

Inside this issue:

<i>Native Plant Website</i>	2
<i>Community Stewardship</i>	2
<i>Volunteer Opportunity</i>	2
<i>Calendar</i>	2
<i>Look & Learn</i>	3
<i>Native to Know</i>	3



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

September 19th Program: Combating Invasive Woody Shrubs

Dr David Dornbos, Associate Professor of Biology at Calvin College will share with us the findings of recent research on autumn olive and buckthorn, as well as other invasive species. He has some interesting stories to relate about how they compete, where they are strongest and the challenges they pose to other species and ecosystem goods and services. We will also learn about control steps we can utilize on our own properties.

The program will be held Monday, September

19 at 7 PM at Calvin College Bunker Interpretive Center (BIC) located at 1750 East Beltline Ave SE, Grand Rapids, 49546 ([map](#)) and will include both indoor discussion and a visit to the woods surrounding the facility to view some of the woody species.

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.

Officers

President—**Amy Heilman**
VP—**Eileen Schmuker**
Membership—**Ruth Oldenburg**
Outreach—**Carol Phelps**
Treasurer—**Nancy Hoover**
Secretary—**Betsy Ford**

Planning Chairs

Newsletter—**Rachel Ford**
Hospitality—**Rhonda Reider, Gretchen Zuiderveen**
Web—**Roland Bouchard**

Advisory Board

Mark Fitzpatrick —Director
Ada Parks and Recreation Dept.
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
Rebecca Ling — Landscape
Designer - River Maid Design,
Environmental Law Investigator

RCWO Fall Auction, Monday, November 14, 2011

Summer is hurrying by at the speed of light so now is a great time to start thinking about our annual auction.

This will be our FIFTH annual auction. Each one has been bigger, better and a greater success. Last year we raised over \$1,000.00! This is our main fund raiser for the year and the money is put to good use supporting our various and increasing number of community projects and outreach.

Now is the time to start thinking about what you would like to donate to the auction. Keep the auction in mind as you work on art work, craft projects, have plants to share from editing your garden, canning your garden bounty or find great bargains while shopping at garden centers. Think about a skill or service you can provide that are of value to other members such as gar-

den consults and designs, computer consulting and holiday baked goods. These have all been sought after in the past and surely will be again. Past auctions have proven that there are a lot of talented and creative members.

Should you have an idea for a item but are not sure if it would work, please give a call to Sue B. 616-450-9429, or Amy H. at 616-308-8176.



Grand Rapids Chapter
River City Wild Ones
rivercitywildones.org
www.for-wild.org
(National Headquarters)

New Native Plant Website



Joy Buslaff, former editor of *Wild Ones Journal* and former deputy editor of *The Ecological Landscaper* has created a wonderful website filled with information on native plants and natural landscaping. Be sure to check out www.homemadewilderness.com. Here you will find such information as slideshows about how to deal with landscape ordinances, a short video of Doug Tallamy speaking on the native plant/wildlife connection in our gardens, and educational articles. This will be a site you WILL want to check back on frequently! We will be adding a link to this website on our own chapter website too.

RCWO Community Stewardship

On July 27th, many hands made light work at the Marywood Dominican Center Prairie as volunteers from our chapter met to assist the Sisters pull Queen Anne's Lace, an exotic weed that had begun to invade their 1 acre prairie. Thanks to all of you who helped out! It was a fun time, we learned from each other and we hope to meet there again soon to learn about seed collection and processing techniques.



Clockwise from top left: Manju Maruliah; RCWO volunteers with the day's work—a veritable mound of weeds!; Mike Bruggink and Sister Doris; Bringing in the Weeds

Stewardship Network Volunteer Opportunity: Woody Species Removal Workday

September 10, Saturday 10:00 am to 12:00 noon

Cost: Free

Locations: Kent County ([Ada Park](#), [Calvin College Ecosystem Preserve](#), [Howard Christensen Nature Center](#) & [Siedman Park](#)), Ottawa County ([Pigeon Creek Park](#)) and Muskegon County ([Wege Natural Area](#)).

After years of success with garlic mustard, West Michigan Cluster partners are coming together again to eradicate a few of the worst invasive woody plants in our region. From busting bittersweet to buckthorn, we will join forces to combat these invasives within our natural areas. Please consider putting in an hour or two of your time at one of the locations listed!

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
Sep 19	Dr. David Dornbos/Invasive Woody Shrubs	Bunker Interpretive Center 1750 East Beltline Ave. SE Calvin College, GR
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, GR
Nov 14	Fifth Annual Auction	Bunker Interpretive Center 1750 East Beltline Ave. SE Calvin College, GR

RCWO Look & Learn Garden Visits

Look & Learn Visits are a new offering from RCWO this year coordinated by Sue Bouchard. The tours are informal with no meeting associated. These are not formal "garden club" type of tours but a chance to see real gardens and learn from the owners how the gardens have evolved.

If you are interested in hosting a Look & Learn Garden Visit next year, please contact Sue at sue@bouchard.com or 616-450-9429. Your garden can be big or small, urban, suburban and anything in between. It need not be all natives and if there are invasives you struggle with members can learn about your efforts to control them.

The pictures at right are from the first tour hosted by Lynn Martin-Dandridge. Thank you! Thanks also to Sue and Ron Osgood for their lovely tour later in August!



Natives to Know: Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)

Great Blue Lobelia is a tall showy perennial found in wet woodlands, meadows, and along streams and ponds in Michigan. It features brilliant lavender-blue tubular flowers, crowded together toward the top of a tall leafy stem (1-4 ft). Each flower is about 1" long and split into two lobes. The upper lobe has two segments, and the lower lobe has three and is striped with white. Occasionally, the entire flower is white. The blooming period is from early July to late September.

The central stem of this plant is rather stout and usually unbranched. The leaves are alternate, up to 5" long and 2" wide, lanceolate or ovate, with serrated margins, and no petioles. The root system consists of a central taproot, from which occasional basal offshoots are produced. The seeds are quite small and come in a two-celled, many seeded capsules.

This plant occurs in both disturbed areas and high quality habitats and thrives in full to partial sun. When in bloom, Great Blue Lobelia is aflutter with butterflies and bees, and also attracts hummingbirds. Deer occasionally eat this plant. The seeds are too small to be of value to birds.

Great Blue Lobelia has many qualities that

make it a wonderful garden accent. It has an extremely long blooming period, bright flowers in tight formation, a tall sturdy stem that requires no staking, and is quite pest free. All it asks from the gardener is more water than average. It also benefits from heavy composting.

This plant is a short lived perennial (each plant living only a few years), so allow the plants to self-sow. Seeds capsules can be collected in autumn, and the seeds easily re-sown in a new location that same season or the following spring. Also, well-established clumps can be divided in the fall or spring by separating the basal offshoots from the mother plant, replanting these shoots, and watering immediately.

Warning: All parts of the Great Blue Lobelia are toxic, although only if eaten in large quantities. That said, Native Americans were known to use this plant as a poultice or infusion in attempts to treat a range of ailments: headaches, colds, rheumatism, worms, stomach trouble, croup, syphilis (hence its Latin name "*siphilitica*"), bewitchment, and to end quarrels, avert divorce or renew love. Because Great Blue Lobelia will cause vomiting if ingested, it played a part in ritual purification for some tribes.



Great Blue Lobelia
(photo: wildflower.org)

More Great Blue Lobelia

More information and photos on Great Blue Lobelia are available at:

http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_losi.pdf

<http://www.easywildflowers.com/quality/lob.silph.htm>

http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/wetland/plants/gb_lobelia.htm