

a voice
for the natural
landscaping
movement



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Celebrating natives
plant and natural
landscapes
since 1979.

The Grapevine

By Maryann Whitman

Wild Ones Presidents

Wild Ones will have a new National President when Carol Andrews is inducted at the Annual Meeting in Dayton, Ohio, on Saturday, August 16.

I read Joe's final "Notes" with a deep sense of appreciation for his style of leadership. True to form, Joe said "What have we accomplished during my term?"

This is a good time for us to remember that the President does not work alone. He or she is not a one-person force. We all work together to make things happen. This same idea is expressed in the fact that Joe had a "traveling administration," in taking the quarterly meetings to the chapters.

That is something that would not have happened without the President's instigation and the direct cooperation of our Executive Director, our other National Board members, and the local chapter's board members. This was an action that brought us together – made each a direct part of the administration. We have excellent people in leadership roles in our organization.

Each president brings to the office his or her own style. Welcome, Carol.

Clusters of flowers draw more buzz-y-ness than solitary specimens

UC Professor of Entomology, Gordon Frankie, has been studying urban gardens in the San Francisco area for a number of years. Here are some of his observations about bees:

- At least 76 species of bees (73 natives and 3 exotics) have been collected from urban residential areas of Albany and N. Berkeley, in northern California.
- Native California bees are six times more likely to visit native California plants than exotics. They do also go to weedy exotics for nectar and pollen, especially if the plants are part of a family that has many native representatives (eg., Asteraceae). Frankie recommends tolerating these plants through their flowering cycle, then yanking them before they set seed.
- Urban bees are unevenly distributed in urban neighborhoods. Gardens with 10 or more attractive bee plants flowering simultaneously had the highest bee diversity and abundance. By comparison, attractive bee plants that are isolated in gardens attract a lower diversity and abundance of bees.



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- Apart from the social bumblebees, 70 percent of native bees are solitary, nesting either in cavities in deadwood or tunnels in the soil. Therefore, leave some deadwood around your garden, and avoid MM and BPI – (Mulch Madness) and (Black Plastic Insanity) – leave some bare soil.

The buzz buzz on Capitol Hill

The Pollinator Protection Act, recently introduced in the Senate, would direct USDA offices to hand out conservation funds to help and encourage producers to develop wildlife habitat, and to develop farming practices that could benefit pollinators. Such activity could entail something as simple as leaving permanent buffer strips running through their farm field.

Sounds like old fashioned hedge-rows to me. Perhaps we need to suggest that these strips be dedicated to native flowering plants.

Memorable quotes are best served straight up

Albert Einstein has been quoted as saying that humanity could not survive more than four years without pollinators. Edward O. Wilson, the Harvard professor, naturalist, and ant researcher, is said to have stated

that without pollinators, humans would only live a few months. Cell phones are said to mess up honey bees.

For the record, what E. O. Wilson wrote was, "So important are insects and other land dwelling arthropods, that if all were to disappear, humanity probably could not last more than a few months." (The Diversity of Life, p. 133). This is quite different from only pollinators disappearing.

The Einstein quote has been debunked by the Einstein Archives at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Never said it.

As for cell phones being responsible for Colony Collapse Disorder of honey bees, this "original research" was based on two hives into which not cell phones, but rather the base units of household cordless phones had been introduced.

I don't know the name of the wag who suggested that bees, being social creatures, would probably appreciate cell phones...

"People believe what they want to believe." Some wise, and many not-so-wise, folks have made this observation – especially when facts are scarce and the situation is scary.

Maryann is Editor of the Wild Ones Journal, and comes to the position with an extensive background in environmental matters of all kinds.