



NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

OZARK CHAPTER

WINTER 2022 ISSUE



CONTENTS

- 2 **President's Column**
by Eric Fuselier
- 3 **Introducing Pam Morgan**
by Eric Fuselier
- 4 **Site Visit Info, Native Plant Sources, Contact Info**
- 5 **Wild Ones - Ozark Chapter 2022 Program Schedule**
- 6 **Programs Presented or Sponsored by Ozark Chapter Membership**
- 7 **Native Plants with Winter Interest**
by Lissa Morrison
- 14 **Winter Wildlife Habitat**
by Susan P. Rupp, PhD
- 19 **Establishing a Pollinator Garden on Septic Field Lines**
by Larry S. Price

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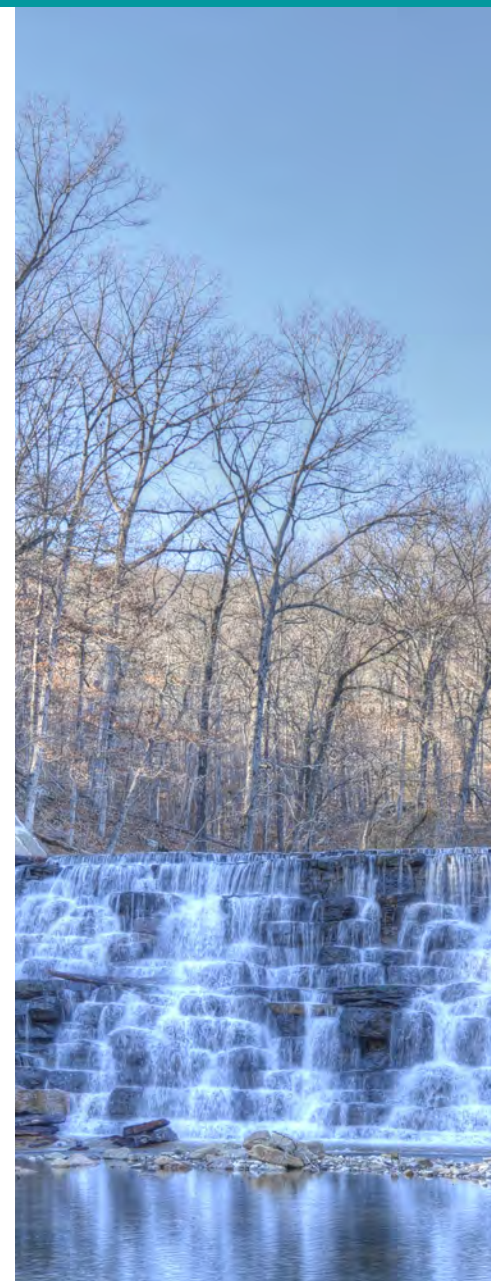
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"I WONDER IF THE SNOW
LOVES THE TREES AND
FIELDS, THAT IT KISSES
THEM SO GENTLY? AND
THEN IT COVERS THEM
UP SNUG, YOU KNOW,
WITH A WHITE QUILT;
AND PERHAPS IT SAYS,
'GO TO SLEEP,
DARLINGS, TILL THE
SUMMER COMES AGAIN."

-LEWIS CARROLL



Photo Eric Fuselier

Wild Ones,

I am excited to inform you that our chapter will be returning to in-person programming in 2022! We have a great lineup of programming to offer you this year that will be both free and open to the public. Meetings will take place on the first Thursday of each month from 11:30am-1pm. Masks will be required for all who want to attend, and we will try to make these available to you at the door should you forget to bring yours.

In other exciting news, we welcome Pam Morgan as the Vice President of the Ozark Chapter this year. Pam is filling the position previously occupied by Lissa Morrison, who is enjoying a well-earned retirement from public service. While Lissa will still be involved with our chapter as an active member, she has decided to do so at a level that requires less of her time. So, as we welcome Pam into the chapter's leadership, we also want to thank Lissa for all of the great work she has done over the past couple of years in her role as Vice President and as the chair of our Site Visits Committee. Lissa was indispensable in getting the Ozark chapter and the Site Visits Committee up and running, and we are grateful to her for all of her contributions.

Steve Alarid has stepped forward to serve as the new chair of the Site Visit Committee. Steve has also been a dedicated member of the Ozark chapter since its founding in early 2020, as well as an active member of the Site Visit Committee since it's humble beginnings. Steve has also been one of the major driving forces behind the Lake Springdale Trailhead raingarden project, and has organized and attended monthly workdays to beautify what was previously a depression in the ground overgrown with turf grass. Thank you, Steve! We are excited that the Site Visits Committee will remain in good hands.

This year we will be focusing on increasing volunteer opportunities and involvement for our members, especially for those who want to get involved in the Site Visit Committee or the Lake Springdale Trailhead. Having a corps of volunteers who can help promote living landscapes and the use of native plants in the landscaped environment is one of the things that Wild Ones does best, and northwest Arkansas is long overdue. We have many other opportunities in the works as well, and will be making announcements for how you can get further involved in chapter activities at our monthly meetings (first Thursday of the month!).

Dutifully Yours,

Eric Fuselier, President (for now)
Wild Ones - Ozark Chapter

MEET

PAM MORGAN

THE OZARK CHAPTER'S NEW VICE PRESIDENT

Wild Ones,

Originally from Connecticut where she was a member of Wild Ones' Mountain Laurel Chapter, Pam spent about 8 years converting her 0.5 acre lawn into a mostly native yard. She was also active with her town's Land Conservation Trust, and helped establish a Pollinator Pathway there in town.

Pam's professional background is in business and marketing. She has an MBA and was a marketing manager at Kodak for 15 years, a position she left to move to Northwest Arkansas. Pam has a wealth of experience in marketing and general business strategy. She has also spent a lot of time working with nonprofits, and in recruiting and organizing volunteers. Combined with her passion for wildlife and native plants, Pam is hoping to use her skills and experience to help Wild Ones further its mission here in NWA.

As Vice President of the Ozark Chapter, Pam will be preparing to assume the role of chapter President in 2023.

Please join us in welcoming Pam!





SITE VISITS

As people transition to using more native plants in their landscapes, they often need support and advice. The Ozark Chapter of Wild Ones is now offering the service of onsite visits in Northwest Arkansas.

The role of the Site Visits Committee is to offer guidance, encouragement, resources, and professional connections to homes and non-profits. Prior to the site visit, a short questionnaire will be sent to establish the priorities of the person asking for help. Our services will be offered in a manner that does not compete with professionals.

If you would like to sign up for a visit, send an email to wildonesozarkchapter@gmail.com. Please use Site Visit in the subject line.

If you are interested in being on the Site Visits Committee and making home visits, please contact stevealarid55@gmail.com.



NATIVE PLANT SOURCES

The Site Visit Committee is gathering a list of sources for native plants. Below are some of sources identified. Please share with us contact information for your favorites at wildonesozarkchapter@gmail.com.

Missouri Wildflowers Nursery
www.mowildflowers.net

Prairie Moon Nursery
www.prairiemoon.com

Pine Ridge Gardens
www.pineridgegardens.com

Ozark Soul
www.ozarksoul.com

North Creek Nursery (wholesale only)
www.northcreeknurseries.com

White River Nursery
www.whiterivernursery.com

Holland Wildflower Farm
www.hollandwildflowerfarm.com

For Wildflower Seeds
email: hwildflowerfarm@cox-internet.com

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Facebook – Our Chapter Facebook page is open to the public.

<https://www.facebook.com/OzarkWildOnes>

We are resuming in-person programming at our monthly **Chapter Meetings in 2022!** You can find out more details on our website and Facebook page, or by signing up for our email list at wildonesozarkchapter@gmail.com!

National Website – Members of Wild Ones have exclusive access to abundant resources on the national Wild Ones website. Registration gives you access to files, publications, and articles only available to members. On the upper right-hand corner of the main page is a “member login” button that will give you instructions for registering.

You’ll be able to access archived Journal articles, vote on the annual photo contest, sign up for the discussion group, and much more!
<https://ozark.wildones.org/>

wild ones - ozark chapter

2022 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Wild Ones - Ozark Chapter is pleased to offer educational programs that support our mission. Please email WildOnesOzarkChapter@gmail.com to sign up.

JANUARY 6TH

Springdale Native Plant Initiatives
with Heather Schneider

FEBRUARY 3RD

Arkansas Native Seed Program
with Jennifer Ogle

MARCH 3RD

Fayetteville's Invasive Species Bounty Program
with John Scott

APRIL 7TH

Herp-Friendly Land Management Practices
with Dr. JD Willson

MAY 5TH

Field Trip: Compton Gardens in Bentonville
with Megan Love-Lipscomb

JUNE 2ND

Butterfly Behavior and Ecology
with Dr. Erica Westerman

JULY 7TH

Field Trip: Pea Ridge National Military Park
with Nolan Moore

AUGUST 4TH

Field Trip: Thaden School in Bentonville
with Marina McCoy

SEPTEMBER 1ST

Garden Tour: Lake Springdale Trailhead in Springdale

OCTOBER 6TH

How to Attract & Support Wildlife in the Off-Season
with Dr. Susan Rupp

NOVEMBER 3RD

Native Restoration & Management
with Cody George

DECEMBER 1ST

Member Potluck and Social

wild ones - ozark chapter

PROGRAMS PRESENTED OR SPONSORED BY MEMBERSHIP

GUIDED HIKES

Winter Botany Hike, led by Eric Fuselier
Saturday January 22, 10am-12pm @ Ponca Elk Education Center
Register at <https://bit.ly/3f9iYkA>

Winter Tree Identification workshop with Jennifer Ogle
Saturday January 22, 1-3pm on Kessler Mountain
Register at <https://bit.ly/3f9iYkA>

Winter Botany Hike, led by Eric Fuselier
Saturday January 29, 10am-1pm @ Hobbs State Park

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

These Are a Few of My Favorite Things - Ozark Native Plants
with Mel Zabecki
Wednesday, January 19, 12pm
Register at <https://bit.ly/3HLZX43>

Biodiversity and the Role of Disturbance in Managing Natural Ecosystems with Nate Weston
Saturday, February 26, 10-11am
Join at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84836721030>

iNaturalist and Citizen Science in the 21st Century with Diana Sotroupoulos
Monday, March 7, 12-1pm
Join at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85281775217>

Winter Botany at Fayetteville Public Library
Saturday January 22, 2-3pm

IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

Native Plants of the Ozarks and Buffalo River Country
Saturday, March 5th, 10am @ Compton Gardens & Arboretum in Bentonville
Register at <https://bit.ly/3r3nDdo>

Native Plant Gardening and Landscaping for Beginners
Saturday, March 5th, 2pm @ Compton Gardens & Arboretum in Bentonville
Register at <https://bit.ly/3HKvX8O>

Ozark Native Plants for Residential Landscapes
Saturday, March 12th, 10am @ Compton Gardens & Arboretum in Bentonville
Register at <https://bit.ly/32VkmoO>

Native Plants for Pollinator Gardens
Saturday, March 12th, 2pm @ Compton Gardens & Arboretum in Bentonville
Register at <https://bit.ly/3F9ZZBg>

NATIVE PLANTS WITH WINTER INTEREST

by Lissa Morrison

Founding Member, Wild Ones – Ozark Chapter



Taylor Juniper (*Juniperus virginiana* 'Taylor')
Photo by author.

Many of us are using more and more native plants in our landscapes. We are learning about and enjoying the environmental benefits of gardening with natives. It's exciting to see the beauty of Ozark native flowering trees, flowering shrubs, and pollinator gardens during the growing season.

It's a bit more challenging to have our garden designs look attractive in the winter when most plants are dormant, but it is possible. Winter is the perfect time to go outside and evaluate your landscape. The features that remain in the winter season are what give a garden backbone and structure. If your design offers something of interest in the winter, then you are on the right track.

In early-December after a killing frost when most plants were leafless, I decided to visit several of the gardens in the area. My goal was to take pictures of native plants that offered winter interest. Most of the photos I have to share were taken at Wilson Park and at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks. In this article I'll illustrate 6 different ways to keep our gardens interesting even in the bleak winter months.

1

Use evergreens if possible

This can be difficult since there are not many evergreens that are native to the Ozark Region. If you visit the Ozark National Forest in the winter, the dominant color is brown, and almost all native plants are leafless. The following is a list of evergreens that I sometimes use in landscape designs. Admittedly, most are not truly native to the Ozark Region. My goal is to always use at least 70% natives in a design, and this might be where compromise is called for.



Inkberry Holly (*Ilex glabra*)
Photo by author.

Taylor Juniper (previous page), Inkberry Holly (left) and Yucca (below) are three evergreens that work well in landscaped gardens.



Arkansas Yucca (*Yucca arkansana*)
Photo by author.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Height	Native Status
Marginal Wood Fern	<i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	18-24" x 18-24"	Native to the Ozarks.
American Holly	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	30'	Native to Arkansas.
Inkberry Holly	<i>Ilex glabra</i>	3-4'	Native to the Gulf coastal region.
Yaupon Holly	<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	15-20'	Native to south Arkansas.
Dwarf Yaupon Holly	<i>Ilex vomitoria</i> 'Nana'	2-4'	Nativar
Foster Holly	<i>Ilex x attenuata</i> 'Fosteri'	20-30'	A cross between native American Holly and Dahoon Holly, which is native to the Florida coast.
Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	25'	Native to the Ozarks
Blue Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus v.</i> 'Glaucua'	20 x 8-10'	All <i>Juniperus virginiana</i> are native but spread rampantly & can be considered aggressive.
Canaertii Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus v.</i> 'Canaertii'	20 x 15'	Nativar
Hillspire Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus v.</i> 'Cupressifolia'	10-15' x 6-8'	Nativar
Taylor Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus v.</i> 'Taylor'	15-20 x 3-4'	Nativar
Southern Magnolia	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	60-8- x 30-50'	Native south of Arkansas. There are many cultivars of Southern Magnolia including some smaller cultivars.
Sweetbay Magnolia	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	10-35' x 10-35'	Native in south Arkansas.
Shortleaf Pine	<i>Pinus echinata</i>	50-60'	Native in all of Arkansas.
Loblolly Pine	<i>Pinus taeda</i>	40-90'	Native in Arkansas south of the Ozarks.
Christmas Fern	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	12-24" x 12-24"	Native in all of Arkansas.
Arkansas Yucca	<i>Yucca arkansana</i>	2' with 6' flower stalk.	Native in all of Arkansas.

Close-up of bark. Riverbirch (*Betula nigra*)
Photo by author.

Add native trees that have interesting bark

2

Trees with peeling or flaky bark are not only interesting to look at, but are often used as homes or habitat by insects. Shagbark Hickory is a favorite roost tree for bats that hide under the peeling bark. American Sycamore is another beautiful native tree that is showiest in the winter with its distinctive large white patches and peeling bark.

Riverbirch (*Betula nigra*) is fast growing, has interesting exfoliating bark and is a host plant for more than 200 butterflies and moths.



American hornbeam or musclewood (*Carpinus caroliniana*) is one of my favorite understory trees to look at in the winter. As the tree gets older, the 'muscles' become showier.



Close-up of bark. Riverbirch (*Betula nigra*)
Photo by author.

3

Incorporate woody shrubs or small trees that add backbone or structure to the garden



Large deciduous shrubs offer form and balance. Even plants that are totally leafless have form. Adding small trees or shrubs will avoid what I call the 'empty look'. The musclewood from the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (in the above photo) certainly has good form and would be a good focal point in the winter.

This well shaped buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*, left) adds structure, and the interesting seed pods (right) often remain well into winter.



The dried flower heads of Wild Hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*, below) are lovely when frost or snow decorate the shrub. These flowers remain most of the winter.

Photos by author.





Winterberry at Wilson Park
Photo by author.

Incorporate shrubs with berries



Not only are the berries beautiful and showy, but native berries are high in fats and oils that help our birds get through the winter. If we are lucky enough to get snow, the berries really stand out against the white.



Use Ornamental Native Grasses

All grasses reseed, but some more rampantly than others. Choose wisely and save the wilder species for naturalized areas. There are many choices for native grasses that are suitable in more manicured landscapes. I have created a [document](#) on the Wild Ones Ozark Chapter website that lists some of the native grasses to choose from. [Link: <https://bit.ly/3noFpXB>]



Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) hedge in early December.
Photo by author.



Small yard in Fayetteville planted primarily with Switch grass.
There is also Muhly grass, Arkansas Blue Star & Yucca
Photo by author.

6

Leave some interesting perennials until the spring clean-up

There are many articles and documents being written about the reasons to save all garden clean-up until the spring. Many beneficial insects, native bees and critters need the leaves and the dried stems to overwinter. As long as you understand how to maintain a healthy winter habitat, it is not harmful to tidy up in the fall. Leave 12-18" on the perennials with rigid, upright, pithy stems for the insects that overwinter inside the stems. Also keeping the leaves whole, and using them for your mulch or making piles in out-of-the-way corners is another good practice. Create a few brush/debris piles around trees or along fences. Even small ones provide winter homes. And if you have room, put a log on the ground and allow it to rot. Just a little bit of tidying up in the fall might encourage more of our neighbors to use native plants.



Arkansas Bluestar maintains this attractive look most of the winter.
Photo by author.



Christmas fern often stays green until well below freezing temperatures. Photo by author.

After a busy year of gardening, I look forward to winter as a time of rest and renewal. I enjoy doing extra research and studying - all about native plants of course. It's the perfect time to re-evaluate our landscapes and garden spaces, keeping in mind ways to attract attention and interest, even in the middle of winter.



About the Author

Lissa was one of the founding members of the Ozark Chapter of Wild Ones and served as the chapter's Vice President in 2020 and 2021. She is also a member of the Arkansas Native Plant Society's Education Committee.

WINTER WILDLIFE HABITAT

by Susan P. Rupp, PhD, Member, NWA Master Naturalists

Proper wildlife habitat management requires one to provide adequate food, water, shelter, and space for the wildlife species in question, both seasonally and throughout the life cycle of the animal. So, with winter right around the corner, now is the time to be thinking about how to provide valuable wildlife habitat throughout the chilly winter months. Good winter habitat is crucial not only for our resident wildlife species, but also for migratory species that may be passing through northwest Arkansas on their way to warmer wintering grounds.

Before tackling any wildlife habitat management, some questions you may want to ask yourself include:

- What kind of wildlife do you want to attract?
- Do you offer adequate food, water, cover, space for those species?
- How will you deter unwanted species while attracting the species you do want?
- Do you have a diversity of native plants that provide vertical, horizontal, and temporal/seasonal structure?
- How are habitat components arranged across the landscape?
- What about adjacent landowners and the habitat they provide, or are missing?

Though many species of wildlife are present throughout the winter months in Arkansas, the most active and visible species are typically our resident songbirds. Colorful species like northern cardinals, blue jays, American goldfinch, Carolina chickadees, white-breasted nuthatches, and many others grace us with their presence at bird feeders and birdbaths throughout the cold winter months.

In order to attract the most diverse bird populations, one can provide a variety of food sources in several different feeder types throughout the winter. Seed-eating birds like goldfinches and chickadees will love visiting hanging feeders filled with black oil sunflower seeds – a food loved by many of our resident songbirds. Other species such as finches like thistle seed that can be used to fill perforated thistle socks that are available at many large supermarkets or home supply stores. And I have a white-breasted nuthatch and downy woodpecker that just love my suet feeders! More colorful species like Baltimore Orioles will

pass through Arkansas in the fall during their migration to the tropics. You might be lucky to catch one of two at your bird feeders in late fall or early winter if the weather is mild. They tend to like fruit such as orange slices that can be mounted on specific feeders designed for those birds. And don't forget to throw a little seed on the ground for those species that tend to like to forage for seed as well. If you live in an area with a lot of squirrels, you might consider mounting feeders on metal poles away from trees and/or invest in a squirrel-proof baffle that prevents squirrels from accessing the birdseed.



MATERIALS:

- Bundt Pan
- Large pot
- Wide Ribbon
- 3 Blocks of suet
- ½ cup of peanut butter
- 9 cups of bird seed
- Dried fruits and berries

STEPS:

1. Melt suet over low heat
2. Add the peanut butter and remove from heat.
3. Add bird seed.
4. Spray bundt pan with cooking spray and fill the bottom with berries and fruit.
5. Fill the bundt pan with the liquid suet.
6. Cool overnight to harden.
7. Tie a ribbon around to hang or decorate as a gift
8. Hang outside for birds to enjoy!

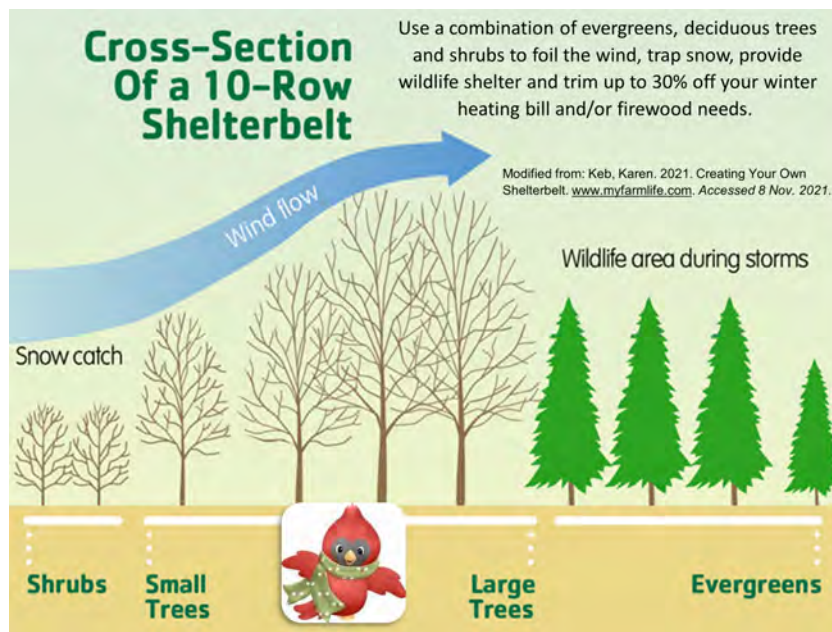
Speaking of squirrels.....one of the more common problems for gardeners in the fall is unwanted attention from rodents around their newly planted fall bulbs! If you are an avid gardener and want to keep squirrels, moles, and other rodents away from your bulbs, consider using some sharp gravel integrated into your garden soil to deter digging rodents.

Some people go so far as to plant bulbs within cages in their garden beds made from mesh hardware cloth so rodents cannot access the bulbs. The plants will still grow through the mesh in the spring. If that is too much trouble, you can also try using red pepper flakes sprinkled over the top of the soil, or buy commercially available rodent deterrents that are target specific (e.g. traps) so as to avoid damage to other wildlife that is often caused by rodenticides.



Though it may be counter-intuitive, birdbaths continue to be important to birds during the winter to preen their feathers and stay clean, because a clean bird is a warm bird! Several online stores sell electric bird baths that can be plugged in or solar baths to keep the water from freezing. Other tricks that have been used with some success include putting a tennis ball or larger stones in the water to keep the water from freezing as fast. In general, moving water (e.g., fountains) will not freeze as rapidly. You can also try adding some warm water in the mornings so that it will take a bit longer to freeze, or add black plastic to the bottom of your bird bath to absorb some of the sun's rays and keep the water warmer for longer periods of time. Glass or mosaicked bird baths may crack in the winter, so avoid these if possible. Be sure to clear snow from the edges of the bath as well, and consider adding some twigs within the water so birds have the ability to access sections of the bath that may have open water.

Though shelter belts are more common further to the north, there is still value in constructing shelter belts in the southern states to create wildlife habitat throughout the year. Shelter belts use a combination of evergreens, and deciduous trees and shrubs to block the wind, trap snow, and provide wildlife shelter (in both summer and winter) that can also trim up to 30% off your winter heating bill and/or firewood needs. In addition, use of native shrubs like American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), and dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.) can provide both summer and winter foraging habitat for birds while simultaneously providing a beautiful landscape. And if you have any standing dead trees (i.e., "snags"), leave them! They provide shelter for several cavity nesting species such as chickadees, woodpeckers, and nuthatches, as well as roosting habitat for bats and places for squirrels, chipmunks, and several bird species to cache food throughout the winter months.



Speaking of dead wood, another useful way to create shelter from the elements as well as protection from overhead predators, is to create piles of wood for small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. As these piles decay, they also provide places for grubs and other insects to feed and burrow, which then provides a source of protein for birds and small mammals in the spring as they come out of the long winter months looking for a nutritious meal before the breeding season starts. Two cautionary notes about wood piles: 1) place them away from residential structures because

they may pose a fire risk, and 2) be aware that those piles of wood also create habitat for species such as raccoons, skunks, possums, and armadillos should that not be your goal.

One point of consideration that many people may not think about in the winter months are chemical applications that may affect wildlife. Though we tend to use fertilizers and herbicides in the growing months, one point source of contamination in the winter is the use of road salt and other chloride-based products used to melt ice. Most of these are already considered unsafe for pets and plants. Likewise, these products can adversely affect wildlife species both directly (through ingestion) and indirectly (through habitat modification via runoff of salts). There do not appear to be many wildlife-friendly alternatives available for these products, but alfalfa meal may be one option. The use of rugs or other non-chemical ways to prevent ice buildup in smaller areas can keep both humans and wildlife safe at the same time.

If you live inside city limits where wildlife habitat is scarce, consider working with your neighbors to create the types of wildlife habitat you all can enjoy. One neighbor may have access to a water feature whereas another neighbor may have more trees or garden landscaping to provide a diversity of wildlife habitat structure. Organizations like the National Wildlife Federation have ways to certify backyard wildlife habitat (see: <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/Certify>) and provide useful resources to make sure your landscape meets certification standards. Other efforts like Monarch City USA (<http://monarchcityusa.com/>) and Tree City USA (<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/index.cfm>) have programs that may be of interest if you cannot meet all the requirements specific for certifying your property as a wildlife habitat.

Every bit of native wildlife habitat we can provide will help in a day and age where habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and climate change continue to challenge our native wildlife species. Plant and landscape with locally sourced native vegetation when you can as our native wildlife are better adapted to these species. Non-native vegetation and ornamentals often attract non-native wildlife or invasive species, which can outcompete our local wildlife for food and other resources. Native plants also typically require less maintenance because they are adapted to the local climates and soils. With a little forethought and planning, winter wildlife in Arkansas can thrive and be enjoyed for generations to come!



About the Author

Dr. Susan Rupp is currently the owner of Envirosapes Ecological Consulting, LLC, based in Gravette, Arkansas. Prior to moving to Arkansas, she was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at South Dakota State University. Dr. Rupp completed both her Masters and PhD degrees in the Department of Range, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management at Texas Tech University. She has previously worked for the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and has held contracts with the National Wildlife Federation, and with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.



Establishing a Pollinator Garden on Septic Field Lines

By Larry S Price

Wild Ones, Ozark Chapter

Arkansas Master Naturalist, Foothills Chapter

Septic Field Lines are always a problem for the rural resident. The extra moisture and inherent fertility can cause weeds to grow rampantly. And the extra mowing is also a big chore.

Last year I read an article about wildflower meadow establishment and the author suggested that planting native plants over your septic field lines would not clog them like planting trees could. I was already planning to convert the 2000 square feet adjacent to the field lines on my property to wildflower meadow, so I immediately pounced on this idea. I calculated that by including the field lines I would incorporate an additional 1000 square feet into the wildflower meadow planting.

The soil in the original 2000 square feet of was dry-mesic, so different plant species would be required for the additional 1000 square feet of wet-mesic septic field. I went about making two plant lists, one for each of these habitats. For the septic field I decided to include rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), foxglove beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*), ashy sunflower (*Helianthus mollis*), swamp sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*), sweet coneflower (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*), purple



Mid September. White Crownbeard and Common Boneset are dominant. Ashy Sunflower can be seen on the left.

Photo by author.



Mid October. Swamp Sunflower is dominant
Photo by author.

coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), prairie gayfeather (*Liatris pycnostachya*), giant ironweed (*Vernonia gigantea*), Missouri ironweed (*Vernonia missurica*), tall spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*), tickseed sunflower (*Bidens aristosa*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), common boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), rose mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*), purple headed sneezeweed (*Helenium flexuosum*), brown-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia triloba*), white leaved mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum albescens*), wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), spider milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*), white crownbeard (*Verbesina virginica*), and yellow ironweed (*Verbesina alternifolia*).

I had already been collecting seeds for Project Wingspan, a two-year effort by Pollinator Partnership to train volunteers in native seed collecting, so I had a leg up. I had access to some of the species I needed on our property, but most were found on Arkansas Department of Transportation rights of way. I also knew that collecting seeds on ARDOT rights of way was legal if one wears an orange safety vest. So I used the seed collecting, cleaning and sorting techniques that I learned from Project Wingspan and from my experience as a gardener and seed saver. In the end I was able to find seed for the vast majority of the species on my list and even a few others I thought might work.

I chose to purchase clear plastic sheeting to utilize a technique called solarization for the larger drier area, but with a later start on the septic field I decided Glyphosate was my only choice unless I wanted to put it off for another year. I treated the area twice, once in late-summer and again in mid-fall. In mid-December I raked the area and broadcast the seed in a moist sand mix, and then used a roller to increase ground contact. I transplanted foxglove beardtongue from specimens in our hay meadow, and I grew the spider milkweed in the greenhouse and transplanted them to the site.

By late March the seeds were germinating. As they grew, identifying them by species became easier.



November 10th. American Lady and Monarch Butterflies and one of my neighbor's honey bees feed on an unusually late blooming Tall Thistle.
Photo by author.

Though the deer feasted on the plants like it was their buffet, somehow most survived. The swamp sunflower took a real beating from the deer, but when the flower heads started showing the deer quit coming for them.

The first plants to bloom were the Missouri ironweed, common boneset and the white crownbeard. A sea of yellow ensued when the swamp sunflower started to bloom. Bees and butterflies filled the air. At the time of

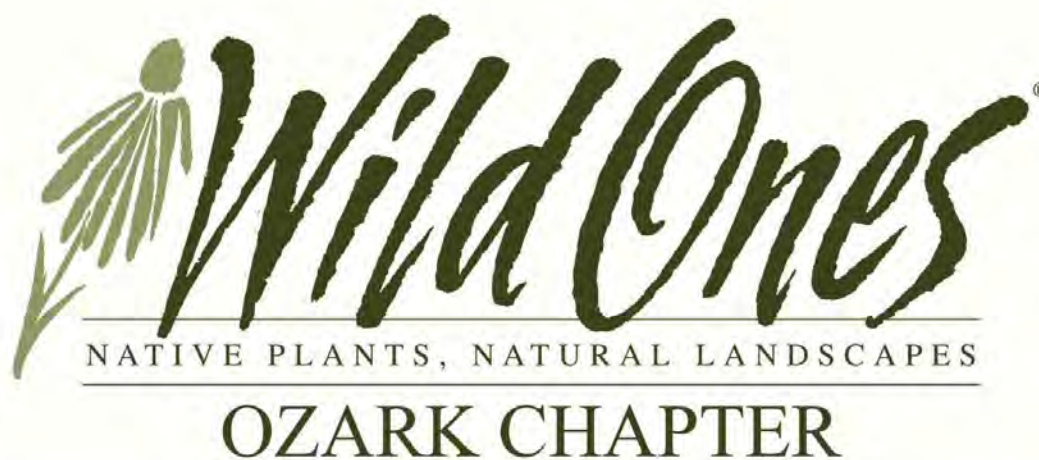
this writing (in November 2021), the swamp sunflowers have expelled most of their seeds and the white crownbeard's seeds are spilling into the wind. The white leaved mountain mint and wild bergamot are large enough to where one could expect quite a floral show next year.

As these plants get larger in the years to come, I expect many of them to "flop" in the rich soil, but that is still better than having super tall Bermuda and Johnson Grass, and a whole lot better than the carbon and particulates released by gas-powered mowers. As an added bonus, I expect to get a lot of vigorous seeds for other planting projects.



About the Author

Larry Price Arkansas has been an Arkansas Master Naturalist for 12 years, and a member of the Arkansas Native Plant Society for approximately 30 years. Larry also serves as a leader in the Citizens Climate Lobby of Russellville and as a volunteer for the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission.



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