



Flora for Fauna

Habitat Gardening in Central New York

A Chapter of the Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes



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Summer 2005

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The 2005-2006

Program

Schedule is included in this newsletter on a separate page.

Please save it for reference!



It's Time for Show Me, Help Me Tours

In the summer, HGCNY has a tradition of visiting members' yards. Wild Ones calls these tours "Show Me, Help Me" tours.

Some of these yards have been habitat gardens or naturally landscaped properties for many years. These "Show Me" yards give us ideas about how to do similar things in our own yards.

Some of the yards we visit are just beginning habitat gardens or they exist only in the owner's hopes and dreams. These "Help Me" tours are an opportunity for all of us to brainstorm ideas for the next steps the

property owner can take.

Of course, most yards are a blend of "Show Me" and "Help Me." But all of our garden programs are meant to be educational as well as fun!

Reservations are requested since not all yards can accommodate large groups. If you make a reservation but find you cannot attend, please let us know so we can notify people on the waiting list.

Some of our tours will be held on our "regular" fourth Sunday at 2:00 pm meeting time, but we have some extra Saturday tours scheduled as well. All are

welcome. There is a \$5 fee for non-Wild Ones members.

Schedule of Tours

- Sat. June 11 @ 10 am in E. Syracuse
- Sun. June 26 @ 2 pm in Tully
- Sun. July 24 @ 2 pm in Westvale
- Sun. Aug. 13 @ 2 pm in Jamesville
- Sun. Aug. 28 @ 2 pm in Clay & Fulton
- Sat. Sept. 10 @ 10 am in Cato

To RSVP: Call Janet at 487-5742 or email stewardship@twcny.rr.com

Join us for our first service project Sat. July 23

Our first service project is an especially appropriate one. We'll be helping Green Lakes State Park eradicate black swallowwort (*see p. 2 for more about this plant.*) This project is an especially good one for our group. We'll be helping rid our park of an invasive plant, and it's an

invasive plant that has immediate and dramatic consequences for one of the most beloved creatures—the Monarch butterfly.

When: Saturday, July 23. Meet at 8:45 am; work from 9:00 am to noon

Where: Meet at the Green Lakes State Park

Office.

- Please bring your own pocketknife or clippers
- Please RSVP so the Park Ranger can plan appropriately.

Call Janet at 487-5742 or by email at stewardship@twcny.rr.com.

A "Trap Plant" for Monarchs



Black Swallowwort flower

From Connecticut Botanical Society website

Black swallowwort (*Cynanchum nigrum*) is yet another non-native plant introduced as a garden ornamental, but which now has become invasive in our natural areas and in our gardens. And this plant is especially dangerous for Monarch butterflies.

Monarchs usually lay their eggs on milkweeds (*Asclepias*), but are confused by this non-native milkweed relative and lay their eggs on it also. Unfortunately, the caterpillars cannot survive on the black swallowwort, and they die. It's not known whether chemicals in black

swallowwort poison the caterpillars, whether black swallowwort doesn't provide the nutrition caterpillars need, or whether the caterpillars simply don't like the taste and starve.

Black swallowwort is a large (3 to 6 foot) perennial vine. It grows in sun or shade almost anywhere in Upstate New York and in other places, too.

The plants can be distinguished by the flowers. Black swallowwort flowers are always a very dark purple, nearly black. The petals are covered with fine white

hairs, and the petal length is about equal to the width. Its leaves are dark green and shiny, arranged in opposing pairs on the stem. They're spade-shaped, wide at the base and narrowing to a sharp point, very similar to a lilac's. The seed pods look just like miniature versions of a common milkweed's.

If you've got it, how do you get rid of it? Pulling and mowing don't work. If you dig it up make sure that absolutely no traces of root are left either underground or sitting on top.

Great Lakes Horticulture

Dan Carroll, CNP

375 South Fourth Street
Fulton, New York 13069
315-598-4600



Specializing in design schemes representing habitats naturally occurring in New York State such as woodlands, stream beds, ponds, ornamental native grasses and perennial wild flowers.

Featured Flora and Its Fauna:

Milkweed and Monarchs

Most people know that Monarch butterflies need milkweed, but most people are familiar only with the type of milkweed they see on the roadside – the somewhat coarse and very “enthusiastic” *Asclepias syriaca*. Many native milkweeds are available, though, that are attractive in the home landscape and which meet the needs of Monarch butterflies.

One milkweed native in Central New York is the bright orange or sometimes yellow butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*). It grows in full sun in well-drained soil and is drought tolerant. Because of its long taproot, it doesn't like being moved, so choose your site carefully. It emerges fairly late in the spring, but blooms for quite a while. It grows about 18-24 inches high and about 24 inches wide.

Another attractive and well-behaved milkweed is swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*.) This milkweed likes moist areas, but grows well in regular garden soil, too. This rose-pink or white flower grows about 36-48 inches high and 24 inches wide and likes full sun.

The milkweeds' nectar feeds Monarch butterflies, but also many other butterflies, beneficial insects, and even hummingbirds.

But milkweeds have special importance for Monarch

butterflies. Besides providing food, they are the *larval host plant* for Monarch butterflies. In other words, they “host” the larva of the Monarch butterfly. The butterfly lays its eggs on milkweed plants *and only milkweed plants* and the caterpillars feed on the leaves as they develop. Here's a time when you can rejoice when you see the leaves of your plants being eaten!

Monarch researchers Karen Oberhauser and Erika Rivers report that the news about Monarch numbers is not good this year. There offer a number of reasons for the population decline:

- winter storm mortality during the '03-'04 winter
- a cold and wet summer 2004 breeding season
- habitat deterioration in Mexico
- breeding and migrating habitat in the US and Canada.

Monarch Watch, a program of the University of Kansas, notes that Monarchs face direct habitat destruction. new roads, housing developments, and agricultural expansion all transform a natural landscape in ways that make it impossible for Monarchs to live there.

Monarchs also face more subtle habitat destruction in the loss of their host plants. Milkweed is considered a noxious weed by some people, and so it's often de-

stroyed. Both milkweed and adult nectaring plants are vulnerable to the herbicides used by many landscapers, farmers, gardeners, and others. And Monarchs themselves can be killed outright by many pesticides.

As gardeners, we can't do much about some of these threats, **but there are some things we can do.**

- We can grow those essential milkweed plants as well as other nectar plants.
- We can stop using herbicides and insecticides, and we can buy organic food so these aren't used in agriculture.
- We can participate in the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project, a citizen science project sponsored by the University of Minnesota (See p. 6)

Butterfly researchers are concerned that the effects of habitat destruction and of extreme climate events may soon bring the Monarch migration to the point of collapse.

They say we're playing butterfly roulette, gambling that breeding success will allow the monarch population to recover from the combined effects of natural and human-caused mortality.

It's time to take action to preserve the Monarch for the delight of future generations!



Asclepias tuberosa

NRCS



Asclepias incarnata
From Grow Native



For more information, visit

Monarch Larval Monitoring Project at www.mlmp.org

or
Monarch Watch at www.monarchwatch.org



Citizen Science:

Monarch Larva Monitoring Project

You can help scientists learn more about the Monarch so future generations will have the same opportunity to enjoy this butterfly. Become a Citizen Scientist by joining the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP)! Anyone can participate either in their own yard if you have milkweeds or at another location.

You can choose your level of participation, but all are encouraged to observe as many milkweed plants as possible and to record the number of eggs and caterpillars they see.

You'll not only be helping scientists, but you'll also learn more about Monarch butterflies and about how science works. It will also sharpen your

powers of observation!

For more information, visit the website at www.mlmp.org

or write:

Monarch Larva Monitoring Project

Dept of Fish, Wildlife & Cons. Biol.

University of Minnesota

1980 Folwell Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55108

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HabitaTIP

A wildlife shrub row is a densely planted row of woody plants made up of a number of different native species. A good "recipe" for a native shrub row is:

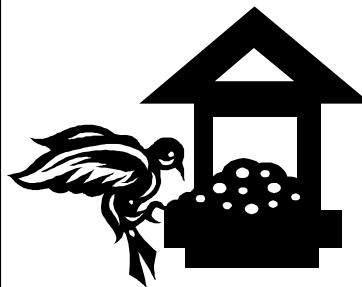
- *One part evergreen species* (such as juniper),
- *Two parts nectar-producing species*, (such as ninebark or clethra)
- *Two parts berry-producing species*, (such as red or black chokeberry or shrub dogwood)
- *One part thorny species* (such as berry bushes or native roses).

The number of each type will depend on the space you have available.

The birds will thank you!



Tweeter Feeders



Critter Cuisine
and
Pet Supplier

8512 Rte 57, Baldwinsville, NY.

(0.2 mi. north of the Rte 31 and Rte 57 intersection, on the right as you are going north)

Phone #: 62Birds (622-4737)

Helping Hands

Estelle Hahn & Mel Miller

We would like to thank our program committee, Estelle Hahn and Melvyn Miller for their work in putting together an excellent program for next year. They also have been the source of many great ideas for our Wild Ones chapter. Thank you Estelle and Mel!

Mauri Stott

Special thanks to local author and Wild Ones member Mauri Stott, who has donated a generous portion of her current book sales

proceeds to further the goals of our organization. She has also been contributing many of her talents. Thank you, Mauri!

Dan Carroll

Dan Carroll of Great Lakes Horticulture volunteered to supply the plants and organize our first native plant sale. Thanks to his generosity and dedication, it was a great success and will help HGCNY continue its work to promote native plants and natural landscapes. Thank you, Dan!



Dick DeGraff

Dick is the owner of Grindstone Farms, an organic farm that operates as a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). He generously offered to include our newsletter in his delivery boxes. Thank you, Dick!



Red Oak Nurseries, Inc.

Growers of Quality Nursery Stock

5860 Ike Dixon Road
Camillus, New York 13031
Phone (315) 672-3055
Fax (315) 672-8650

Tom Dusart
Cell 439-6941

James Dusart, Sr.

www.redoaknurseries.com

Natural Landscaping

By Jim Engel, White Oak Nursery, Canandaigua, NY



“Natural landscaping is fully compatible with the needs of homeowner, native wildlife and our environment.”

Homeowners demand a lot from their landscapes and Natural Landscaping delivers. Homeowners ask for a landscape that is pleasing to the eye, is low maintenance, creates a feeling of peace and harmony and is also beneficial to wildlife and the environment. Nature provides the inspiration and you experience the benefits.

Natural landscape designs follow sound ecological principals. Natural landscapes are stunning and attractive while providing for the needs of wildlife. Natural landscaping transforms the residential landscape by replacing large expanses of lawn with landscaped borders, strips, islands and

beds of native vegetation. These landscaped beds create self-sustaining plant communities that provide critical wildlife habitat. They also provide numerous environmental benefits. Natural landscaping harmonizes with other nearby landscapes whether managed or natu-

ral, residential or commercial.

In the last 50 years the American landscape has turned into a green, biological desert. This sterile landscape of mowed lawn decorated with one or two shade trees is replicating itself across the landscape at the expense of wildlife, bio-diversity and the general health of the environment. Few wildlife species can survive in this type of landscape. With a shift in thinking and by following a few guiding principals the residential landscape can be transformed.

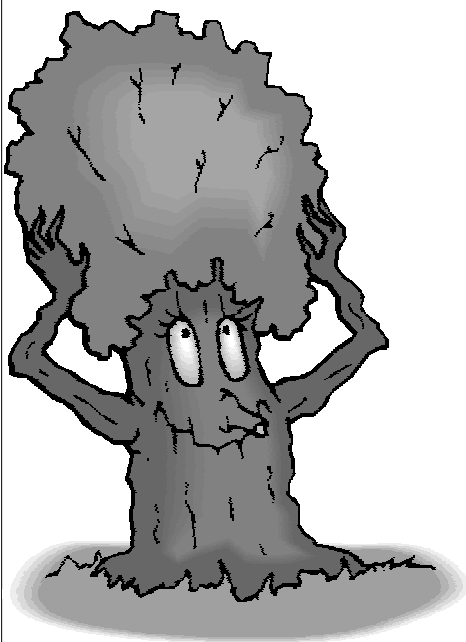
One's yard can become a sanctuary for wildlife while also contributing to emotional and environmental health. Natural landscaping is fully compatible with the needs of homeowner, native wildlife and our environment.

Natural landscaping uses four guiding principals to transform the residential landscape: the use of a diverse assemblage of native species, high density spacing, the use of vegetative layering to create three dimensional vertical habitat, and planting according to the needs of wildlife and their habitat requirements. The shrub

layer is the most important group of plants in the woodland setting and is the corner stone of natural landscape design. Use native shrubs to provide critical habitat, wildlife food and ground level cover for birds and small mammals in the landscape. Trees and shrubs should be grouped and closely spaced just as they grow in natural settings. Following these guiding principals can make the difference between creating wildlife habitat or simply planting a collection of plants.

The woodland palette is large and diverse. The variety of species makes natural landscaping interesting and attractive as the woodland gallery changes through the seasons. Like fine wine the landscape improves with age and maturity. Natural landscaping is a living work of art that evolves over the years. Homeowners who lack vision and patience may never get to experience the many benefits of natural landscaping.

To read this entire article and others, go to www.whiteoaknursery.biz and click on Essays and Articles.



Become a Wild One!

And when you're a member of the Wild Ones, you're automatically a member of Habitat Gardening in Central New York!

Benefits of membership:

- all HGCNY meetings are free or at a discount
- you receive The Wild Ones Journal, a bi-monthly national publication
- some local merchants offer discounts for Wild Ones members.
- you're supporting the educational efforts of the

national Wild Ones organization to plant a better world!

It's easy to join Wild Ones online at www.for-wild.org—just click on "Joining Us." If you join online, be sure to indicate that you're a member of the CNY chapter!

You can also call Janet at 487-5742 or by email at stewardship@twcny.ny.us and we'll send you a membership form.

Mission

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.



Growing Wild in Canastota and White Oak Nursery in Canandaigua offer discounts to Wild Ones members!



Growing Wild

Joan Livingston

4080 E. Milestrip Rd.

Canastota, NY

684-9846

Perennials

Native plants

Cut flowers

Consulting and design services



Wild Birds Unlimited

402 E. Genesee St.

Fayetteville, NY

637-0710

Bird feeders and houses

Jewelry

Gifts for gardeners

Chimes

Bird baths and statuary

Nature gifts for kids

Everything for nature lovers

HABITAT GARDENING
IN CENTRAL NEW YORK



401 Parsons Drive
Syracuse, NY 13219

Phone: 315-487-5742
E-mail: stewardship@twcny.rr.com

We're on the web at
www.hgcny.org

Did you know?

- Hummingbirds weigh 1/10 ounce; the weight of a penny.
- Hummingbirds' brains are about the size of a BB.
- Their legs are under-developed so they are unable to walk.
- The mother weighs only about 8 times more than her egg.
- They generally lay 2 eggs about the size of a blueberry.
- They use spider webs as glue to attach the



nest to a tree branch as well as a binding agent for the building materials.

- Hummingbirds eat about every 10 minutes.

*From Wild Birds Unlimited
Bird Tracks Online*

Words of Wisdom

"I'm lucky to have spent my childhood summers among woods, streams, meadows, and marshes, but most suburbanites have never searched for frogs' eggs, caught fireflies in a jar, or peeked into a grassy nest of adorable baby mice. As the years pass, fewer and fewer people will long for the call of bullfrogs. Today's children, growing up on lawns and pavements, will not even have

nostalgia to guide them, and soon the animals will be not only missing but forgotten."

~ Sara Stein,
Noah's Garden

