a voice
for the natural
landscaping
movement

Wild Ones®

NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

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Celebrating natives
plant and natural
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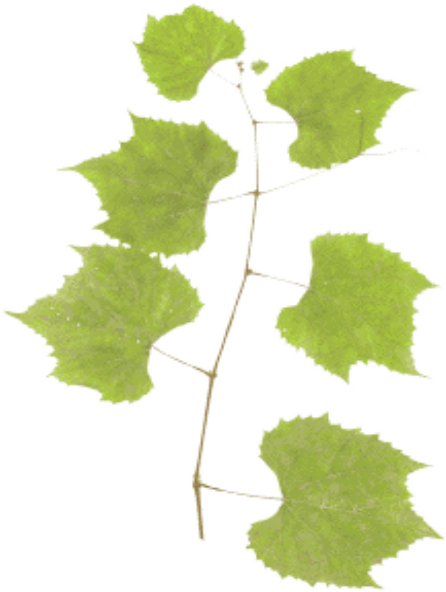
since 1979.

The Grapevine

By Christian Nelson
(Guest Writer)



What's that you say? You don't believe in global warming? That's OK ... the planet still needs your help.

Whether or not you believe in man-made global warming (or climate change as it's now being called), if you're a regular reader of the Journal, you're most likely aware of the fact that planet Earth has been in trouble for a long time now.

Even if you can ignore all the bad news about climate change, you can't just forget about the mass extinctions caused by our encroachment into the wild, the threats posed by all sorts of invasive species (plant and animal), and the man-made pollution that has ruined so many rivers and caused so much illness and other problems.

The loss of biodiversity is a real problem that affects every person on Earth – even you. Our non-stop habit of pumping carbon dioxide and other pollutants out of the tailpipes of our cars will eventually poison us all, even without the added possibility of global warming. And once all our fresh water becomes polluted, what will we drink?

Even if you're turned off (as many of us are) by the current hysteria, this doesn't give any of us a free pass on helping our favorite planet stay alive.

Pay attention. Stay involved. Stick with Wild Ones. Share your ideas for making things better.

Now is not the time to withdraw. Do everything you can think of to improve the health of our planet. Future generations will be grateful.

The revenge of the worm

In the last issue of the Journal, there was an article describing the damage being done to our forests by exotic, non-native earthworms. What a surprise. Who would have guessed that those squiggly wigglers impaled on our fishing hooks could be such nasty creatures?

Now comes news from Germany that the worms may be implicated in global warming. The German government has mandated big increases in the composting of organic waste, and they're putting worms to work to speed the process.

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There's a problem though. A recent study has shown that these worms produce greenhouse gases that are "290 times more potent than carbon dioxide." What's next? A ban on composting?

Smoke on the water
It was 1972 when the British rock group Deep Purple released an album with the soon-to-be iconic "Smoke on the Water." That was a good thing.

But there's a another smoke on the water that's not so good. The International Council on Clean Transportation recently announced results of a study, saying that there are now more than 90,000 commercial ships crisscrossing the oceans, and that these ships belch out more carbon dioxide than all but 10 of the 39 industrial nations originally included in the Kyoto Protocol.

And it gets worse. In addition to all that carbon dioxide, this worldwide armada emits more sulfur dioxide than all the land vehicles on the planet – and a sixth of all the nitrogen oxides pumped into the atmosphere.

Fuel standards for ships are much looser than standards for land-based emissions. Diesel fuel sold in the U.S. cannot exceed more than 15 parts per million of sulfur on average, while some fuel used by ships contains 27,000 parts per million.

If only we could talk them into growing native plants on the decks of these ships as partial offsets for these pollutants. SS Hoary Puccoon, anyone?

Christian Nelson is Associate Editor and Creative Director of the Wild Ones Journal.