



Ribes aureum

Photo by James L. Reveal, courtesy of Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

May 2023 Member Matters

Edited by Colleen Lyon

In this member update...

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Gift a Wild Ones Membership
today!

Member Matters is our members only e-news published on the off months in between our quarterly newsletter for the whole WOFR community.

Chapter Updates

Regional Meet and Greets

Thanks to all of the members who came out for our April Member Meetups in Fort Collins, Lakewood and Elbert/Douglas County. We are looking forward to getting to know and learning from each other! Check out our [Events](#) section for our May Meet & Greets.



Larimer & Weld Counties Member Meet & Greet



Jefferson County Member Meet & Greet



Douglas & Elbert Counties Member Meet & Greet

Want to stay in the loop on Member Meetups in your part of the Front Range? Join a Regional Email Group!

If you are interested in joining one of the groups, please send an email with your name and member number to the appropriate Regional Coordinator below:

- *Boulder County:* [Emily KenCairn](#)
- *Douglas & Elbert Counties:* [Pam Schulz](#)
- *Jefferson County:* [Laurel Starr](#)
- *Larimer & Weld Counties:* [Suzie Muttel](#)

Groups that still need members to volunteer as Regional Coordinators:

- *Denver Metro*
- *Colorado Springs*

Board Member & Committee Updates

Mary Hinton has asked to step back from the board as Membership Chair while continuing as an active member of the Membership Committee. Thanks Mary, for your many ongoing contributions, including welcoming new members to our chapter, maintaining our contact management database, and creating our membership reports.

Jonathan Sciarcon has joined the board, voted in as our new Membership Chair (learn a little more about him below). Welcome Jonathan!

Idelle Fisher has joined our Website Committee as co-chair with Rick Phillips. Thanks Idelle, for contributing your web design experience to our chapter!

Wild Ones Front Range Native Plant Toolkit is live!

We are finally live! An outline of our [Native Plant Toolkit](#) is now on our website and the following sections have been published: *How to Use this Toolkit*; *Why Coloradoscape* (a new term being coined) *with Native Plants*; and *Native Plant Seed Collection and*

Germination. The toolkit's mission is to allow anyone to be a successful native plant gardener on the Colorado front range. This toolkit is a living document, meaning we encourage your comments, and we publish as soon as we feel the document is good enough, not when it is perfect. Please [email us](#) your comments - we look forward to them!

Jonathan Sciarcon

We are very pleased to introduce Jonathan Sciarcon as our newest board member. Jonathan is extremely knowledgeable about native plants, although you would not know that from his educational and work background. He has a Ph.D. in History from UC Santa Barbara, and currently is an Associate Professor at the University of Denver in the History and Judaic Studies departments.

Over the past five years, Jonathan has become increasingly engaged in Native plant advocacy. He served as a moderator on the Colorado Native Plant Gardening Facebook page and propagates many native plants from seed to give away. He “practices” what he preaches with his own native plant landscape. We are excited to join forces with Jonathan.

Ask CSU Extension Anything (About Native Plants)



QUESTION: Douglas Tallamy's recent book, *The Nature of Oaks*, maintains that oaks (*Quercus*) are perhaps the most important species to plant if you are gardening for wildlife. This is because they host the most caterpillar species of any plant and thus support the wider food web, particularly birds. Is this true in Colorado? I have heard that on the Front Range, willows are our oaks. Do willows support more caterpillar species than oaks in Colorado (or on the Front Range)?

ANSWER: The answer will vary somewhat, depending on what part of Colorado you garden in. Particularly in scrublands (such as what occupy the Palmer divide), scrub oak (*Quercus gambelii*) can be very beneficial. Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) is a good “bird tree,” hosting small insects like aphids and gall wasps, and because the bees, flies, and wasps that seek gall ooze are food for orioles, pewees, and olive-sided flycatchers. Unlike the eastern United States, though, where Dr. Tallamy’s work is conducted, Colorado has different plant communities and associated food webs. For example, the table below summarizes some common butterflies and moths you might find here and their larval hosts.

Species	Caterpillar Host Plants
Painted Lady	Thistle, Sunflower, Mallow, others
Viceroy	Willow, Cottonwood
Mourning Cloak	Hackberry, Elm, Aspen, Cottonwood
Pearl Crescent	Asters
Monarch	Milkweed
Weidemeyer's Admiral	Aspen, Cottonwood, Willow, Amelanchier
Variegated Fritillary	Pansy, Linum
Gorgone Checkerspot	Sunflower, other Asters
Hoary Comma	Currants, Gooseberries
Two-tailed Tiger Swallowtail	Ash, Prunus
Western Tiger Swallowtail	Willow, Cottonwood, Aspen
Black Swallowtail	Dill, Parsley, Fennel
Armyworms and Cutworms	Grasses, Forbs
Sphinx Moths	Wide range of trees and forbs
Silk Moths	Deciduous trees, large shrubs, pines
Skippers	Grasses
Sulphurs and Whites	Grasses, legumes
Green Fruitworm	Fruit trees, Linden, Oak, Cottonwoods, Maples
Western Spruce Budworm	Spruce
Spring/Fall Cankerworm	Apple, Ash, Boxelder, Cottonwood, Elm, Honeylocust, Linden, Maple, Oak, Willow
Linden Looper	Gambel Oak, Chokecherry, Serviceberry, Aspen

As you can see, even this small sample of moths and butterflies that can be found in our state have a very broad range of potential host plants, and many larvae aren't found on woody plants at all, owing to their natural adaptation to the treeless plains.

Birds in our area rely on a variety of insects and other food sources beyond caterpillars for raising young. Gall-making insects in hackberry, aspen, and cottonwood are extracted from bark by nuthatches, chickadees, brown creepers, and woodpeckers during winter and early spring. Those insects that make it past the first round of predation are consumed by neotropical migrating birds (for example, warblers, vireos, kinglets, and flycatchers, among others) and house finches.

Rocky Mountain Juniper can be a key resource for birds; it supports insects like aphids and lacewings, produces edible cones (juniper berries), and provides a dense canopy suitable for nesting. Other conifers, including Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and Blue spruce are sources of both insects and seeds.

Some Rocky Mountain birds rely on persistent fruits from the previous fall to feed young. In suburban and urban areas, these can include things like hawthorn fruits and crabapples. Grasshoppers, adult miller moths, worms, and earwigs are also popular nestling food items.

Ask your native plant questions here!



Get Involved

Join a Board Committee!

The Wild Ones Front Range Chapter is run by volunteer committee and board members. One of the most impactful ways for you to support us is by becoming an active committee member!

No experience is required - just bring your passion for native plant gardening. Thank you for helping us deliver on our mission! [Email us](#) to learn more.

Below are our current openings:

Colorado Gives Day Campaign Manager

Manage our campaign for Colorado Gives Day, including setting up our profile on the Colorado Gives Day platform, developing a series of promotional messages, and tracking results.

Newsletter Co-Chair

Team up with the other co-chair to manage our content calendar, author content and further streamline how we produce our newsletters.

Photography Chair

Organize photographs taken by chapter members and make them available for use by our committees.

Programming Co-Chair

Team up with our other programming co-chair to identify and produce educational programs.

Publicity Chair

Identify ways to publicize native plant gardening, the Wild Ones Front Range Chapter and our mission.

Regional Coordinators for Denver and Colorado Springs

Organize member events and advocacy in your part of the Front Range.

Swaps Co-Chair

Team up with the other co-chair to organize plant and seed swaps.

Volunteer Chair

Identify ways to recruit, recognize and reward volunteers.

Upcoming Events

Check out our website's [Events](#) section for event details and registration!

PLANT SWAPS

2023 Northern Colorado (NOCO) Plant



MEMBER MEETUPS

Denver County (Arvada)

Saturday, May 6
10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Boulder County + Neighbors (Boulder)

RESCHEDULED

Sunday, May 7
2:00 - 4:00 pm

Swap

Saturday, June 17
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
TBD, Fort Collins

Third Annual Denver Native Plant Swap & Giveaway

Saturday, June 24
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Earthlinks, Denver

OTHER EVENTS

Colorado Native Plants You Shouldn't Live Without

Saturday, June 10
10:00 - 11:30 am
Harlequin's Gardens, Boulder

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

