

a voice
for the natural
landscaping
movement



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For more information, or to join
Wild Ones Natural Landscapers,
here's how to reach us:

Phone

(920) 730-3986
(877) 394-3954 (Toll-Free)

Mail

PO Box 1274
Appleton, WI 54912-1274

E-Mail

ExecDirector@wildones.org

WebSite

www.wildones.org

Celebrating natives
plant and natural
landscapes
since 1979.

The Grapevine

The Annual Meeting/Conference, don't blame the bats, and spreading invaders.

By Maryann Whitman

The Wild Ones Annual Meeting/Conference

While looking at the pictures from the Annual Meeting/ Conference I couldn't help thinking "this looks like a family reunion." There were people meeting inside, people meeting outside, some were hanging out in the kitchen, and others were strolling around the grounds. It was all informal and comfortable, with a barbecue and picnic tables. Someone was over-nighting in a tent on the north lawn. All were familiar faces – or if not, you could walk up to a stranger, introduce yourself, and ask, "So what chapter are you from?" Everyone belonged there.

I sincerely regret not being able to attend this get-together. Mostly because it was held at our Wild Ones home base – and that's what the WILD Center is for all of us. It's not in a steel high-rise in Washington, D.C., but in Wisconsin, where the idea of Wild Ones was first created, and where our "grass roots" first began to grow. We are scattered all around the country, but we always have a place where we belong.



The WILD Center not only houses the National offices, it is the hub around which the organization circulates. No Wild Ones chapter, no matter how well established, can be a self-sustaining entity on its own. It exists through National. For a chapter to exist successfully, National must exist successfully. We are all parts of a symbiotic relationship, supportive of each other, knowing that we can't afford to lose any part of "us." Our strength locally is because we are part of a larger, national organization. We are strong as a national organization because we have all these parts – chapters and their members and partners-at-large – to sustain us.

Wild Ones National presents and represents our face to the world. We are making great strides at creating a home base for ourselves at the WILD



Center. The front walk and rain garden could easily make the front page of a magazine. Next year the home base and the reunion will be even better. I am looking forward to meeting you at next year's reunion.

Back to business

Bats, the little creatures of the night, prolific bug-eaters, and pollinators, have an undeservedly spooky reputation. Some movie makers take advantage of this reputation to add a bit of "horror" to their stories. The recently released movie, "Contagion," is one of these. A mysterious, fast-spreading virus kills countless humans around the world. In the end, it is concluded that the virus was linked to bats. Bat Conservation International has released this official statement about "Contagion": "Although bats sometimes harbor pathogens, any risk pales in contrast to the benefits bats provide. In fact, bats hunt and reduce the number of insects carrying diseases such as West Nile virus. And scientists recently concluded that bats save American farmers billions of dollars a year by consuming cropdestroying pests. Bats also pollinate many valuable plants, and disperse seeds that help restore damaged rainforests. In North America, right now, their own disease, white-nose syndrome,

which does not affect humans, is decimating bat populations. For centuries, bats have been threatened because of misinformation and myths.

We hope this movie does not encourage such needless fears."

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Take heed

Clematis virginiana (on the left-hand page), and Clematis vitalba, also called "old man's beard," and sometimes unwittingly sold as our native, resemble each other remarkably well. C. vitalba is the UK's only native clematis. Like C.

virginiana it has small, white sepals (that can be mistaken for petals), stamens, and stigmas. **The one readily perceptible difference is that its leaflets typically grow in fives, as opposed to C. virginiana's which grow in threes.** If you have doubt, check it out carefully. My experience with this plant strongly suggests that it may quickly become a serious invasive in my southeast Michigan woods. While C. virginiana is a spreader, it is nowhere nearly as rampant as C. vitalba. Natural area stewards are mounting an all-out war on C. vitalba in New Zealand, where it behaves like our kudzu

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