

NATIVE NEWS

Gibson Woods Wild Ones

6201 Parish Ave. Hammond, IN * 219-844-3188

December, 2018

Volume 19, Issue 10

Wild Ones promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to encourage biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit, environmental, educational, and advocacy organization.

FROM OUR EDITOR

I want to share a story with you.

After our last meeting, I met up with my cousin & uncle. While chatting with my uncle, I mentioned that I had just come from a Wild Ones meeting. He must pay attention, because he knew that our meetings are held at Gibson Woods. He reminded me that he & my dad (and my two other uncles) grew up very close to Gibson Woods. He then told me that my dad & his buddies used to play in those woods when they were kids. He said that they built a fort inside one of the 'hills' out there. This makes no sense because Gibson Woods is made up of really sandy soil, right? Well he told me that they made their fort out of good lumber to reinforce the top & sides & even made a secret entrance that consisted of old oil drums. Now, if you knew my father, you would totally believe this was possible because my dad always meticulously thought out his projects & took the time to make it perfect. I have a total image in my head of this structure in the woods - built into the side of a hill - by a bunch of really smart 12 year olds. I can even venture to bet that part of that fort is still out there somewhere - by now, completely buried with that sandy soil & covered with prairie grasses & flowers.

My dad died when I was in my early 20's - long before my interest in native plants or Gibson Woods, so there was never really a reason for my dad to tell me this story - or maybe he did & I just didn't retain the information because I had nothing to relate it to. At this point in my life, however, I can't begin to tell you how comforting it was for my Uncle Cary to share this with me.

I know this story has nothing to do with Wild Ones or native plants. Maybe it's the time of year - Thanksgiving & the upcoming holidays, or maybe it's because it's really kind of cool to know that about 65 years ago, my dad was hanging out in the same spot as I do now. I'm pretty sure that if he were still around, he would have been very receptive to my interest in native plants and all the reasons why they're so important. He might have even planted some here & there in his yard among his beloved roses. And maybe, we would have gone for a walk in the woods together so he could show me just where that long ago fort was!!

Happy Holidays to you & your loved ones, and may you make & reflect on nothing but happy memories!

Kim Moor



Visit us online at:

<http://gw-wildones.org/>

New Membership & Renewals:

\$40 household - or - \$25 student, ltd income

Send check to:

Wild Ones, 2285 Butte des Morts Beach Rd., Neenah, WI 54956
Mark your check 'Chapter 38'

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monthly Meetings are held the first Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m. at Gibson Woods unless otherwise noted.

December 1, 2018

Tree Decorating Naturally
Potluck

January 5, 2019

Greenhouse Orientation -
at the Greenhouse

Bring your own snack

February 2, 2019

Dolly Foster, WO Member & LCMG
Winter Sowing Workshop

Hosts: TBA

March 2, 2019

Daiva Gyls, Student Conservation Assoc. & Drew Hart, US Forest Service
Topic to be announced

Hosts: TBA

April 6, 2019

Plant Sale Preparation

Hosts: TBA

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wild-Ones-Native-Plants-Natural-Landscapes-Gibson-Woods-Chapter-38/528949993858676>

2018 Officers

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Joy Bower, Gibson Woods
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Jbower1126@aol.com

December Meeting

It's time to have some fun making Nature Ornaments for the Gibson Woods Christmas tree. Bring the items you've collected & your creativity! There will be items that Gibson Woods employees have collected, as well as glue, ribbon, etc.

And, don't forget to bring your favorite dish for our Pot-Luck!! Plugs are limited, so cold dishes are preferred.

Our books will be out & available for sale - in case someone is looking for a Christmas gift for a special nature lover in your life.



2019 Officers

Elections took place at our November meeting. Unfortunately, we didn't get any new nominations, except that Tonia Flowers volunteered to transition from interim to full time Secretary! So without further ado, let us introduce our 2019 Officers!

**** PRESIDENT - Karl Ackermann ****

**** VICE PRESIDENT - Kim Moor ****

**** SECRETARY - Tonia Flowers ****

**** TREASURER - Karl Ackermann ****

January Meeting - Greenhouse Orientation

Reminder - Our January 5 meeting will be at the Greenhouse. If you've never been there before, we'll give you directions! You can call one of the officers from the list on this page, or contact Kim Moor via email (kckim10@gmail.com) with the area that you're coming from & she'll get you turn-by-turn directions to get you there.

This is our procedure orientation, so if you're planning on volunteering this year, please plan on attending this meeting. We will be making a schedule, so think about what day(s) you will be available to help. If you are new & want to volunteer for the first time, you will be partnered up with a 'veteran'.

After going over procedures & scheduling, we will take some time to 'dig in', so bring your garden gloves & favorite clippers. Remember to bring your own drink & snack to this meeting.

All paid members who volunteer at least 15 hours between now & the Plant Sale will receive half-off all plants purchased!

Don't forget - when it's cold outside, it's nice & warm in the Greenhouse!

PLANT STUDY – by Kim Moor**Christmas Fern** (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)

Family: Dryopteridaceae

Genus: Polystichum

Native Range: Eastern North America

Height & Spread: 1.00 to 2.00 feet

Sun: Part shade to full shade

Water: Dry to medium

Leaf: Evergreen

Tolerate: Rabbit, Deer, Drought, Heavy Shade, Erosion, Dry Soil, Shallow-Rocky Soil



Christmas Fern typically grows in a fountain-like clump up to 2' tall and features leathery, lance-shaped evergreen fronds. It is best grown in organically rich, dry to medium moisture, well-drained soils in part shade to full shade. Consider planting rhizome at an angle to help combat potential crown rot problems which can occur in poorly drained soils. Although rhizomatous, this fern will not typically spread or naturalize, however can form small colonies. Clumps will increase in size over time. This fern naturally occurs in both dry and moist wooded slopes, moist banks and ravines, helping to conserve soil, and to allay erosion.



Christmas fern's tightly coiled fiddleheads emerge silvery green in early spring. As the frond matures, the long, narrow blade deepens to a rich, dark green. The stipe (stalk or petiole) of the frond is brown and scaly at the base. The blade (leafy portion) of the frond is lanceolate and widest at the base. The blade is pinnate, meaning that it is divided into a number of leaflets that are arranged regularly on each side.



On mature plants, the first fronds that emerge in spring are generally fertile and are held stiffly upright. The sori (spore cases) are round and appear on the upper third to half of the fertile frond. They are arranged in rows on each side of the leaflet midrib. This characteristic gives Christmas fern its botanical name, for in Greek, poly means "many" and stichos means "row." The fertile fronds are followed by somewhat shorter, sterile fronds, which tend to be more loosely arching in form. In the winter the fertile leaves (leaves bearing spores) die and the sterile leaves will remain through the winter but are often laid down by snow or frost.



Opinions differ regarding the origin of Christmas fern's common name. Some state that it comes from the fact that the fern is evergreen at Christmas and was used by early settlers as holiday decoration. Others believe it comes from the fact that the pinnae, especially the larger ones, are shaped like a Christmas stocking or like Santa's sleigh or boot.

Source: <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=a710>Source & photos: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polystichum_acrostichoidesPhotos: https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/grasses/plants/christmas_fern.htm

November Presentation -

Keith Nowakowski was our November guest speaker who presented us with a lot of great information about planting natives in the home landscape. In fact he tied his presentation, "Stalking the Wild Midwestern Native Plants for the Home Landscape" with the author Euell Gibbons who wrote a series of 'stalking' books which focus on foraging & environmentalism. You might remember this guy from Grape-nuts commercials in the '70's.

During his presentation, Keith recommended a couple other books & websites – "*The New England Wild Flower Society Guide to Growing and Propagating Wildflowers of the United States and Canada*" by William Cullina is out of print & a little pricy now, but if you can find a good used copy somewhere, it is well worth the read. Another good one to have is '*Know Maintenance Perennial Garden*' by Roy Diblik (see his play on words there?).

Keith also suggested Vans Pines Nursery in Michigan for anyone looking for seedling trees (mostly conifers & oaks). Their website is www.vanspinesnursery.com. For anyone interested in hiring or conferring with a native plant landscaper, Keith recommended that you contact Red Stem Native Landscapes, which is located north of Chicago (his reference to Blue Bison during his presentation was incorrect).

And, last but not least, Keith wrote the book '*Native Plants in the Home Landscape*' which is also out of print, but well worth it if you can find a copy. It might still be available at the U of Illinois Extension. You can visit Keith's website at sustainingbeauty.net.

Plant Stalks

We always talk about leaving plant stalks stand in Winter & that we should leave part of the stalk up even in the Spring. Ever wonder what kinds of insects might have use for those stalks? Yep, bees – in particular Mason & Carpenter bees. But do we need to keep all of those stalks in the Spring? Not necessarily. There are certain stalks that are more desirable to the insects that use them. Donna Vanbuecken recently wrote about the best 'bee stalks' to keep on her website: <http://www.accentnatural.com/>.

The plants that work best have long, linear, strong flower stalks and can be of varying diameters:

Stiff Goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*)
 Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*)
 Yellow Coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*)
 Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)
 Tall Coreopsis (*Coreopsis tripteris*)
 Asters (*Symphyotrichum* spp)
 Angelica (*Angelica atropurpurea*)
 Sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp)
 Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium* spp)
 Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)
 Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)
 Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)
 Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
 Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)
 Raspberry (*Rubus* spp)
 Hydrangea (*Hydrangea* spp)
 Cup plant, Rosinweed, Compass Plant, Prairie Dock (*Silphium* spp)

Bees also use the pithy stems of woody plants such as:

Bush Honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*),
 Elderberry (*Sambucus* spp),
 Sumac (*Rhus* spp),
 Walnut (*Juglans* spp).

So, don't be so quick to prune dead branches from trees and shrubs, and leave some piles of twigs and branches in your garden.

You can read about this and other interesting information about bees in Heather Holm's book *Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide* (which we carry). It also contains an excellent bee and plant identification guide.



Small carpenter bees will use broken as well as cut stems of plants for their nests. Photo by Heather Holm.



Small carpenter bees are typically solitary. Shown here is a *Ceratina* bee just beginning the task of removing the pith from the stem of a plant. Photo by Heather Holm.

The Indiana Terrestrial Plant Rule – You Play an Integral Part and We Need Your Help

This summer, in July, the Indiana Natural Resources Commission (NRC) granted preliminary adoption of the proposed Terrestrial Plant Rule (TPR). The adoption process opened a public comment period. This comment period will end on December 20th after a public hearing that is scheduled for December 19th.

What does this Mean and How Can Citizens Participate?

The TPR addresses the sale of terrestrial plants that have been determined, through a scientific and collaborative process, to be highly invasive in Indiana. There are 44 plants listed on the TPR. Several plants listed in the rule, such as Japanese barberry, Asian bittersweet, and Amur honeysuckle, are commonly sold for use in our landscapes. The rule reads that it will be “illegal to sell, offer, or grow for sale, gift, barter, exchange or distribute, transport, transfer or introduce any of the 44 plants listed”. Basically, the rule aims to eliminate additional sales and use of these species in our landscapes.

You can read the entire rule at the NRC website which is located here: <https://www.in.gov/nrc/2377.htm>

Why Is This Rule So Important?

Plants assessed as highly invasive escape landscaped areas and invade and take over our natural areas. They are the second leading threat to our rare, threatened and endangered species. In addition, they are also the second leading threat to our forests.

Each of us can help our amazing land, plants and wildlife in Indiana by avoiding the use of species determined to be invasive. The TPR will assist our efforts by removing the legal sale of the listed plants.

Commenting – It’s the Most Important Action

Many of us work diligently and collectively spend millions of dollars every year to protect our lands and waters in Indiana. Our efforts are constrained tremendously by invasive plants that we use in our landscapes. We need support from you, our citizens. We need you to comment on the rule. We need you to let the NRC know, in writing, how important it is to stop the sale of invasive plant species so that we are not investing our monies and time on something that degrades our cherished natural areas.

Use the following link: <https://www.in.gov/nrc/2377.htm> to access the Indiana NRC rule webpage. Scroll to the bottom of the page to a list of rules that are open for comment.

Find the Terrestrial Invasive Plants rule and click on the “comment on this rule” link. The link takes you to a page that allows you to input personal data in required fields (name, city, county, email address) and write a comment about the proposed rule.

Additional instructions are available on the rule webpage if your comments require more space than allowed with the electronic form.

Supporting this rule is a powerful means to support conservation of our lands and waters. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Dawn Slack

Director of Stewardship for the Indiana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Dawn.slack@tnc.org

THINGS TO DO

PROGRAMS & HIKES

Call for details & to register 219-844-3188

GIBSON WOODS

6201 Parrish Ave.
Hammond, IN

OAK RIDGE PRAIRIE

301 South Colfax Street
Griffith, IN 46323

Name that Tune

Wednesdays, Nov 7 - Mar 27
@ Gibson Woods

Increase your birding lists by enhancing your birding skills! Join us for this free program Wednesdays from November 7 through March 27 at 9:30 AM as we familiarize ourselves with the bird songs we hear in Northwest Indiana throughout the year. No program December 19, 26 or January 2. This program is designed for adults. Please register by calling 219-844-3188.

Stay at Home Flyers & Bird-Friendly Ornaments

December 8, 2018, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
@ Gibson Woods

Many species of birds stick around for our cold Northwest Indiana winters. Join us as we learn about some of them, take a short walk to see who's around and then make edible ornaments for them to enjoy at the feeder stations. Please register by calling 219-844-3188. No organized groups, please.

Winter Solstice Almost Full Moon Hike & Campfire

December 21, 2018, 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
@ Oak Ridge Prairie

Enjoy the shortest day of the year and the start of calendar winter with a guided hike by the almost full moon, followed by a campfire (with snacks) at Oak Ridge Prairie. Please dress for the weather. \$5 fee per person. Please register by calling 219-844-3188. No organized groups, please.

Cookie Burner Hike

December 28, 2018, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
@ Oak Ridge Prairie

Burn off those holiday calories with a hike around the prairie at Oak Ridge. Please dress warmly. Program recommended for ages 8 and up. Please register by calling 219-844-3188. No organized groups, please.

BYO Snowshoe Hike

Saturday, January 12 from 10-11:30 AM
@ Gibson Woods

Enjoy the Gibson Woods in winter with a guided snowshoe hike Saturday January 12 from 10-11:30 AM. Must bring own snowshoes. If there is not enough snow for snowshoeing, we will offer a traditional hike instead.

Digging into the Past

Sunday, January 20 at 1 PM
@ Gibson Woods

Have you ever wondered what the Calumet region was like before it was settled by Europeans? How did traders and settlers impact the Native Americans? Les Marzalek, President Archeo Survey Corp., will be our guide on an exploration of the past. Join us to learn how Native Americans lived and how their influence is still seen today.

BYO Snowshoe Hike

January 21, 2019, 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM
@ Oak Ridge Prairie

Explore Oak Ridge Prairie trails in the winter on a guided snowshoe hike. Must bring own snowshoes! If there is not enough snow for snowshoeing, we will offer a traditional hike instead. Please register by calling 219-844-3188. No organized groups, please.

Amphibians and Reptiles of the Calumet Region

Sunday, February 10 at 1 PM
@ Gibson Woods

The Calumet Region is where the eastern deciduous forest and the Midwestern prairie meet making the number of amphibians and reptiles living in here quite large. Alan Resetar, Field Museum manager of the collections, staff, and volunteers in Amphibians and Reptiles, will share his love and knowledge of this amazing group of animals.

Backyard Bird Count

February 15-18, 2019, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM
@ Gibson Woods Nature Preserve

Need to get out of the house during these winter days but want to do something different? Join in a worldwide bird count right from the bird viewing room at Gibson Woods Friday February 15 through Monday February 18 from 11 AM-4 PM. Stop by any of these days and simply tally the numbers of the kinds of birds you see. We have tools for you to use on site. Help learn more about the birds of our neighborhood. For all ages!

SAVE THE DATE

February 23, 2019
8:00 - 4:30 PM

**Michiana Master Gardeners
Present the first annual
Elkhart County Garden Expo**

Elkhart County Fairgrounds
117746 County Road 34
Goshen, IN

Sponsored by:
Michiana Master Gardeners' Association in
Cooperation with Purdue Extension of Elkhart County