



Rock River Valley Chapter Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 7

July 2006

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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No July Meeting—Next Event:

Evening Social at Fran Lowman's - July 20, 2006 Virginia S. Watson, Vice President/Program Chair

We are well into summer and have all been busy working in our yards. The plants we purchased earlier this year are all installed and have begun their lives as cherished members of our own native sanctuaries. Weeds are now a challenge and thoughts of the next green project are stirring. STOP!

It's time for a break! Fran Lowman is hosting a *members only* **Evening Social** on July 20, 2006 at 7:00 PM at her home (5654 Rotary Road, Cherry Valley). This will be a laid-back, casual affair so bring a lawn chair for yourself and a finger-food plate to share. Fran has a wonderful woodland as well as a large prairie yard full of natives she has planted herself. We'll get her to tell us about the shrubs and trees she has used so successfully, many of which are choices on this year's shrub and tree sale list.

Fran planted her first prairie natives in 1994 and will show you the results of the following 13 years. Come and meet Fran's 240 year old burr oak and see the difference her efforts have made in her oak savanna. Be sure to notice the roadside in front of Fran's property where she has been weeding and throwing in native seeds for the last ten years.

This may be your last chance to visit Fran's successful prairie/woodland/savanna restoration. She is contemplating selling her property and moving, though, lucky for us, staying in the area.

This will be an informal event so come comfortably dressed for an evening outside. We will have a fire in the pit and sizzling good conversation. Check the map for directions and join us for a relaxed social evening on the third Thursday in July at Fran Lowman's home. See you there!

See page 6 for a map and detailed directions.

Please contact Virginia S. Watson at 815-398-0138 for more information.



Articles for the August newsletter must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor by July 23, 2006.

Chapter Members Receive Community Service Award

Lowell and Betty Edwards were honored last month by the Alpine Kiwanis Club. They jointly received the *Touch a Life* award for service to their community including active participation and volunteer efforts with Wild Ones, their church, the Literacy Council, the Natural Land Institute, and Severson Dells. Congratulations Lowell and Betty!

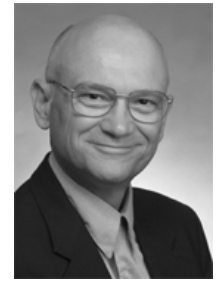
Message from the President **Tim Lewis**

Maintaining your Membership

During the last national board meeting we discussed retaining members. Many people seem to drop their memberships after just three years. Some of us reasoned that this was because those people join to learn how to landscape naturally and after they learn what they need, they quit Wild Ones. I think this is unfortunate because they are missing out on opportunities to continue learning and they are no longer supporting the organization's mission or new members.

In October 2004, Fran Lowman, Membership Chair, compiled a list of members in our chapter, organized by how long people had been members. At that time there were 158 members. Of those, 53 had been members five years or more and five had been members since 1994. Those five are still members and in my quick search of the 53 members, it looks like about 47 are still members. I am impressed.

I think long-time members, including me, realize the value of their memberships for a variety of reasons. Many of them stay members because their interest has shifted from learning about natives to supporting an important cause. Another reason is that some of us want to continue learning, because the more we learn, the more we want to know. Our programming year always includes at least one topic that is aimed at the more experienced.



I am a firm believer in giving something back. I learned a lot through my membership in this organization and I want to spread what I know to others. We can all give back to Wild Ones with our financial support as well as our actions. Long-time members can invite members to our yards to show what they have learned and done. One way is to be on the Show Me/Help Me (SM/HM) tours where members can learn and be inspired by example. (As a side note, I learned some new things at our June SM/HM tour from inexperienced members.) Experienced members can also offer to be mentors.

Membership is something that extends beyond our own yards, just as our natural landscapes do. By keeping up your membership you are helping others establish native landscapes. Your dues help to spread the word and allow the chapter to offer programs and events to teach new people. Your membership also supports the organization nationally.

I encourage every one of you to continue your support of Wild Ones by maintaining your membership. For those who have been long-time members, thank you very much. It helps to spread the word about natural landscaping more than you know.

June Show Me/Help Me Day

A dozen members turned out on a beautiful June morning to admire beautiful landscapes and learn from the experiences of others. We hope you will participate in the next Show Me/Help Me Day in August.



photo: T. Lewis

Show Me/Help Me Day participants explore the landscape at Bruce and Mary Ann Matwisch's home on the river.



photo: T. Lewis

Dianne Stenerson and Deanna Larson consult a field guide to identify angelica at Cindy and Scott Stear's home.

June Meeting Recap Cathy Schafman

Habitat: If You Plant It, They Will Come

Don Miller, Severson Dells Environmental Educator, has had 20 years of experience in his field, but his experiences with nature began when he was young. He grew up in a time and place when nature was all around. He formed a love for the natural world that he has carried through his life.

Don began by asking why we plant natives. We answered: to attract birds and butterflies, to restore heritage, to work with nature, to use less water and no fertilizers or pesticides, and for their natural beauty. In the early 80's, Don saw pale purple coneflower in the wild and decided to put some of it in his yard. At a time when it was difficult to find natives for purchase, he had so much demand from friends for these plants that he soon started a business called *Native Acres*. In time, he had to phase this out as his life filled with other activities. He always admired the beauty of the native plants, but his interest in them evolved when he began observing the creatures eating his plants. He knew that all animals need a habitat; if he wanted to draw birds and butterflies to his yard, he had to fill this requirement. A key to attracting native wildlife is plant diversity. If we plant native trees, shrubs, and plants we also help combat habitat loss. Don reminded us to think both horizontally and vertically when planning and planting.

All animals need water, shelter, food, and air. A pond is a wildlife magnet. Somewhere in your yard, you should have water less than two inches deep. Birds and butterflies need shallow water and love mud puddles. You can make little mud puddles by burying shallow pans and filling them with water. Bird baths are fine also. Make sure and refill them daily. Butterflies also like dripping water and flat rocks in direct sun on which to bask.

Shelter is provided both by vegetation and brush piles in your yard. You can augment these by providing bird houses. It was noted that butterfly houses are more decorative than functional.

Our native flowers provide food for the birds and butterflies. Supplementing with bird feeders, ensures that the birds have food year-round and also

gives you a closer look at them when you position the feeders for that purpose.

Don had a list of 17 common butterflies in our region which Severson Dells set out to attract to their butterfly garden. He quizzed the group and all were named! They are the following:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Cabbage White | 9. American Painted Lady |
| 2. Clouded Sulfur | 10. Painted Lady |
| 3. Eastern Tiger Swallowtail | 11. Viceroy |
| 4. Eastern Black Swallowtail | 12. Red spotted Purple |
| 5. Pearl Crescent | 13. Great Spangled Fritillary |
| 6. Eastern Tailed Blue | 14. Meadow Fritillary |
| 7. Spring Azure | 15. Question Mark |
| 8. Monarch | 16. Red Admiral |
| | 17. Hackberry Butterfly |



Don Miller at the June mtg.

Don brought several reference books from the Severson Dells library, some of which are sold in the gift shop there. He suggested utilizing the information found in reference books to draw a particular species to your yard. You can note the plants that entice a certain species or check to see what kind of wildlife the plants you have might draw.

One book he recommended was "The Gardener's Butterfly Book" written by Allen Branhagen. Mr. Branhagen will be speaking at the Klehm Arboretum on October 19, 2006.

Don left us with several thoughts, both his own and written by others, which he quoted to us:

- A good way to start each day is to face east and greet the sun.
- Celebrate each plant's birthday (the day it flowers) and keep track of that day each year.
- It is very important for us to share our love of nature with others.

Don emphasized that you might be the only person that will give a child these experiences. We need to raise our children to see the joy and value of nature so they will then want to protect and restore it as adults.

Membership Update Fran Lowman, Membership Chair

175 memberships on June 1, 2006

June Meeting Attendance:

Forty-three members representing 36 memberships and 10 guests for a total of 53 people attending.

Thanks go to Fran Lowman for providing the refreshments.

Dues payments can be sent either directly to the National Office or to the Chapter Membership Chair, Fran Lowman. Forty percent of the dues paid, regardless of the amount, are shared with Rock River Valley Chapter. Members wishing to make donations specifically for the local chapter, should make a separate payment or so note on their membership application under "Chapter Contribution" and mail to the Chapter Membership Chair. Dues payments, regardless of amount, are considered a donation and are tax deductible.

Welcome New Members

- Susan Halvorsen, *Rockford*
- Janice Henningsen, *Rockford*
- Doreen Howard, *Roscoe*
- Ruth Roth, *Rockford*
- Steve and Julie Servantez, *Milton WI*
- Guy Smith, *Rockford*
- Charlie Sturm, *Rockford*

Special Thanks to Recent Rock River Valley Chapter Donators

(any amount above the \$30 basic dues)

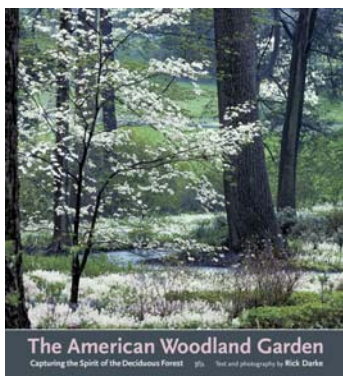
- Lois Boese
- Virginia McIlwain
- Pat and Roger Schroder
- Charlie Sturm

Membership Challenge

- Carol Delheimer gave a gift membership to Ruth Roth.
- Fran Lowman invited Charlie Sturm.
- Darlene Soppa invited Janice Henningsen.

Book Review Lenae M. Weichel

The American Woodland Garden: *Capturing the Spirit of the Deciduous Forest*



Author: Rick Darke
Published: Timber Press, 2002
ISBN: 0-88192-545-4

“This book is not intended to be an encyclopedia but, rather, a synopsis: a portrait

drawn from the ethos, the aesthetic, and the ecology of the eastern deciduous forest.” So begins the author’s preface to a wonderfully visual and informative book. Focusing on native trees, shrubs, flowering perennials, vines, grasses, and sedges in their natural growth habits and settings, this book

does a beautiful job of showing the same plant or scene in multiple seasons, giving you a glimpse of the ever-changing landscape of the woods.

The book is laid out methodically, introducing forest areas, providing design and planting ideas (including soil and maintenance details and color aesthetics), and giving species information aimed at the home gardener. Throughout the book are over 700 lovely photographs, taken by the author, which show the variety and beauty that is found in the deciduous forest.

Equally at home on a coffee table or in the hands of a practitioner, this book is a great overview and asset to the woodland gardener. Beginners will find the information useful while those with more experience will enjoy the photographs and find new inspiration.