



Midpoint between Summer Solstice and Autumn Equinox, a feast on *Asclepias tuberosa*. Photo by Colleen Lyon

August 2023 Member Matters

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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

2023 Plant Swaps Recap

The Denver and Fort Collins 2023 plant swaps resulted in over 7,500 regionally native plants finding new homes along the Front Range. [Read more about the impact of these swaps and the phenomenal volunteers who made the swaps happen in this post.](#)

Greenverein Demonstration Garden Tour

We had a great group come out to tour the Greenverein Garden, which was started in 2019 as a collaboration between Denver Turnverein, Uptown on the Hill, and Front Range Wild Ones on a former Denver hell strip located on Clarkson Street. [Read more about the tour and see additional photos in this post.](#)



Fort Collins Pollinator Yard Tour

A huge thanks to member Ruth Idris-Widrick for hosting a tour of her mature pollinator

garden and sharing her journey from being a novice gardener to pollinator advocate. [Read more about the tour and see tour photos in this post.](#)



Board Member & Board Committee Updates

WOFR member Teri Thomson is now the Swap Co-Chair for the Denver events! She was an organizational and energy force at the successful Denver native plant event in June. We know you will enjoy working with her. Thanks for stepping up Teri!

We are looking for members from Boulder and Colorado Springs to join the Regional Coordinator team. Please [email us](#) to learn more.

Ask CSU Extension Anything (About Native Plants)



QUESTION: Do I need to keep dead perennial stems for three years in order for them to be of benefit to pollinators?

ANSWER: While it seems like “new” information, the three-year timeline for perennial stems is derived from the life cycle of stem-nesting pollinators. Your first reaction might be, “Three years!,” but it isn’t as dramatic as it would seem—you don’t need three years of dead stems standing in the garden.

Year 1 - The first year is the year of growth, including cutting pithy or hollow stems to create entrances. The general recommendation for stem length is 8 inches minimum. Because the stems have to last through a couple of winters, they should be dry and rigid, or woody, for this phase.

Year 2 - The second year is when invertebrates will access this new real estate. Imagine that the stems matured in late summer or fall; pollinators will be active the following spring and

early summer (in general). They will lay eggs and larvae will develop up to pupation in the stems. The stems must remain through the growing season and into the following year, when any surviving pupae emerge as adults to begin the cycle over.

Year 3 - The third year, then, is the emergence year. Any particular species of bee or wasp may only be active for a few weeks in the summer; you need to wait until they have emerged to remove the stems. Once they have left the nest, you may then wish to cut them back and get rid of them to prevent re-use, which, while not intrinsically bad, can cause concentrations of pathogens. (The same reason you clean and change the straws in a bee house).

Two common questions arise:

1. Do we have stem-nesting bees in Colorado? Yes. The vast majority of native bees here are ground-nesting, but stem-nesting bees are found in Colorado. Defining some terms here, though, will be helpful. Most entomologists refer to perennials as plants that last more than a year. Most gardeners agree, with one important difference. Rare is the gardener who includes trees and shrubs in the category, “perennials,” but insect scientists are not so particular.

As a result, the research about bees nesting in perennials usually refers to such “perennials” as *Sambucus*, *Rosa*, and *Rubus*, to name a few. These are all woody plants—aka, shrubs! Will a bee or wasp use a stem from a garden perennial? Maybe—but remember that the stems have to last through two winters; many herbaceous perennial stems aren’t durable enough. The only way to know for sure if stems are being used is to carefully check them for inhabitants. If you do find bees nesting in herbaceous plant stems, consider taking photos and submitting to iNaturalist so that others can benefit from your citizen-science data!



Sambucus racemosa (Red Elderberry)
Photo by Eric Beckers, courtesy of Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center

2. Can I move the stems to another place in the garden? Yes. You can collect stems and use them in bee “hotels” or gather them in an out-of-the-way place. Just be sure to protect them from rotting, that is, orient them vertically, as they would have been while growing (tomato cages can hold a lot of stems very naturally), or install them in an above-ground “hotel” structure. Of course, you can leave the stems in place too, and let the following year’s foliage cover them. Just remember that longer stems are better, and 8 inches is a general minimum.

Answer developed by:
John Murgel
Extension Specialist, Horticulture and
Natural Resources
Douglas County
Colorado State University Extension

For additional information on this topic, please see the ["Spring Stem Cleanup" article](#) by Jennifer Heath in WOFR's March 2023 newsletter.

Ask your native plant questions here!

Get Involved

Apply to Join our 2024 Board of Directors

Are you interested in...

- Empowering people to plant and promote native plant landscapes?
- Driving change locally?
- Guiding our chapter's success?
- Helping to protect the environment?

If so, consider applying to join the Wild Ones Front Range (WOFR) board of directors for 2024! With WOFR membership steadily growing, and interest in native plant gardening intensifying, it's an exciting time to join the board. While no prior board experience is required, we do value candidates who are passionate about our environmental mission and have strong organizational/management skills. Native plant knowledge is helpful, but not required.

Our board members all serve on a volunteer basis for a term of one year. Our board is considered a "working board," since board members manage projects, committees, and/or operational functions that ensure the chapter runs smoothly.

All members of the board:

- Advocate for the Wild Ones mission and Chapter goals
- Are Wild Ones members in good standing
- Abide by the Chapter Bylaws
- Chair at least 1 chapter committee, including managing projects and committee members to achieve the committee's goals
- Assist in the recruiting of new members, committee members, and board members
- Contribute to the member and subscriber newsletters
- Attend programs and events
- Prepare for, attend and participate in monthly Board meetings on the third Wednesday of the month from 6-8 pm via Zoom

Interested candidates, please submit [this application](#) by September 15th. Also feel free to [email us](#) with any questions - we'd love to chat.

The WOFR Nomination Committee will interview candidates and then put forward their slate of candidates for approval at the October 18th board meeting. WOFR members will vote on the new slate in November and the new board term will begin January 1, 2024.



Volunteer With Us

The Wild Ones Front Range Chapter is run by volunteer committee and board members. Consider volunteering your time and talent with us to help deliver on our mission.

Below are some of our openings, but we are always looking for help in a variety of ways. No experience is required, and we will work around your availability - just bring your passion for native plant gardening.

[Email us](#) with your interest and to learn more.

Colorado Gives Day Campaign

Help us 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.

Communications/Publicity

Partner with the newsletter, social media, and website chairs to communicate about our chapter's events and resources. Identify ways to increase awareness of WOFR and our mission.

Greenverein Demonstration Garden Maintenance

Greenverein is a 100 foot long primarily native plant garden on the north side of the Denver Turnverein Dance Center @ 1570 Clarkson Street, Denver 80218. Volunteers weed, prune, and collect seeds.

Newsletter

Help to create our content calendar, identify authors for articles, and coordinate content submissions.

Plant & Seed Swaps

Help to organize plant and seed swaps in various locations along the Front Range.

Regional Coordinators for Colorado Springs & Boulder

Organize local member meetups to learn from each other's native plant gardening journey.

Secretary - Board Member Position

Manage board meeting logistics, take board meeting minutes, and maintain chapter records.

Volunteer Coordinator

Identify ways to recruit, recognize and reward volunteers.



Upcoming Events

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

Jefferson County Public Native Plant Gardens Tour

Saturday, August 12

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Jefferson County Fairgrounds

[Register here](#)

Denver Southeast Garden Crawl

Sunday, August 27

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Denver, CO

[Register here](#)

WOFR September Board Meeting

Saturday, September 20

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Online/Virtual

Please [email us](#) if you're interested in attending.

