



January Plant Spotlight: *Cornus sericea* (Red Twig Dogwood)
Photograph by Steven Depolo via Flickr.

January 2023 Newsletter

Edited by Colleen Lyon

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Join or Gift a Wild Ones Membership
today!

Letter from the President

By Jen Smith

Happy New Year Wild Ones Front Range (WOFR) Chapter!

I am thrilled to be our new chapter President. Just a few years ago, I learned about the surprisingly powerful benefits that native plants deliver to our ecosystem, including food and shelter for our native birds and pollinators, storage of greenhouse gasses, and water conservation. I suddenly looked at my yard and other community green spaces differently: as abundant opportunities for us to sustain life and make meaningful environmental change. I began volunteering with the WOFR Chapter to share this new knowledge with as many people as possible and look forward to continuing this work with all of you.

Our chapter is a network of people who are not only passionate about native plant gardening, but are happy to share their tips and tricks for getting native plants to thrive. Growing native plants requires a different approach to gardening - from soil, to watering, to maintenance. In many cases the [best practices](#) are counter to what we have learned over our many years of gardening. By leveraging our chapter's collective knowledge and experience, we are well equipped to cultivate climate resilient landscapes that are teeming with life.

It is you, our members, who make it possible for us to deliver on our mission. Thanks to so many of you who volunteered to help us offer a variety of educational programs and events in 2022, including:

- 6 Garden Tours
- 5 Webinars
- 3 Plant Swaps (partner events)
- 3 Seed Swaps (partner events)
- 3 Guided Hikes
- 3 Demonstration Gardens
- 2 Member Mixers
- 2 Field Trips
- 2 Community Native Seed Ball Events
- 1 Hands-on Workshop

As we kick off this new year together, please join us for our [Member Meeting on January 18th](#), which will feature a Propagation Panel of members sharing their favorite techniques. Winter is the best time to begin turning native seeds into plants for your garden!

Finally, I invite you to get more involved with our chapter in whatever ways work for you. No matter how you contribute, you will make new friends, have fun, and MAKE A DIFFERENCE! [Contact me](#) with your interest.

The New Front Range Native Plant Gardener Toolkit

By Ayn Schmit and Deb Lebow Aal

In line with our chapter's positioning statement - *to empower people to plant and promote native landscapes* - we are introducing the Wild Ones Front Range Native Plant Toolkit. We will eventually have, in one place, the answers to your questions on how to be a successful native plant gardener on the Front Range and resources to rely on as you begin or continue your native plant journey.

Below is an outline of the topics we are considering including in the toolkit. The outline is meant to follow the process of envisioning, planning and implementing a native plant

landscape. We hope to start populating the tool kit in early January, 2023. Our first entries will be on seed starting and propagation, and turf removal, two topics we get frequent questions on. The toolkit modules will be:

Introduction

- How to use this toolkit
- Why native plants?

Getting Started: Evaluating Your Site and Setting Goals

- Determine native landscape goals
- Evaluate your existing site
- Develop turf replacement approach and take advantage of incentives

Seek Inspiration

- Member gardens list/map
- Native plant photo library
- Public demonstration gardens

Create Your Landscape Design

- Use available design examples
- Consider use of landscape designer
- Produce design components—scale drawing, hardscaping, irrigation plan, mulch selection
- Select plants—sun/shade, alternating bloom times, layering trees/shrubs/grasses/forbs

Prepare Your Site for Planting

- Turf/weed removal and existing plant removal
- Install hardscape
- Install irrigation

Acquire or Propagate Plants

- Native plant and seed sources
- Collecting and germinating seeds
- Resources for propagating plants

Install and Establish Plants

- Best practices for planting, mulching and maintaining your plants
- Reducing irrigation as plants establish
- Diagnosing problems and managing pests/rabbits/deer

Maintain Your New Landscape

- Managing dead plant material - how/when to cut back
- Weed identification and management

Share Your Progress and Get Support—options under consideration:

- Map of member gardens
- Regional groups to share ideas and do garden check-ins
- Native garden certifications—Audubon, CoNPS, National Wildlife Federation

Advocate for ‘Coloradoscaping’

- Information to use for advocacy with city officials, HOAs, neighborhood associations around using native plants in your neighborhood and community

Given the wide range of topics it will take some time to fully populate all the sections of the toolkit. We are taking a ‘living document’ approach. We’ll post available materials for some sections, which may not be complete but at least offer a starting point on that topic, with the intention to edit and update material over time.

Let's co-create! As the toolkit is under development, we welcome your feedback. Did we miss a topic that is important to you? Or did we leave out important information on a topic? Are you aware of existing resources that address these topics? We certainly don’t want to invent a new wheel where one already exists. Would you be willing to take the lead for one of the topics, which could include writing original content, consolidating and updating existing information (e.g., past newsletter articles), and identifying additional pertinent resources? We’d love to hear from you! Please [email us](#) with input or to volunteer for a section.

Chapter Updates

Where We're Going

Our board has created a new chapter positioning statement to clarify our focus and differentiate us from other organizations with similar missions:

The Wild Ones Front Range Chapter empowers people to plant and promote native landscapes that sustain local ecosystems for a climate resilient future. We do this by providing native plant gardening how-to resources and encouraging collaboration among our members.

As you can see, our focus is on the HOW of native plant gardening and the power of member connections. This year we will be expanding our native plant resources in an online toolkit and helping members organize local in-person meetups to learn from each other. Please [contact us](#) if you are interested in helping with these projects.

Colorado Gives Day

Thanks to 60 generous donations, **we raised over \$5,000 on Tuesday, December 6, 2022.** These donations plant the seeds for everything we do at Wild Ones Front Range. These funds will:

- Create educational programs for our members and Front Range community
- Support the ever-popular seed and plant swaps
- Create gardening tools and resources that will be available on our website
- Advocate on behalf of legislative change

Your contributions will grow our movement as we transform our Front Range gardens into native plant habitats and sustainable gardens. **Our greatest appreciation goes out to the Wild Ones community members who contributed:**

Ann Winslow	Ilene Flax	Mary Loving-Driscoll
Anonymous	James & Ann Haggard	Michael & Chris Woods
Ayn Schmit	Jan Midgley	Nora Morgenstern
Brian Rasmussen	Jana Colgate	Pauline Reetz
Carol Lehman	Jeanine Owen	Peggy Hanson
Charles White	Jennifer Smith	Reta Carlson
Constance Hunter	John Case	Richard & Vicki Phillips
Courtney App	Joanne Keys	Roy Wardell
Courtney Cowgill	Karen Rider	Sally Kuhn
Daniel Rink	Kathleen Besser	Shirley Howson
Danna Liebert	Kathryn Jameson	Steve Origer
Debby & Charlie Martin	Laurel Clark	Sue Parilla
Deborah Aal	Laurel Starr	Susie Muttel
Deborah Foy	Linda Lange	Tom Chaney
Diane Stahl	Linda Young	Tom Reiners
Donna Baker Breningstall	Lynn Vavra	TR Chawla
Doni Angell	Margaret Gaddis	Virginia Kearney
Edward Furlong	Margaret Mazzarella	Yvonne Wilder
Elaine Selsberg	Marianne Leviton	Zia Zybko
Idelle Fisher	Mary Hinton	

Really, there is no gift too small. If you missed Colorado Gives Day and wish to be a part of our community, please donate now!

And, in case you needed a chuckle today, and some encouragement that you're not the only one that makes mistakes, this from a new member:

"I REALIZED I NEEDED A TRAY WITH HOLES WHEN I SAW THAT THE WARM DAYS AND COLD NIGHTS HAD TURNED MY TRAY OF SEEDS INTO A SOLID BLOCK OF ICE. WHOOPS! WE SHALL SEE IF THEY STILL SPROUT!"

Plant Spotlight

Red Twig Dogwood



Photo credit: www.wildyards.com

There's nothing better for a gardener at this time of year than to see color in their winter landscape. Yellows and reds can highlight the browns and greys of winter. One of the best native shrubs you can have in your landscape is Red Twig Dogwood, or Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*). This plant also is lovely in other seasons, but is a real standout in winter with its red bark. For that reason, it should be planted where you'll have a good view of it in winter.

But, there is a drawback. This plant likes water. So, plant it where you have other water-loving plants, like near your vegetable garden, or that teeny tiny patch of grass you still have that needs water. In the wild, you will find this shrub at the edges of water bodies.

The flowers in the spring are white, but not that showy. The flowers appear in June and the white berries shortly after (we've heard that birds find the berries enjoyable, though haven't seen it in practice). Other than its water requirements, this is not a fussy plant. It will do well in most soils and although it does not need regular maintenance, the newer branches are a showier red, so it's advantageous to prune the older branches out. It can get fairly large – 6-8 feet tall, and 6-12 feet wide, and is hardy up to 10,000 feet in elevation. It is also a good plant for wildlife. The [National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder](#)* says that this plant supports 58 species of butterflies and moths. That's a very large number. For comparison, a common native sage supports 9, and a sumac (*Rhus*), 20.

** If you have not used this finder, you might want to look into it. It lists the native forbs, trees and bushes in your zip code, and how many moth and butterfly species it supports. It's an invaluable tool.*

Get Involved

We welcome your involvement to make a meaningful impact on the WOFR chapter. No native plant experience required. Just bring your energy and commitment!

- Please consider sharing your time and talents with us in a way that works for you.
- Come check out one of our committee meetings to see if you could contribute to a project or program
- Volunteer to write a newsletter article or website resource
- Host a tour of your native garden
- Organize a member social or field trip in your part of the Front Range
- Offer to run an educational program



[Contact us](#) with your interest and to learn more!

Upcoming Events

Important notice: We announce many of our events to members first, as our events are popular and sell out fast. So, if you are not a member, please consider becoming one!

Native Seed Planting

hosted jointly by CoNPS and Wild Ones

January 17, 2023

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Colorado Springs

Come plant native seeds with us! We will meet at the Sustain-a-Center to plant native seeds in containers for your next garden. Melanie Helton will share her wisdom. She started her entire garden using this method of seeding popularized by Wild Ones.

We will provide soil and seeds (sharing the seeds that were donated at the 2022 Pikes Peak Region Seed Share). You bring containers! Milk jugs are best. We will have some containers on hand but since everyone will take their own planted seeds home, you should bring what you want to use. Any recycled containers work, and/or go to the nursery to see what they have.

More information and registration details [here](#).

Member Meeting & Propagation Panel

Wednesday January 18, 2023

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Join us for a free members-only meeting in January to discuss chapter accomplishments and priorities for 2023. Then some of our members will host a propagation panel to share their tips and techniques for propagating native plants. Come with your questions and let's have fun propagating over the winter!

More information and registration details [here](#). Members will be notified via email when registration opens by mid December. Not yet a member? [Join today!](#)

Landscaping With Colorado Native Plants Conference: Climate Resilience

Saturday, February 25, 2023

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Save the date for the 8th Annual Landscaping with Colorado Native Plants Conference! Experts in horticulture, ecology, and landscape design will share how to plan, plant, and maintain beautiful and biodiverse native landscapes from the ground up. With the theme of climate resilient landscapes, this year's conference offers inspiration and insight to both novice and experienced gardeners.

The conference will be online to allow participation throughout the state and beyond. Recordings of the speakers' presentations will be available for registrants to view after the event as well. All classes are eligible for CEUs for Landscape Industry Certified Technician recertification.

More info and registration details [here](#).



We love to hear from you! 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://frontrangewildones.org/>

