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In this issue...

*An Inspirational Interview with Joe Riederer, Got Milkweed?, Prairie Nursery
Trip in Westfield, CWWO on Portage County Garden Tour*

"Summer's lease hath all
too short a date."

- William Shakespeare

The first wildflower to emerge in the spring, often through snow, native to Central Wisconsin—beautiful. Because a love for natural landscaping courses through our veins...



The newsletter of Central Wisconsin's natural landscapers.

CWWO Booth at the MREA Fair

For the second year, we sponsored a booth at the Midwest Renewable Energy Association's annual fair (June 21-23, 2002). The national Wild Ones office sent us boxes of their brochures, handbooks, journals, signs, and application forms. Tim Gutsch gave us copies of the Great Lakes Nursery catalogues. Joe Riederer donated the use of his tabletop Wild Ones display and arranged for Prairie Nursery and Prairie Moon Nursery to send us boxes of their catalogues. Joe also donated native plants for us to display, as did Dan Dieterich and Eileen Guthrie. Eileen Guthrie also donated a beautiful scroll-sawed sun on our behalf to the MREA silent auction and coordinated the staffing of the booth by Carol Kropidowski, Joe Riederer, Phyllis Tuchscher, Mark Wolverton, Cheri Wolverton, Camin Potts, Tim Gutsch, Judy Travicki, Dan

Dieterich, and (of course) Eileen Guthrie.

The weather for the three days of the fair ranged from torrential rain—9 inches in 24 hours—to sweltering heat, and our display was in a dirt-floored (often mud-floored) tent. Nonetheless, 12,500 people attended the fair and many of them stopped at our booth to identify the spiderwort and interrupted fern, to ask us to identify native plants they had encountered, to share their own experiences as lovers of native plants and fellow Wild Ones members, to read some of our plant identification books, or to get application forms to join Wild Ones. Just as we did last year, we had a great time both in our booth and wandering through the 179 other displays and 113 free workshops at the fair. *

THIS SATURDAY!!! Mosquito Hill Nature Center

Please join us for a wildflower hike at Mosquito Hill Nature Center in New London at 1:00 PM on Saturday, August 3, 2002. There's no admission fee.

We will meet at their (16,000 square foot) recently updated Interpretive Center. It features displays on native Wisconsin wildlife, including a large display on birds of prey and a live frog exhibit. We can then tour their native prairie, the 900-foot-high hill itself, and various upland woodlands and lowland woodlands along the Wolf River. They invite a \$1 donation from those who would like to tour their Butterfly House (open from 11:00 AM until 3:00 PM). It contains 10 species of butterflies as well as the native plants and cultivars on which the butterflies feed.

Directions: Take Highway 54 north through New London. On the east side of New London, turn right (south) on County S. Go two miles until you see the entrance to the center on Rogers Road. We'll meet at the Interpretive Center at the end of the Road. *

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"Spring is a natural resurrection,
an experience in immortality."

- Henry David Thoreau

**New Membership
Chair Needed!**

Dorothy Snyder, Membership Chair since the founding of Central Wisconsin Wild Ones, has assumed additional responsibilities and so cannot continue as our Membership Chair. If you're able to take over as our Membership Chair, please contact Dan Dieterich. This is an excellent way to get to know your fellow Wild Ones members. *



A Quick Look at a Couple Good Books:

Summer Reading

Looking for a good novel to read this summer? I recommend Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2000). Kingsolver is widely acclaimed as one of the finest novelists writing today. I've read her other novels (*The Poisonwood Bible*, *Animal Dreams*, *Pigs in Heaven*, and *The Bean Trees*) but *Prodigal Summer* tops them all.

Now, admittedly, the subject matter of *Prodigal Summer* may have influenced my choice somewhat. She deals with such topics as natural landscaping, lady's slipper orchids, chestnut trees, wolves, and invasive honeysuckle. But, the characters were also wonderfully believable, and the deftly interwoven plots got me hooked. I didn't ever want to reach the end. I expect that you'll love it too.

If you prefer non-fiction, consider Michael Pollan's *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World*. (New York: Random House, 2001). A contributing writer for The New York Times Magazine, Pollan recently won the first Reuters-World Conservation Union Global Award for Excellence in Environmental Journalism. I read and enjoyed his earlier book, *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*, but I've only started on this newest one. The four chapters deal with the apple, the tulip, marijuana, and the potato. His point is that, instead of domesticating these plants, we've been domesticated by them. One reviewer said, "He will make you fall in love with Nature."

—Dan *

CWWO on the Portage County Garden Tour

CWWO member Elaine Rubel graciously consented to include her gardens in the 2002 Garden Tour sponsored by Portage County Master Gardeners on July 12 & 13. She also donated her back porch for a display of books on native plants, nursery catalogues, and our tabletop display on Wild Ones. CWWO members Eileen Guthrie, Pauline Pray, and Dan Dieterich helped Elaine to conduct the tours.

Although Elaine's house is only a few blocks from Business 51 in Plover, she has established small native prairies in both her front and her back yards. They feature prairie coneflower, spiderwort, pale purple coneflower, coreopsis, flowering spurge, penstemon, pasque flower, prairie smoke, wild lupine, Solomon's seal, black-eyed Susan, and many other native forbs as well as prairie dropseed, indian grass, and little bluestem. She's also starting a shade garden featuring Jack-in-the-pulpit, Turk's cap lily, bloodroot, large-flowered trillium, maidenhair fern, round-lobed hepatica, and sweet cicely.

We had a great time talking about natural landscaping and learning about how Elaine established and maintains her gardens. *



A Wild One Interview

Interviewed by Dan Dieterich

Meet Joe Riederer

A co-founder of Central Wisconsin Wild Ones as well as CWWO's Secretary, Joe Riederer is one of the most influential leaders of our organization. A junior high school science teacher, Joe's also the author of an award winning novel, *Restoration in the Barrens*, and within a month will publish his second novel, *Trouble in the Barrens*. I recently interviewed Joe at his home near the Buena Vista Grasslands. I was only occasionally distracted by the goldfinches visiting his feeders just outside the window and by his son Ricky, who obviously found listening to the interview more interesting than the other activities available to him on a sunny summer's day.

Dan: Joe, why don't you begin by telling me how you got started in natural landscaping?

Joe: When I was in college I got stuck working a summer job for the DNR at a Youth Conservation Camp in Namekagon Barrens outside of Minong. I ran a crew of high school kids. My friends got good jobs, but I got the barrens. When I first saw it, it looked like a wasteland. But, over time that's where I got hooked on native plants.

Later, I move to a house on Illinois Avenue in Stevens Point and didn't want to water, so I slowly started dabbling in prairie plants. My first attempt was a "meadow-in-a-can"! I had a lot to learn and relearn. It's like bird watching, you know? You used to know the name of that bird, but...[At this point a song sparrow obligingly called several times.]

Dan: What's your current natural landscaping project?

Joe: Slowly turning my 30 acres into native landscapes. I'd eventually like to introduce the animal component too: a couple head of beef, for example. Without animals, a native area doesn't stay native long. I'm still learning from my mistakes. It's a Darwinian approach. Those plants that survive...survive. I don't use any pesticides on my light soil, but I've devel-

oped some tricks.

I work on a two- to three-year cycle. In year one I rototill to bring the rhizomes to the surface. Then I plant plain old bird feeder sunflower seeds—very thickly. The birds get to dine for a while. Sunflowers are allelopathic: they tend to keep other things from sprouting. They're also nitrogen hogs. When they're done, the soil is starved for nitrogen—which is good because prairie plants don't need it, but the weeds do. Prairie plants are better able to compete then.

That's year one. The seeds grow a nice little sunflower, and friends come out to cut them down for arrangements. Next, I plant winter wheat or buckwheat as soon as I can to compete with the weeds; I then mow and bag that. The third year, I till it up and plant prairie plants. If the weeds are still there, I'll grow my vine crops.

Next to one prairie area, a number of prairie plants have seeded themselves. I will mow it down, rake it, and overseed the weeds. But, I will have to lower my expectations. Instead of 75% germination, I may get 25% germination, but I'll just seed heavily. I decided to avoid perfection at all costs.

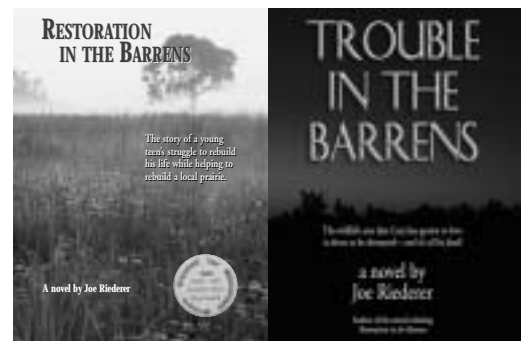
Lastly, I do intensive gardening. I have beds of beardtongue in a nursery setting to generate seeds and plants. I now have 3,000

plants. As another example, three years ago, I dug up four prairie sage plants from a feed mill parking lot...and got laughed at. From those four plants I moved out about 200 plants this year alone.

Dan: Any final advice to share?

Joe: Be patient! It's faster than growing trees, but it's not like laying carpet. This morning I found a milk vetch in bloom where I had tossed some seed two or three years ago. The fun part is being surprised. This is a banner year for blazing star. There are hundreds of them now. In a month it will be incredible!

Sidenote: Joe has just sent his sequel to *Restoration in the Barrens* to print. In *Restoration in the Barrens* A young teen, Corey, struggles to rebuild his life while helping to rebuild a local prairie. *Trouble in the Barrens* has Corey trying to save this same area that he has grown to love when something he says to the media is taken out of context. *





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GOT MILKWEED?

On May 18, 2002, the national Wild Ones board authorized the "Got Milkweed?" partnership. Our Wild Ones logo and URL will be printed on "Got Milkweed?" bumper stickers that will be sold for five dollars. Of this amount, one dollar will come back to Wild Ones and one will go to the Monarch Watch tagging fund. Contact the national office to pick up your bumper sticker!

WILD ONES NATIONAL BOARD MEETING

The National Wild Ones held its third quarterly board meeting in Columbus, Ohio, on July 14, 2002. Old business included the mission of the organization, the organization's name, corporate membership, and national funding. New business included discussion of how to celebrate Wild Ones' 25th Anniversary in 2004 at the annual meeting tentatively scheduled to be held in St. Louis, revision of plant rescue guidelines, and guidelines for Wild Ones' endorsements of environmental organizations. One of the organizations that Wild Ones has been asked to endorse is the Native Plant Conservation Campaign. If you'd like to learn more about the NPCC, go to this URL: www.cnps.org/1npcc.htm. *

Prairie Nursery and Waushara Gardens August 17th Day Trip

The Green Bay Botanical Garden cordially invites you to take a daytrip to Prairie Nursery in Westfield, Waushara Gardens (gladiolas & dahlias) in Plainfield, and Bloch's Farm (bulbs). The trip includes lunch at Wautoma's Silvercryst Supper Club and light evening refreshments at a private home

garden (not naturally landscaped) in Montello. Cost is \$60 for Green Bay Botanical Garden members and \$70 for non-members. If you're interested, contact Brenda Hansen at (920) 490-9457 or Pat Fasanella at (920) 499-9346 for more details. *

Don't Miss Another Great Dig!

We had another dig at the Marathon County landfill, courtesy of our very own Eileen Guthrie.

The landfill itself is an amazing trip and worthy of a tour that would make any earth conscience consumer reconsider their purchased retail packaging and the trash it becomes.

We started in a very small area planning on ending on the opposite end of the des-

ignated area. But we were surprised to find so much in such a small section that we ended up not more than about 50 yards from where we started. Another lesson in what can be found right below your nose, when you're looking!

Many ferns, trillium and much, much more have survived the transplant to their new homes! Don't miss the next one!

*Thanks Again, Eileen! **