,+Greenville,+MI+48838). Be advised that the residence is set back from the main road and the driveway is narrow. Native plants flank each side of the paved drive - so use caution when entering and exiting. Please carpool and park on the grass alongside the barn.



The perfect pod—
milkweed!

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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Frederik Meijer Gardens &
Sculpture Park

Steve Mueller—
Environmental Education
Consultant

Patricia Pennell —Director
of Rain Garden Program, West
Michigan Environmental Ac-
tion Council

RCWO News and Notes

August Meeting Recap: Exploring Ruth Oldenburg's Native Landscapes

On August 16th, River City Wild Ones members were graciously invited to tour fellow member, Ruth Oldenburg's property.



Ruth and her husband have worked for more than six years transforming approximately 0.5 acres of their residential property into a native garden.

Each year they worked a new section of land; tilling, killing weeds than seeding. Despite several challenges along the way (including the Memorial Day rain storm that washed away yards and yards of mulch), they have created an amazing oasis.

Some of the many native plants included in the garden: cup plant (see pic at right), indigo, bee balm, great blue lobelia, coneflower, black-eyed susan and many native grasses.

Thanks again for opening your home and garden to us!



Ruth rangles a huge cup plant!

River City Wild Ones November Auction

Labor Day is upon us and fall activities are gearing up. Once again it is time to start thinking about the RCWO auction that will be held on November 15. This will be our 4th Annual Auction and Social evening. Last year's auction was a great success with over \$700 raised for RCWO projects such as creating native gardens with schools, public education programs and scholarship grants.

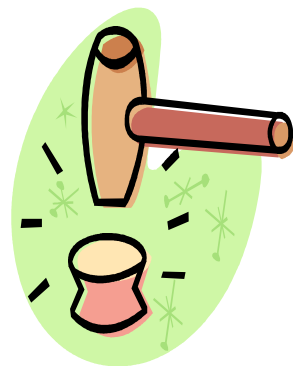
This year we will be holding our auction at the Bunker Interpretative Center at Calvin College. There will be lots of room to display all the wonderful items that our talented members donate. There also will be more room for all the tasty appetizers and desserts brought by members that are part of the evening.

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). So put on your thinking caps and decide what you can do to help have a bigger and better auction. Need a few ideas to 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), computer consulting, graphic design, just to name a few.

Let's make this the 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.

Next month's newsletter will have more specific information about the auction.



Mystery Plant Identified!

A couple of folks wrote in say they think they identified the interesting herbaceous plant we showed a photo of in the August newsletter. The plant was found growing in Cheryl Tolley's woodland during our tour of Sandhill Farm. And, the drumroll... it appears to be Horse Balm, also known as Richweed. Thank you to Dawn Buckley for your research!

Horse Balm/Richweed (*Collinsonia Canadensis*)

Mint Family (Lamiaceae)

Flowers: 1/3 – 1/2" long. 5 light yellow petals fused into 2 lips, lower lip long and slightly fringed with 2 stamens protruding with the pistil.

Foliage and flowers have a light lemon scent (more citronella-like odor when crushed)

Leaves: 4-8" long, opposite, ovate, sharply toothed

Height: 2-4'

Flowering: July-September

Habitat: Rich woods



Horse Balm

Natives to Know: Indian Grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)



Autumn is approaching, and now is good time to consider how native grasses can add color and interest to your garden...

Indian Grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) is a showy native perennial that grows 3-7 feet tall and is noted for its upright form and broad

blue-green foliage. Its alternate blades grow to 2' long and 1/2" across, are flat and hairless, yet rough in texture, and are pointed at the end. During late summer, the plant bears narrow, greatly branched flower panicles (up to 12" long) atop stiff vertical stems that rise well above the foliage. Each floret has 3 yellow stamens and 2 white stigmas. The spikelets that bear the florets are fringed with white hairs that give a metallic golden sheen to the flowering parts. These later develop into large, plume-like, seed heads of a soft, golden-brown. In autumn, the color of Indian grass can range from deep orange to purple and usually retains hints of color into the winter.

Many insects, including caterpillars and grasshoppers, feed on Indian Grass. These in turn are an important source of food for many songbirds and upland game birds. Other birds and small mammals eat the grass seeds. Because of its height and tendency to remain erect, Indian Grass provides excellent nesting, escape, and winter cover for wildlife. Throughout the summer when the leaves are green, Indian Grass is relished by livestock and bison, providing a good source of protein and vitamin A.

On residential properties, Indian Grass can be planted in mass or blended into naturalized areas. It can also be used as vertical accents along garden borders. It grows easily from seed with no pre-treatment necessary, and various kinds of soil are tolerated. Plant in full to partial sun, and water regularly but do not over water; although periods of flooding or drought are tolerated. Do not cut back in fall because of its winter interest. The flowers of Indian Grass are good for drying and preserving.

- Joyce Tuharsky

More Indian Grass

Photos and more information :

http://www.wildflower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image=24688

http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/grasses/plants/ind_grass.htm

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=SONU2>



Community Events

Kent Conservation District Fall Native Plant and Tree Sale

Date: Sat. Oct. 2nd **Time:** 9 a— 1 p **Location:** 3260 Eagle Park, Grand Rapids

It is almost Fall and that means it is time for the Kent Conservation District (KCD) to hold it's annual sale. Check their website at www.kentconservation.org/events to see details on what species are available. An order form is also provided. Along with a nice assortment of native broadleaf and evergreen trees and shrubs, there will be wildflower flats available from Vern Stephens (owner of Designs By Nature). You may remember that he has spoken to our chapter in the past and provided plants for us as well. **The deadline to order is coming quickly – September 17.** Please contact Connie Redding, Project Coordinator with any questions you may have (616) 942-4111 ext.100.

Roselle Park "River Festival"

Date: Sat. Oct. 2nd **Time:** 10 a— 4 p **Location:** 1010 Grand River Drive, Ada

Come out and enjoy Ada Township's new Roselle Park! There will be activities for all ages plus food, music and river stewardship information.. River City Wild Ones will be one of the exhibitors, so make sure to stop by our table! Admission is free. Special activities set for the day will include: exhibits and displays by river conservation organizations., live music , hands-on and discovery activities for kids , hiking and biking , river kayak and canoe information and snacks and drinks. See you there!

RCWO Member Gallery:

Barbara Olson



Downy Sunflower



Elderberry

Volunteer/Learning Opportunities



Volunteer Work Days in Ada Parks

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 River City Wild Ones Advisory Board, has placed this announcement asking for volunteers to participate in upcoming stewardship projects. Please consider donating some of your time towards these events. Your time will be counted towards Master Naturalist volunteer hours if you are need of these. 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, September 8	9:30 a.m. – 12 noon	Ada Park,
Wednesday, September 22	9:30 a.m. – 12 noon	Roselle Park
Wednesday, October 6	9:30 a.m. – 12 noon	Leonard Field
Wednesday, October 20	9:30 a.m. – 12 noon	Ada Park
Wednesday, November 3	9:30 a.m. – 12 noon	Roselle Park

Note: you are welcome to help in the parks on others days, just coordinate your schedule and the projects with Mark ahead of time.



Thornapple and Grand River Annual "Clean-Up Day"

Date: Sat., Sept. 18 **Time:** 8:30 a—1 p **Locations:** Leonard Field

Help care for our local rivers and nearby streams. Clean up teams will walk or use their own kayaks and canoes to remove trash and debris from sections of the Thornapple River and Grand River that flow through Ada Township. Contact the Park office at 616-676-0520 or mfitzpatrick@adatownshipmi.com to register. Individuals, churches, businesses, school groups, private landowners all welcome. Come dressed to be outside. Supplies, gloves, snacks and lunch provided.



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
Sep 20*	Carol and Fritz Rottman/Restored Prairie	11300 Hart St Greenville, MI 48838 Carpooling Suggested! *note 6:30 pm start time!
Oct 18	Nancy Hoovler/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