

Wild Ones®

NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES
FRONT RANGE



*It's that time of year!
Photo by Deb Lebow Aal*

April 2022 Newsletter

Edited by Colleen Lyon



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Join or Gift a Wild Ones Membership
today!

Upcoming Events

Crevice Gardening with Kenton Seth

A Method for Low-Water Native Plant And
Wildlife-Welcoming Garden

April 11, 2022

Virtual Workshop

For registration, go to the events section of our [website](#)

Hands-On Crevice Gardening Workshop with Kenton Seth

April 24, 2022

Morning session 10:00 -11:30 am

Afternoon session 1:00 -2:30 pm (SOLD OUT)

For registration, go to the events section of our [website](#)

Guided Hike at Two Bridges Open Space Franktown, CO

May 22, 2022

9:00 am -12:00 pm

Save the Date! See native plants in their natural habitat

Registration not yet open. See our events page on our [website](#) for more details

Fort Collins Native and Pollinator-Friendly Plant Swap

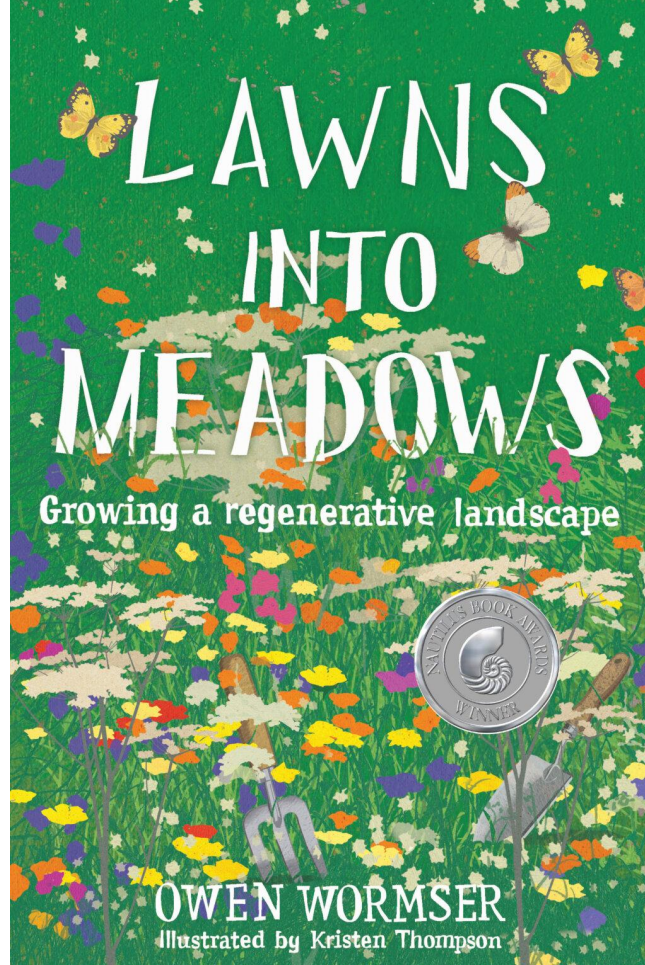
June 18, 2022

9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Fort Collins Native and Pollinator Plant Swap will be part of the City of Fort Collins Xeriscape Garden Party. Come enjoy the fair and check out the plant swap to pick up some native and pollinator plants and if you can, share some too! More details soon!

Lawn Into Meadows

A book review by Rick Phillips



Being a Wild Ones member, the book [Lawns into Meadows](#), by Owen Wormser, caught my eye immediately. And with an author named Wormser, you would think this guy must really know soil and plants! Wormser is a landscape architect and horticulturalist who grew up off the grid in Maine and now lives and works in western Massachusetts. His specialty is regenerative landscape design.

The book begins with chapters on the negative features of lawns and the beauty and benefits of a natural landscape (in the mold of Doug Tallamy, professor of entomology and author of [Nature's Best Hope](#), among other books). On the negative side, we all know how lawns require lots of water, pesticides, herbicides, and constant mowing that produces air pollution. We also know the positives of how a yard covered with native plants can reduce water consumption, provide host plants for insects, feed pollinators and provide a scene of natural beauty.

Wormser gives advice on assessing your soil type and checking its ability to drain, which can impact your choice of plants. He takes you through several projects from beginning to end, including the pitfalls encountered, as his skill level as a meadow designer has increased. The use of seeds versus plugs is covered in detail.

There is a chapter on grasses and forbs that do well in a lawn meadow environment. While the plants on the list are native to the Massachusetts area, a large number are also native to the Front Range. Some of the plants listed, like purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) and rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) are not Colorado natives, but it doesn't hurt to have a few non-natives in your garden (author's opinion, obviously)! After all, our guru Doug Tallamy says to strive for at least 70% native species in your garden. And, who can resist a purple coneflower, which has both pollination and medicinal benefits?



Linum lewisii (Blue Flax), grows naturally with native grasses in Colorado
Photo courtesy Sally and Andy Wasowski, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

The section called “Prep Work” covers how to prepare your site before planting. He discusses in length the importance of killing weeds before you plant. In my experience, this is the hardest and most important step in having a successful meadow garden. If this is not done properly, you will be haunted by excessive weeds in the first year that can overwhelm your seeded plants. This step is often overlooked until it is too late, because it must be done in advance of your planting, sometimes requiring that it be done a year in advance. For example, if you plan to till your site to start with bare earth, you should invest 6-9 weeks into the process (tilling 2-3 times with a 2-3 week wait between tilling to allow any new weeds to come up, which are then eradicated with the next tilling). Each time you disturb the soil, dormant weed seeds are activated.

The "Planting Guide" section follows with extensive advice on planting and watering options. He covers the pros and cons of planting with seeds, plugs, or a combination of the two. Options for planting in bare soil with the use of "nurse plants" to keep weeds at bay, planting in a bed of mulch, and even an option of planting directly into uncleared grass sod are covered. As for watering, the author states you don't have to water a seeded bed at all, further stating that plug beds can be weaned off waterings after several weeks. Well, I guess that's good advice for Massachusetts, where it rains 60" per year! We all know that won't work in the semi-arid Front Range region; in this area, plan on regular watering of seed and plug beds for the entire first growing season.

The “Upkeep” section provides advice on how to maintain your young meadow and a more mature, established meadow. Certain maintenance activities are needed every year to keep out weeds and woody plants. The first year or two require the most work, mainly to overcome weeds.

“Community Building,” the last section of the book, is important for all Wild Ones members. It covers the politics of transitioning from the standard, accepted bluegrass lawn to a meadow of native wildflowers and grasses. Advice is given on interacting with your neighbors, so they know what you are doing, and hopefully changing their conception of how a lawn should look. You can do things like hiding the meadow in the backyard, starting with a small area, and keeping it more or less neat and tidy. The author advises that we should raise awareness and become meadow activists! (*Editor's note: For more tips on how to "build the native plant community" here on the Front Range, scroll down to the Colorado Native Landscaping Coalition update below!*)

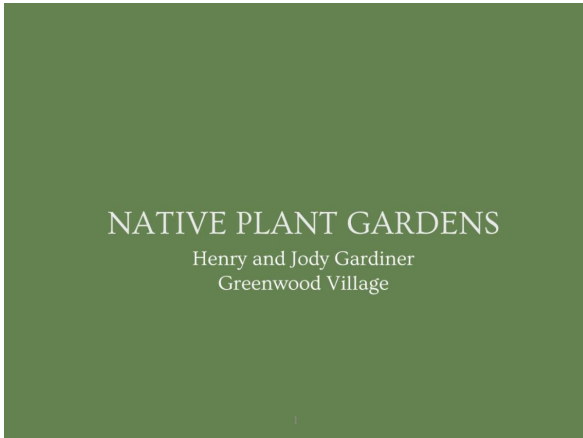
I highly recommend this book to anyone contemplating a lawn conversion. It is well written and organized and takes you through the process from beginning to end. It provides expert advice from someone who has become a master at lawn conversions. The only caveat I have is to remember that it was written based on his Massachusetts location. You need to make mental corrections to account for our local climate and soils.

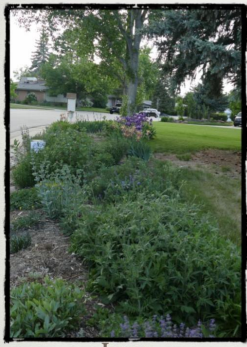
If you want to preview the book before buying it, Denver Public Library has several copies. For photos of his projects and to learn more about the author, you can visit his company's website abounddesign.com.

Native Garden "Before and After"

by Jody Gardiner

Here is a photo journal of Jody and Henry Gardiner's transition from a traditional front yard landscape to their current lovely native plant and pollinator friendly landscape.





June 2021



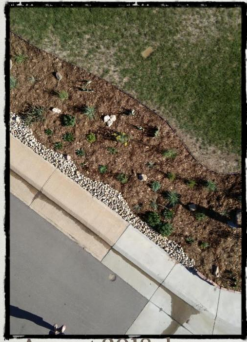
June 2021



Before turf removal for third garden, March 2018



8



August 2018 drone view



June 2020



Pollinator, August 2020



Red-tailed hawk in fountain by native gardens, July 2021



August 2021

This is why I plant native plants!



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Colorado Native Landscaping Coalition Update

By Tom Swihart, Danna Liebert, and Eryn Joy Murphy

The December 2020 issue of the Newsletter informed members that Front Range was a founding member of the Colorado Native Landscaping Coalition (CNLC) - a collaboration between [Wild Ones Front Range Chapter](#), the [Audubon Rockies Habitat Hero Program](#), the [Colorado Native Plant Society](#), the [Colorado Wildlife Federation](#), the [People and Pollinators Action Network](#), and [Denver Audubon](#).

All of us can make a difference in our individual yards (if we have them) but are often uncertain how to prompt wide-scale landscaping transformation beyond our own homes. The Coalition spent over a year identifying and reaching consensus on the most important policy actions to promote native landscaping, build community, and enhance Colorado biodiversity. We focused on these broader policy actions in a document now available at the [CNLC website](#): "Recommended Native Landscaping Policies for Local Governments and Water Providers." No other state has a comparable set of recommended landscape transformation policies.

Six issue areas of the 31 policies that the CNLC recommended:

1. Focus on Communities
2. Reform Development Codes
3. Enhance Public Spaces
4. Commit to Environmental Justice
5. Reform the Term “Xeriscaping”
6. Use Financial Incentives Wisely

Other CNLC projects underway include:

- Working to make native plants more available to the trade and to homeowners.
- Evaluating legislative proposals. For example, we recently endorsed the “turf replacement” bill being considered by the Colorado Legislature.
- Creating a database of yard makeover programs and municipal native landscaping sites statewide (coming to our website soon).

Although our individual native landscaping actions are of course important, we can accomplish much more on a neighborhood, local, and state level. The CNLC aims to influence critical landscaping choices for new community developments, streetscapes, commercial buildings, and open spaces. Successful projects in all these areas can inspire even more.

What can you do, as an individual Wild Ones Front Range member? Continue your own native landscaping efforts, which are very valuable. At the same time, lift your eyes above our beautiful native flowers. Start speaking to your own local governments and water providers about landscaping transformation! Refer to the CNLC’s “Recommended Policies” and decide what actions in your community are most worthwhile for you.

Examples of how to "build our native plant community" together!

- Advocate for native landscaping with your local city council, parks department, and water provider.
- Educate your community and clients about the benefits of native plants.
- Create a community native habitat project or advocacy group.
- Ask nurseries to increase and label their native plant selection.

Consider what actions, in your own community, seem best for you to undertake. If you would like to learn more, or devote energies to the purposes of the Colorado Native Landscaping Coalition, please contact: CoNativeLC@gmail.com



Announcements and Acknowledgements

Time to Awaken our Demonstration Gardens

It's time to muster our volunteer armies! We need your help maintaining our three demonstration gardens. Please remember to bring water, sunscreen, and your favorite weeding and planting tools. If you are interested in helping out, here is some information:

Depot Prairie Park: Volunteers are needed for planting and maintenance at Depot Prairie Park to help replace turf with a low-water native plant landscape. Depot is located at 653-667 W. Dartmouth Ave, Englewood. Please contact Danna.liebert@icloud.com for April and May planting dates and maintenance days throughout the season. Click [here](#) to learn more about Depot Prairie Park.

Ekar Farm: Volunteers are also needed to help weed and plant at Ekar Farm Native Plant Garden, a Wild Ones Front Range demonstration garden that we just started last year. We may be putting in a crevice garden this year, so if interested in that, please come help. The garden is located at 6825 E. Alameda Ave, in Denver. To find out more, please contact Deb Lebow Aal at drlebow@gmail.com.

Greenverein Project: Located at 16th and Clarkson, in Denver, the Greenverein project is a beautiful example of what to do with a hot and dry area. We are currently waiting for Xcel to let us know if they'll be doing more digging in that area, before we can schedule volunteer dates, so stay tuned!

Neighborhood Improvement Grant Opportunity (Englewood)

Englewood's Neighborhood Resources Program invites neighborhood groups to submit grant proposals for the 2022 Neighborhood Improvement Grant. Groups can apply for up to \$3,000 for their neighborhood project. If you live in Englewood, you could apply for your neighborhood to plant native plants and pollinator habit! Grant applications are due April 17. [Learn more and apply here!](#)

We Want to See your Native Plant Garden!

Tours of our members' native gardens are some of our most popular programs! Do you have a native garden you are willing to share so others can learn and get inspired? We are accepting garden tour nominations, **particularly in Colorado Springs and Fort Collins/Loveland**. Tours will take place spring and early summer, 2022. Send us an email at fronrangewildones@gmail.com and let's chat!

We love to hear from you, and we are always looking for people to write articles for the newsletter. If you would like to comment on anything in this newsletter or write an article, please send your comments or ideas to FrontRangeWildOnes@gmail.com.

Wild Ones Front Range Chapter | <https://fronrangewildones.org/>

